

Integration Through Training

Comparing the Effectiveness of Strategies to Promote the Integration of Unemployed Young People in the Aftermath of the 1997 Luxembourg Summit

Leonardo Da Vinci Programme

Final Report

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Preface

This report is the result of a two year collaboration between academics in eight countries. Among the group, some members were involved throughout the whole process, others were employed on short-term contracts to contribute towards specific tasks. All played important roles in the overall project. While the report draws together the main research findings, a number of other documents were produced along the way by members of national teams. Most significantly, the information on labour market contexts, policies and training programmes has been distilled from fairly extensive national reports which were produced in the first phase of the research process. For reference, these are included in an Appendix. The chapters which make up this report were drafted by small teams with all partners contributing to one or more chapters. Hence the overall 'product' should be regarded as a joint one in which many people contributed both to research, writing and discussion. Those who participated in the research were: Andy Furlong, Wallace McNeish, Andy Biggart, Fred Cartmel (UK), Andreas Walther, Gebhard Stein, Gerd Maier (Germany), Sven Mrch , Mathilde Mrch (Denmark), Manuela du Bois Reymond, Wim Plug (Netherlands), Patricia L'Oncle, Gonzo Alvestegui (France), Martin Brjesson , Thomas Frstan (Sweden), Charlotte Bubbolini, Luca Minguzzi, Laura Gambi, Marco Borazio (Italy) Jesus Hernandez, Andreu Lopez Blasco, Jose Errea, Clara** Txtxue***** (Spain). The final version was drawn together by Andy Furlong and Wallace McNeish although it draws heavily on draft chapters compiled by groups of participants.

The research for this project was both enjoyable and frustrating. The discussion at the group meetings was always lively and stimulating and led us all to re-think some of our fundamental assumptions. At the same time, some members were able to draw on a more extensive literatures while for others the whole concept of interventions in youth transitions was relatively new. Some of the main frustrations were bureaucratic ones.

The report is fairly lengthy, but necessarily so. We make no apologies for extensive description in the early chapters: it is necessary to have a working knowledge of the different systems and policies before outcomes can be evaluated. We also make no apologies a strongly theoretical chapter (chapter 4). Theoretical positions and assumptions need to be spelt out before it is possible to explain the processes at work and their likely impact.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Contexts and Perspectives

1.1 Introduction

At the 1997 Luxembourg Summit on Employment, a set of common principles were agreed relating to the provision of measures aimed to reduce the chances of marginalisation of young people who had been unemployed for six months or more. Concern was expressed about levels of youth unemployment and about the difficulties faced by the long-term unemployed. Although the Luxembourg agreement aimed to establish a broad set of principles for promoting labour market integration, a commitment was made to offer all young people by 2002 a 'new start' before they reached six months of unemployment. With different countries having a range of ongoing and developing initiatives to meet this commitment, this report aims to assess the impact of these different measures and highlight 'best practice'.

The research was conducted in eight member states which have different systems and traditions of labour market regulation and which have developed, or are in the process of developing, a variety of measures to prevent the marginalisation of young people who become unemployed. In this report we highlight differences and similarities in approaches and, through interviews with key officials, policy-makers and providers, introduce a typology of measures and highlight factors which improve effective integration or which represent barriers. The main objective is therefore to exchange knowledge of effective policies on the integration of unemployed young people in order to reduce the risk of marginalisation. The report focuses on access to vocational education and training as a means of preventing social exclusion especially amongst those with few qualifications.

The research on which this report is based first involved a detailed documentation of the policies affecting unemployed 18-25 year-olds that have been implemented since 1995 in the eight countries. A series of national reports were produced (Appendix A) through which an assessment was made of the extent to which the respective countries have begun to implement the principles agreed at the Luxembourg Summit. Within these national reports, existing and on-going evaluations of new vocational education and training initiatives have been summarised and discussed with reference to country specific contexts. The main themes that emerged from these national reports are discussed in the following chapters as we assess the effectiveness of the various measures

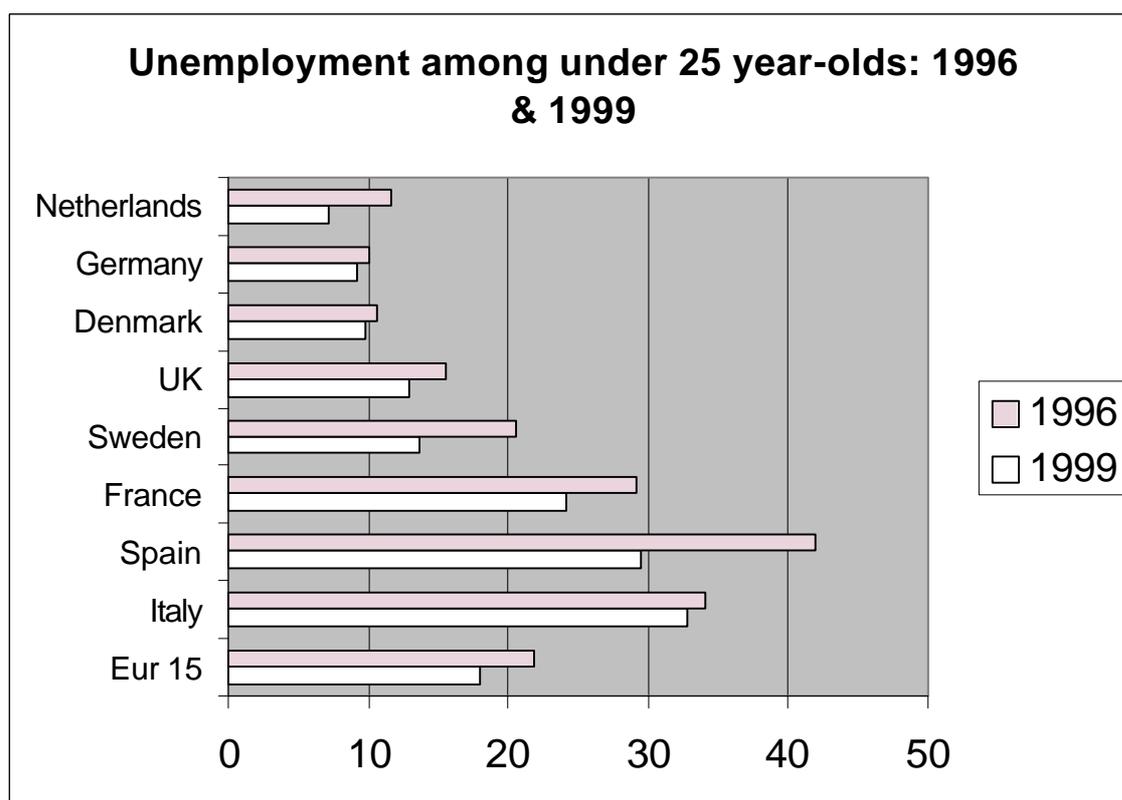
introduced in order to increase young people's access to education and training and promote labour market integration. In order to aid interpretation, a set of typologies are subsequently developed to help assess the impact of initiatives.

The second stage of the research involved interviews with employers, training providers, trade union officials and local officials. Around twelve in-depth interviews were conducted in each country. Through these interviews detailed information was gathered on the strengths and weaknesses of initiatives and information on any gaps between official policy and methods of implementation. These interviews, together with information from unpublished studies, were also used to test and validate the interpretative typologies which are ultimately used to bring the national evaluations together into a comparative model. The model is used to highlight processes of convergence or divergence in strategies of integration and to suggest future courses of action.

1.2 National Contexts

Throughout the European Union, rates of unemployment among young people are higher than among the general population and, although rates are declining, concerns have been expressed about processes of marginalisation and exclusion (EC 1994). In 1999 the rate of unemployment among under 25 year-olds was around 18 per cent: around twice the rate experienced by adults (9 per cent) (Eurostat 2001). In Europe, around 40 per cent of the unemployed population are under 25 years old, although this age group comprises only 20 per cent of the total labour force.

Since 1996, rates of youth unemployment have declined in the EU as a whole and this is reflected in all of the eight participating countries. Among the partner countries, youth unemployment rates (15-24 year-olds) are lowest in the Netherlands (where youth unemployment rates are less than half of the EU average) and highest in Italy (where youth unemployment rates are nearly twice the EU average) (Eurostat 2001). Indeed, in Southern Europe, the youth unemployment rate is extremely high with an unemployment rate of 33 per cent in Italy and 29 per cent in Spain (Eurostat, 1997). Of the participating countries, Italy, Spain and France all have youth unemployment rates that are above the EU average. In all of the countries except the UK and Sweden, rates of unemployment tend to be higher for females than for males with the differences between male and female unemployment being particularly large in Italy and Spain (around double the male rate).



Source: Eurostat 2001

Although rates of youth unemployment are affected by the overall activity rates within a country, other factors have an impact. In this context, patterns of educational participation are particularly important. In countries where rates of post-compulsory educational participation are high, the numbers of under 25 year-olds who are exposed to the risk of unemployment may be relatively low. As such, education and training policies are inextricably linked to patterns of unemployment and, by acting as ‘holding containers’ (Morch, 1997) may provide a false impression of patterns of opportunity. Among the participating states, fewest young people participate in post-compulsory education in Italy and Spain whilst completion of tertiary education is most common in Denmark, Sweden and the UK (European Youth Forum, 2001).

With evidence of a tightening bond between educational credentials and labour market integration and with long-term unemployment being concentrated among those with few qualifications, each of the countries has introduced a range of measures which aim to promote effective integration. All of the countries covered by this report provide work experience, vocational training or programmes of education in order to help smooth the access of the young unemployed to the labour market. The main measures operating in each of the countries are described in chapter 2.

In a recent study of trends in convergence and divergence in systems of education and training in the EU, Leney and Deluca (1998) argued that although European governments are responding to a common set of concerns, they tend to do so within the context of their existing educational and training structures and in terms of their wider structures, systems and prevailing beliefs. Given the need to generate knowledge of the effectiveness of strategies of integration which are applicable to all member states, this research has been conducted within eight countries which have a full range of welfare regimes, labour market contexts and educational and training policies.

1.3 Welfare regimes

With many of the countries linking benefit payments and allowances to participation, there is a trend towards a citizenship model of training with rights to allowances being clearly linked to an obligation to participate. However, there are significant variations in the nature of welfare systems in the eight countries. In some, generous levels of compensation have long existed for the unemployed. In others, welfare provision is minimal and those without work are forced to rely on their families. These different welfare cultures emerge clearly in the design of youth activation policies. At one extreme, there are countries which operate a universalistic system of benefits and with Governments being concerned to ensure that those participating in intervention measures do not suffer financially. At the other end of the spectrum, there are countries in which participants are remunerated at levels which are either marginally higher than benefit levels or on a wage that is significantly less than 'normal' minimally agreed rates. It should also be noted that despite poor levels of recompense, in many countries refusal to participate can leave a young person without any income whatsoever. Here Gallie and Paugam's (2000) typology of welfare regimes helps to contextualise national variations.

Unemployment and welfare regimes

Regime	Coverage	Level & duration of cover	Active employment policy
Sub-protective	Very incomplete	Very weak	Quasi non-existent
Liberal/minimal	Incomplete	Weak	Weak
Employment centred	Variable	Unequal	Extensive
Universalistic	Comprehensive	High	Very Extensive

Source: Gallie and Paugam (2000)

Gallie and Paugam describe a sub-protective regime as one which provides the unemployed with a very minimal level of protection at a level which is unlikely to meet their subsistence requirements. Many unemployed people receive no benefits whatsoever. A liberal/minimal regime is slightly more comprehensive

in its coverage, but levels of compensation remain very low and there is a risk of poverty. In such regimes, higher levels of compensation tend to be regarded as something which may remove the incentive to work and disrupt the equilibrium of the market. In employment centred regimes, benefit eligibility tends to depend on previous labour market involvement. As such, the risk of poverty tends to be concentrated among those with limited recent labour market involvement, especially the long-term unemployed. Gallie and Paugam identify a universalistic regime as being the only type which provides comprehensive benefit coverage and a relatively high level of financial recompense, usually irrespective of the income of other members of the household.

Although Gallie and Paugam regard these as ideal types, using their criteria and examples, the figure below allocated the eight study countries to these four regimes. At one extreme we have the sub-protective regimes of Italy and Spain, and at the other the universalistic regimes of Denmark and Sweden.

Unemployment regimes and the eight study countries

Sub-protective	Liberal/minimal	Employment centred	Universalistic
Italy	UK	France	Denmark
Spain		Germany	Sweden
		Netherlands	

1.4 Youth transitions and interventions

Youth transition regimes, like welfare regimes, are also central to an understanding of existing and emerging labour market interventions. High levels of youth unemployment, labour ‘flexibilisation’ and the increased participation in post-compulsory education and training have led to the greater protraction and de-linearisation of transitions to work. The need for interventions and the ways in which they are targeted are dependent on the routes which are predominant in a given society and on patterns of de-linearity.

Three main routes can be identified: academic; skilled or vocational routes; semi and unskilled employment routes. Academic routes involve extended involvement in education and frequently lead to professional and managerial positions. Skilled and vocational routes involve a period of formal training either in college, on the job, or a combination of the two. Those embarking on such routes tend to expect them to provide access to employment in the fields in which they have been trained. Those following semi and unskilled routes tend to expect to move fairly directly from education to work, usually at an early age. Those who fail to do so may encounter protracted periods of unemployment or may be required to participate in labour market interventions of one type or

another. Of course, ‘breaks’ can occur in any of these routes as young people fail to make a successful transition from education or training to paid employment and interventions are not restricted to semi and unskilled routes. Recognising that non-linearity transitions have become increasingly common, the figure below highlights six possible routes.

Linearity and transitions

Linear routes	Non-linear routes
Academic -direct	Academic -indirect
Skilled/vocational -direct	Skilled/vocational -indirect
Semi and unskilled -direct	Semi and unskilled -indirect

Interventions have largely been directed towards those on non-linear skilled/vocational and semi and unskilled routes although in some countries Government funded initiatives support linear skilled/vocational routes and in all countries state funding of higher education means that academic routes are effectively supported. The balance of interventions in any country will partially depend on the nature of the labour market and the routes that are predominant. With a high incidence of unemployment being typical at the semi and unskilled level, many of the initiatives discussed in this report are directed at this group and tend to provide training which will move them to the less risky skilled/vocational routes. However, at the extremes there are a range of initiatives which simply provide work experience without any training and programmes which aim to move young people back into mainstream academic routes.

The measures which have been introduced to smooth transitions in the eight countries can be grouped as follows:

- A broad range of initiatives based on a guarantee of jobs, education or training for unemployed youth with different conditions relating to eligibility (UK, The Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden);
- Measures which involve the extension of vocational education as well as employment initiatives based on the funding of socially useful work programmes (France, Spain, Italy);
- The extended provision of apprenticeships and pre-vocational courses (Germany, Spain);
- Placement initiatives which aim to close the gaps between educational and employment programmes (Germany, Italy).

1.5 Meeting future economic needs

The Luxembourg agreement is part of a broader European Employment Strategy that aims to make Europe ‘the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion’. Acceptance of this goal means recognising the need to provide superior professional and vocational training for all young people.

1.6 Small steps forward: the Luxembourg agreement

Recognising that the future prosperity of Europe rests on the skills and productivity of the younger generation, all member states of the European Union share a commitment to reducing levels of youth unemployment and ensuring that young people are equipped with the education and skills which will allow them to take their places in a dynamic knowledge based economy. To achieve economic and social cohesion within Europe, it is necessary to ensure the provision of common opportunities and safeguards for all citizens. Yet full convergence is difficult to achieve in a Europe which is still characterised by uneven patterns of economic and social development.

The Luxembourg agreement contains a set of set of principles and policy objectives which will provide a minimum level of employment protection for young people by removing the threat of long-term unemployment. Under the first pillar of the agreement a set of guidelines are laid down which aim to improve employability by addressing youth unemployment and smoothing the transition from education to working life. Under the agreement, by 2002 all member states have to ensure that ‘every young person is offered a new start before reaching six months of unemployment’. Titled ‘Tackling youth unemployment and preventing long-term unemployment’ the guideline stated that:

In order to influence the trend in youth and long-term unemployment the Member States will intensify their efforts to develop preventative and employability-orientated strategies, building on the early identification of individual needs; within a period to be determined by each Member State which may not exceed three years and which may be longer in Member States with particularly high unemployment, Member States will ensure that:

1. Every unemployed young person is offered a new start before reaching six months unemployment, in the form of training, retraining, work practice, a job or other employability measure with a view to effective integration into the labour market.

There is also a commitment to improving the quality of education and to reducing by half the proportion of 18-24 year-olds with no education or training beyond the lower secondary level by half by 2010. The Luxembourg agreement also contains guidelines on a range of other employment issues. However, being the aspect which is of prime importance to young people, here for brevity we use the term Luxembourg guidelines to refer specifically to pillar one (above).

For some member states, these objectives are not particularly ambitious. For others, especially those with high levels of unemployment and weak welfare systems, the task is an enormous one - as the Commission recognises. In a mid-term review of progress towards the implementation of the guidelines, countries were divided into those who had largely implemented the guidelines, those who were on course to do so by 2002 and those who were unlikely to implement on time. The figure below places the six countries studied in this report into these categories.

States who have largely implemented guidelines	States likely to implement guidelines by 2002	States unlikely to implement guidelines by 2002
Sweden	Denmark	Italy
UK	Netherlands	
	Spain	
	France	
	Germany	

Source: European Youth Forum, 2001

1.7 The report

In the report we begin by describing the labour market and training contexts of each of the eight countries, highlighting new measures and drawing attention to specific target groups and to the ways in which policies are likely to meet the objectives of the Luxembourg agreement (chapter 2). Using information gathered through interviews as well as material gathered through secondary analysis, chapter 3 examines the effectiveness of policies, drawing attention to good practice as well as shortcomings. Having described and evaluated the different programmes and initiatives, Part Two of the report seeks to *explain* variations. It begins with a theoretical chapter (chapter 4) which focuses on the impact of processes of globalisation and modernisation on the labour market, examines the consequences for youth and youth transitions and on forms of competence required in modern labour markets. In chapter 5 we draw on these concepts in order to undertake a detailed evaluation of variations of processes of policy development and implementation in the eight countries. The report is

concluded in chapter 6 with the development of a series of models through which we explain structural variations in youth unemployment policy. In the final pages we outlining a set of measures which we consider to be necessary to promote future European convergence.

Chapter 2

Models and Modes of Delivery

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the policy models and modes of delivery that were implemented to tackle unemployment amongst young people in the eight researched countries in the aftermath of the 1997 Luxembourg Summit on Employment. This description serves as a contextual background for the exposition of research findings and analytical discussion developed in subsequent chapters. For further detail, readers are referred to the national reports in Appendix A.

As was indicated in the introductory chapter, the labour market situation for young people varies markedly between the eight countries. Due to this variability, but also due to the fact that the eight countries have followed different developmental trajectories in education, training and labour market policy, the measures implemented in the late 1990s to tackle unemployment amongst young people diverge in at least four important areas:

- *Target Groups*: Due to variances concerning the labour market situation for young people in each of the countries, the policy measures are aimed at different target groups. In some countries these measures have been designed to support young people in general, whereas in others more specific target groups (such as young people without basic education or immigrant youth) have been focused upon.
- *Stated Aims*: Differences concerning the stated aims of the policy measures range from those whose stated aim is to raise educational attainment and qualification levels amongst young people, to those with the aim of increasing the number of jobs available for young people.
- *Content of Policy Measures*: Differences related to the stated aims have meant that the specific content of the policy measures range from an emphasis on educational programmes to an emphasis upon labour market programmes.
- *Responsibility for design and delivery*. In some countries the policy measures have been developed by the state at a centralised national level,

whereas in others the responsibility has to various degrees been devolved to regional or local agencies.

It is also important to recognise that in some countries many of the key policy measures in question were introduced prior to 1997 while in others the key policies were developed after 1997. For the latter group of countries, it is clearly easier to relate the policy measures to the Declaration on Employment made at the Luxembourg Summit, while for the former group the question is whether the policy measures have been changed in light of the Declaration at the Summit.

2.2 United Kingdom

2.2.1 Labour Market Situation

The processes of de-industrialisation occurring over the last twenty years generated high levels of structural unemployment in Britain which averaged over 10 per cent during the 1980's and early 1990's - a trend that was exacerbated by the effects of two recessions (1980-83, 1990-93). Sustained economic growth since the mid-1990's has, however, significantly reduced unemployment from approximately 3 million (or 10 per cent) in 1993 to an average of 1.8 million (or 6.2 per cent of the adult population) by the end of 1999 (LMT 1999) and the downward trend continues.¹ Numbers of long term unemployed (those out of work for over a year) have, however, remained persistently high, averaging over 40 per cent of total unemployment in the early to mid-1990's, a figure which has dropped only gradually to approximately 29 per cent in 1999 (LMT 1999). Inequalities in earnings have risen faster in Britain over the last ten years than in any other European country, approximately a quarter of all jobs are now part-time, and almost one in ten of the UK workforce is currently employed on temporary contracts (Finn 1999: 3).

Traditionally the youth labour market in Britain is the most fluid in that every year large numbers of young people begin employment, move from one type of employment to another and in and out of unemployment and training programmes as they search for suitable jobs and careers (Atkinson 1999: 8). It is also a deeply volatile labour market in that the employment of young people is most affected by economic restructuring and cycles of upturn and downturn in

¹ The figures used here are those which pertain to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of unemployment which is a broader definition than the 'claimant count' ie, those people claiming forms of unemployment related benefits. The ILO defines the unemployed as those people who are out of work, want a job, have actively sought employment in the previous four weeks and are available to start work within the next two weeks, or are out of work and have accepted employment that they are waiting to start in the next two weeks.

the economy. Because of the fluidity and volatility of the youth labour market unemployment amongst young people has tended to be disproportionately high compared to the general level of unemployment; it is not unusual for it to run at double the general rate.

The social characteristics of the young unemployed in the United Kingdom display certain continuities. Young males are most at risk from unemployment, consistently making up between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of the young unemployed during the 1980's and 1990's. Approximately 40 per cent of young unemployed men have never worked before (apart from temporary jobs), or had work experience on a training programme, 25 per cent have no qualifications and nearly 40 per cent have qualifications of only the lowest variety (Atkinson 1999). Young unskilled working class men are therefore most at risk of unemployment – during early 1999 unemployment amongst young men was running at 13 per cent (LMT 1999). Arguably this is directly linked to the transformation in the British economy over the last two decades from a strong manufacturing base to what can be described as a 'post-industrial' service base (Ashton 1992).

The United Kingdom has a relatively large proportion of young people leaving school early with few qualifications. Approximately 14 per cent of 16-year-olds were not in school during 1998, while 21 per cent of 17-year-olds and 40 per cent of 18-year-olds had left education. At the same time however, Britain has the largest proportion of university graduates in Europe. There continues therefore to be a basis for significant social and economic division between on the one hand, the well educated who generally attain and retain employment, and on the other, those leaving education early who are most at risk of unemployment and underemployment.

2.2.2 Labour Market Policy

The Labour Party under the leadership of Tony Blair returned to Government after eighteen years of Opposition in 1997 and immediately began to implement a series of social and economic policies designed to reduce unemployment, eradicate poverty and combat social exclusion. These goals are not however to be attained through the re-distributive taxation or Keynesian demand intervention to create full employment which had traditionally defined Labour Party policy throughout its history, but rather through the 'new' Labour project of promoting opportunity and enterprise through deregulation, flexible labour markets and increasing access to education and skill attainment. At the heart of new Labour's strategy is radical reform of the welfare system which aims to break the 'dependency culture' which it equates with long term unemployment

and the claiming of associated benefits. Moreover, the notion of ‘making work pay’ by for the first time by setting a minimum wage and reforming the taxation system is also an integral part of the plan. This combination of measures, they argue, will ensure continued economic growth and competitiveness, reduce unemployment to a more acceptable level, keep inflation down and help to cut the ever growing social security budget.

From 1996, all unemployed people in the United Kingdom were reclassified as ‘jobseekers’ who are required by law to enter a ‘Jobseekers’ contract agreement with the Employment Service (ES) at an initial ‘New Jobseekers Interview’ where a planning and advice dialogue regarding work orientation takes place. Under the terms of this agreement the unemployed must specify weekly activities taken to find employment, attend fortnightly reviews of progress, and accept any ‘suitable’ jobs which become available to them. A key emphasis is activity from day one of unemployment, and young jobseekers like their older counterparts must display continuous job-seeking activity in return for unemployment related benefits. If after 13 weeks an individual remains unemployed there is an in-depth *Job Review Interview* whereby progress regarding job-seeking activities is reviewed and further direction given. After 6 months of unemployment a young person is transferred to *The New Deal for Young People*.

2.2.3 New Policies and Programmes (*The New Deal for Young People*)

The New Deal is the first fully comprehensive policy and coherent labour market programme to be implemented for young unemployed people in Britain. It signifies a notable shift away from the generally passive laissez-faire approaches of past Governments to one which centres upon active measures designed to reduce unemployment amongst young people. The ‘new’ Labour Government’s reform of the welfare system is predicated on a supply side ‘welfare to work’ programme which seeks to increase the employability of those who are unemployed by furnishing them with the skills that employers demand. New Deal began with a nominal target of reducing unemployment in the 18-24 age group by 250,000 in the lifetime of the Government’s first Parliament – this is a target which according to official statistics was surpassed in 2000.

The New Deal can be characterised as a programme of intensive individual help with counselling, guidance, training and directed activity for young people, with the purpose of direct integration into the labour market. The Programme begins with an intensive period of counselling, discussion and investigation at the ES, called *The New Deal Gateway*. What the ES does in this Gateway period is to assess every young persons job-seeking needs and give personalised advice and

attention to satisfying those needs. If no positive results are achieved within four months, the job-seeker is required to choose between four options:

- Six months subsidised placement (£60 per week) with an employer, who also offers opportunity for training and guidance at least once per week. The employer is not tied to continue with any employment after the six months.
- Six months work experience on 'benefits plus' (£15.60 per week extra benefit) in the voluntary sector. Participants in this Option are entitled to at least one day release per week for educational or training schemes leading to accredited qualifications.
- Six months work experience on 'benefits plus' (£15.60 per week extra benefit) on a new Environmental Task Force. Participants in this Option are entitled to at least one day release per week for educational or training schemes leading to accredited qualifications.
- Up to twelve months access to full time education or training leading to a Level 2 NVQ (National Vocational Qualification).

A 'follow through' support service operates continuously while participants undertake options in order to aid completion and job search. It is also provided if a participant returns to unemployment after completing the New Deal Programme. An average of £750 is made available to employers, voluntary organisations and other providers to cover training costs.

The New Deal is enforced by forms of compulsion which are driven by the sanction of progressive forfeiture of benefits for non-compliance. This in part explains the high rates of participation. The Government has extended the scope for sanctions (and indeed toughened the nature of those penalties) for those young people who persistently fail to comply with the New Deal regulations. A new 'three strikes and out' sanction regime has recently been implemented. Here sanctions follow a pattern of two week and four week suspensions of benefits which are associated with non-compliance to the jobseekers contract; a 26 week sanction is applied to those who 'offend' for a third time. This tougher benefits regime does however continue to include immediate access to hardship payments for those people whom the Employment Service defines as being vulnerable.

2.2.4 Modes of Delivery

National labour markets develop unevenly and are local in their nature and operation (Martin *et al* 1999). In its design of the delivery mechanisms for the New Deal for Young People, the British Government has sought to address this problem by developing a national network of local programmes centred upon different forms of localised partnership. By the end of 1999 there were 144 such programmes operating across the UK, each responsible for covering a distinctive geographical location. Central to the delivery of the New Deal for Young People is therefore the construction of localised partnership agreements. These agreements involve a range different types of organisation working together including the Employment Service (ES), local authorities, Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC's), Local Enterprise Councils (LEC's), educational institutions, training providers, voluntary organisations and business consortia.

2.2.5 Target Groups and Basic Aims

In the Employment Action Plan (EAP) (1997), the British government specifies that the target group which the New Deal for Young People focuses upon are those under 25 who have been unemployed for over 6 months. The Government defines the basic aims of the New Deal for Young People as:

- improving the labour market attachment of young people by improving work skills and disciplines and helping them to find and stay in work.
- balancing rights and responsibilities – benefit sanctions will apply to those who turn down the offer of help.
- meeting wider social and environmental objectives by providing valuable work in the community. (EAP 1997: 13 p.41)

2.2.6 United Kingdom Policy and the Luxembourg Guidelines

The New Deal for Young People's focus upon employability when combined with flexible delivery through local partnerships directly ties British government policy into the First Pillar of the Luxembourg Employment Guidelines. Equally the government's commitment to reduce unemployment amongst 18-24 year olds by 250,000 in its first term of office complies with the Policy Principle agreed at the Summit of setting targets and objectives as benchmarks for evaluating the success or failure of EU government's employment strategies (EES & ESF 1998: 6-7).

2.3 Denmark

2.3.1 Labour Market Situation

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Danish labour market model was based upon a laissez faire model. Near full employment was maintained as a result of an equilibrium of supply and demand. For many years, unemployment was regarded as a very temporary phase and very high degree of public compensation was provided - sometimes up to 80 per cent of a previous salary. However by the late 1980s it became obvious that Denmark had a new problem with what came to be termed 'long term unemployment'. A key reason for this new problem was that the skills of many of the unemployed had become obsolete due to the ever increasing pace of change in labour market requirements. Thus unemployment, for many, had become a prolonged social detour, with the lesser qualified increasingly becoming unemployable both due to the changing demands and the sheer pace of change within the labour market.

In the late eighties this new problem spurred an ongoing political debate centring on the disadvantages of the Danish laissez faire labour market policy. A consensus eventually emerged around the notion that a targeted interventionist approach was needed if the future employment needs of both the unemployed and employers were to be fulfilled. Two overall strategic goals were agreed upon: firstly, the labour market was to be made structurally more flexible (this also involved reducing unemployment benefits and the introduction of other measures to 'encourage' participation); secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the education system was to be opened up to the whole labour force. This latter goal meant launching a programme of adult training and life-long learning and the fundamental restructuring of the education system to ensure that all youngsters acquired skills and qualifications demanded by employers.

2.3.2 Labour Market Policy

The central focus of the Danish policy measures that target the unemployed below 25 years of age is enhanced education. Danish policy is essentially focused on solving the youth unemployment problem through education. No programmes specifically oriented towards the labour market have been established following the Luxembourg Guidelines. Instead a vast number of education-oriented programmes have been established. Some of these programmes have the purpose of motivating the young person for further education while others use enhanced education to facilitate labour market integration. Labour market partners have been obliged to participate in the new educational effort in youth policy, but direct interaction between the youngster

and the actors in the labour market is not a part of the programme. Even though some of the efforts following the Luxembourg Guidelines have been obviously directed towards labour market integration, the main aim of Danish youth policy remains education.

2.3.3 New Policies and Programmes

New policies making the labour market more flexible, increasing incentives to take paid employment and encouraging labour force participation in education were introduced at the beginning of the 1990s. Special rules restricting eligibility to benefits were introduced for those below 25 years of age, which meant that the obligations of this group vis-à-vis education were heightened. At the same time young unemployed people were made a priority through the special Youth Effort (see below). Legislation was passed which strongly emphasised educational measures over job-training/work experience measures. Hence the ongoing Danish attempt to keep young people in the educational system was intensified. In practical terms the furtherance of this goal was operationalised by targeting the residual group who were central to the problem. Each year a considerable number of students dropped out of their particular educational programmes and this problem was especially acute amongst those in vocational training. Surveys showed that these young people did not advance any further in the educational system, and that they in particular ended up unqualified and therefore without requisite skills or competencies. These young people were targeted as the residual group and special measures were initiated to ensure continued education for this group.

2.3.4 Key Policy Initiatives

After identifying people who drop out of vocational training as the key target group in the 18-25 year old category, several policy measures were initiated which aimed to address the problems of this group. In broad terms, to ensure strong incentives regarding paid employment or education, normal rules governing unemployment benefits were revoked. Strict regulations were enforced which essentially meant that it became almost impossible to be young and unemployed.² More specifically, the Youth Effort was launched – this involves the interplay of a variety of different education, training and benefit initiatives:

- 1) Vocational Training. When young people have been unemployed for six months out of nine, they are required to enter vocational training for 18

² For instance, young people must become 'active' in education or training as soon as possible. This may only take a few days.

months on special UJF-courses.³ The entire vocational training system has begun on a process of fundamental restructuring in order to enhance mobility and flexibility inside the system. Vocational training has moved upwards on the political agenda and has received large increases in state funding.

- 2) **Benefit Reform.** Young people on UJF-courses will not receive Education Benefits, but instead receive half of the normal unemployment benefit which is approximately twice as much as the Education Benefit, but due to the Danish taxation system, in net income is almost the same. This new benefit (half of the normal unemployment benefit) was made standard for the entire group to make sure that youngsters do not avoid educational measures due to financial reasons. The only group who can still benefit financially from unemployment are those who are insured in an unemployment fund⁴. The minimum age for membership of a fund was changed from 16 to 18 years of age. Rejecting an offer of job training or education results in losing the right to full unemployment benefits.
- 3) **Subsidised Employment.** For a short period, a special financial agreement was made with working places that hired young unemployed people below the age of 25 with the state paying half of their salary. This initiative turned out to be ineffective and was withdrawn.
- 4) **Education Initiatives.** To enhance educational competencies amongst all young people a large number of educational initiatives have been launched. Key examples include:
 - A new educational path where a young person will receive a standard apprentice salary if he or she enrolls in the two-year long programme to be a social assistant.
 - The latter stages of compulsory education have been restructured to lead directly into further and higher education - so-called 'bridge-building'.
 - The flexible Free Youth Education Initiative was introduced. In this programme young people can build their own educational programme from an assortment of measures and receive standard Education Benefit.
 - Young unemployed people without secondary education have been referred to Production Schools.

2.3.5 Denmark and the Luxembourg guidelines

The policies described above should meet the Luxembourg guidelines by 2001. At the present time, very few young people remain unemployed for over six

³ UJF: Uddannelse- og Jobkvalificerende Forløb

⁴ Membership can be obtained only through working for several years.

months (approximately 10%) and this figure is likely to continue to decline. Although complying with the guidelines, the Danish approach is somewhat unique in that the main emphasis is on education rather than on labour market integration. In Denmark as in the UK, compliance is promoted through a combination of incentives and sanctions. Although young people are presented with various options, this strong emphasis on education may be counterproductive when it comes to those who are educationally disaffected.

2.4 France

2.4.1 Labour Market Situation

In France, as in other countries, youth unemployment tends to be concentrated among those leaving school with a low level of educational attainment and few formal qualifications. The labour market has increasingly developed a requirement for skilled and qualified labour, and yet many young people choose other pathways. Unemployment among 16 and 25 year-olds is approximately twice the general level while young people also constitute a significant proportion of the long term unemployed. Moreover, there is a clear gender difference when it comes to the proportion without jobs and positions in the labour market: 27 per cent of young women between 16 and 25 years of age are unemployed compared to 20.3 per cent of males. The female disadvantage is particularly severe amongst the low educated.

2.4.2 Labour Market Policy

Central to French social policy is the notion of 'insertion', which since the beginning of the 1980s has been a key feature of all new policy initiatives. In relation to employment policy, the emphasis on 'insertion' has meant increased state intervention in an attempt to shape individual and collective behaviours and facilitate access to the labour market. High rates of youth unemployment and the need to conform to the Luxembourg guidelines have led the French Government to introduce a broad range of initiatives in the area of employment policy. In general terms, French labour market policy and the fight against unemployment relies on a three pronged strategy: higher growth, flexible adjustments to the rapidly changing Labour market (in organisations, companies as well as amongst private persons), and a fairer distribution of resources. An important political objective is that the benefits of calculated growth are to be distributed in a manner that it favours all citizens but especially those from disadvantaged groups. These groups are identified by the Government as young people, women and the disabled and residents of certain geographical locations

in France.⁵ The struggle against unemployment is according to this strategy, in part a struggle for better social and economic conditions for the vulnerable and the under-privileged, with the ultimate aim of social re-integration.

Contemporary policy measures have also taken a more individualised focus with an emphasis on increasing employability. These measures focus on competence development, vocational training, work experience, and the stimulation of entrepreneurship. One key objective regarding young people is to prevent them leaving of education at an early stage. Another objective is to give the young long-term unemployed a fresh start by moving them from 'dependency' upon social welfare to work and self-reliance. More specifically, this means that, on the one hand, emphasis is placed on to motivating young people to actively seek employment, and, on the other, to encourage them to pursue qualifications more appropriate to the changing demands of the contemporary labour market – especially in the fields surrounding new technology. The transition from education to employment also forms an integral part of French labour market policy where the aim is to make it easier for young people to enter working life.

In accordance with the Luxembourg guidelines, labour market programmes in France have been shaped according to a strict time limit. Young people are not to be unemployed for periods longer than six months. After that time the employment agency – ANPE – takes overall responsibility to give support at the individual level. Various organisations, companies and local authorities – the so-called social partners – co-operate to help young people into new jobs, provide a vocational training place or an educational placement. Above all, however, resources are directed to help young people into the regular labour market and to create new jobs. ANPE has an important role in the development of all labour market programmes: it leads work related activities, spreads information and draws up general action plans. It also has a co-ordinating role; liaising between different public and private employers, local non-profit organisations and other interested parties. Further, ANPE oversees the way in which partnership contracts are drawn up. Here the activity is oriented towards a local market for the development of jobs that correspond to local needs and resources. The content of every job is specified as is how an application is to be written and indeed who may be recruited.

⁵ So called ZEP-areas, i.e. areas in which the residents are regarded as economically and culturally less fortunate.

2.4.3 *New Policies and Programmes*

Nouveaux Services – Nouveaux Emplois

While unemployment remains high, it is recognised that there are many social service requirements in French society that are not filled by any organisation or business. The programme *Nouveaux services – Nouveaux emplois* (NS-NE) focuses in upon these grey spots on the activity-map. Both qualified and unqualified staff are required in these service roles and it is hoped that in relation to these services some of the young unemployed may find their own special niche. At the local level there is knowledge about local needs and which service niches might be further developed. It is therefore at the local level that new service jobs are to be evolved – in homes, work-places, institutions, public places etc. One example is the rapidly growing number of older people who need help in various ways – with shopping, picking up medicine, transportation and so on. New service needs have also evolved in a diversity of areas such as home-based services, the media and environment that may be filled by young unemployed in the NS-NE programme. It is recognised that in the long term there are also possibilities that the new service jobs may be integrated as a part of the private market.

The state provides financial resources for the NS–NE so that the organisations and the authorities providing work and project activities receive subsidies and the young people participating get a salary. The income guarantee for a full-time job is 80 percent of the minimum salary (SMIC) in France.⁶ This means a monthly pay of about 7 700 FRF. According to the contract, this salary is guaranteed for five years. Only local and central authorities and other non-commercial and public institutions get permission to work with the programme and receive state subsidies (EC 1998b). Everyone entering the NS – NE programme is required to sign a work contract and this means that he or she is legally bound to long term participation. This is generally viewed as beneficial as it guarantees long term experience as contracts are written in the main for five-year periods. The core idea here is to make work experience comprehensive and stable, giving time for work and expertise to develop continuously.

TRACE

TRACE (Trajet d'accès à l'emploi) is a new kind of 'paths to work'-programme involving 18 months of integrated measures especially aimed for young people who suffer from a combination of personal and educational difficulties. The objective is to prevent unemployment and marginalisation while at the same

⁶ SMIC - Salaire Minimum Interprofessionnel de Croissance

time supporting work, development and integration in society. An important part of the programme takes the form of an initial contact with the authorities in order to evaluate individual educational needs and the develop a plan for dealing with the problems existing outwith the sphere of employment/unemployment. The content of the measures is, to a high degree, individually adjusted and economic subsidies are provided throughout the programme period.

2.4.4 Target Groups and General Aims

The French government has taken the position that the fight against youth unemployment must cover every category of unemployment whether it be short term or long term, or involving young unemployed people with special needs and problems. The programme NS–NE is targeted at:

- all young people aged between 18 and 25 years old at the time of appointment;
- young people aged between 26 and 29 years old who have not worked long enough to allow the claiming of unemployment benefit (currently 122 days of contributions during the eight month period before the end of the last contract);
- disabled young people less than 30 years old.

Participants must have the qualifications demanded for the kind of work they are interested in. However, the less qualified or residents in urban areas with social and cultural problems will not be excluded from the programme. Job allocation takes account of individual competence and skills. In order to correspond to the programme, each placement measure has to fulfil three criteria:

- It has to create a job.
- It has to be socially useful.
- It has to answer to emergent of non-satisfied needs.

The programme *TRACE* is specifically oriented only to young people with special needs. Starting in 1998 the French government has stated that its aim is to reach everyone in the country in need of this kind of special support within five years.

2.4.5 France and the Luxembourg guidelines

The set of measures introduced in France are consistent with the Luxembourg guidelines. The main problem relates to the high levels of youth unemployment which must be addressed in order to meet targets. The Government is committed to dramatically increase access to programmes so as to meet a target annual participation rate of 398,000 by 2001 (European Youth Forum 2001). If they succeed in this aim, they will have fully implemented Guideline 1.

2.5 Germany

2.5.1 Labour Market Situation

Due to the standardised and institutionalised structure of vocational training in Germany – the ‘dual system’ – unemployment rates for young people have for a long time been the lowest in Europe. This labour market arrangement is characterised as an ‘occupational labour market’ in which formal vocational qualifications are decisive in the distribution of occupational positions (Müller and Shavit 1998). At present however, transitions from school to work are affected by a major decline of training and employment opportunities. One symptom of this development is a considerable increase in youth unemployment. In 1998 the average overall unemployment rate was 12.3 per cent while the rate for under 25 year-olds stood at 11.8 per cent – a marked contrast to the 5.8 per cent in West Germany in 1992. It took the crisis of the 1990s to show that Germany’s particular form of institutional integration does not automatically mean social integration in the sense of stable employment corresponding to individuals aspirations.

The most important explanation of the current patterns of relatively high unemployment is that it is a direct consequence of German re-unification in 1989. On the one hand this led to a fundamental re-structuring of the East German labour market with a loss of about 3 million work places compared to the situation under the previous regime. This is reflected by unemployment rates of 10.5 per cent in the West compared to 19.5 per cent in the East in 1998. Re-unification led to considerable increases in public spending requiring the raising of taxes and social security contributions of both employers and employees - something that according to employers has reduced their employment potential. However, factors other than re-unification play a part. In Germany the service economy has developed rather slowly and training opportunities for young people (especially young women) have emerged rather slowly.

2.5.2 Labour Market Policy

The existence of high levels of unemployment – which publicly is often explained in terms of processes of globalisation – has led to a weakening of the

corporatist structures which were regarded as import for Germany's post-war economic growth and for the development of vocational training and welfare structures (see Esping-Andersen 1990; Piore and Sabel 1984; Schmid 1997). It seems that under current economic and political conditions German corporatism has been transformed from a successful social and economic model into a burden. Either employers have given up the consensus in some areas (e.g. the self-obligation of offering more apprenticeship places than required for the own demand of human resources) or the institutions in which state, employers or trade unions share responsibility (e.g. national employment service or vocational training) lack innovatory dynamics. In 1998 the new partnership Government of Social Democrats and the Green Party implemented the so-called 'Buendnis fuer Arbeit' (Alliance for Work) which is supposed to renew the corporatist consensus. The main issues for the Alliance are: an increase of apprenticeship places, development of low wage labour market segments and innovation in the pensions system in order to stop the steady increase in contributions. However, more than one year after its implementation no decisive reforms have been initiated.

In identifying recent key labour market policies it is firstly the various measures taken to develop the dual system in terms of its qualitative adaptation to changing labour market demands and its quantitative increase which have to be underlined. Second, there are the policies intended to reduce youth unemployment and in particular those addressing the needs of the disadvantaged. Here it is mainly the 'Immediate Action Programme' which represents a new effort in this direction by increasing opportunities for vocational training, pre-vocational training and subsidised employment for young people.

2.5.3 New policies and programmes

The Immediate Action Programme

The 'Immediate Action Programme to Reduce Youth Unemployment: Programme for the Training, Qualification and Employment of Young People' (IAP) has been implemented by the new Social Democratic-Green Government. In its initial phase this programme was clearly influenced by the British Labour Government's 'New Deal'. This influence is mainly manifest in regard to the impressive speed of its implementation and size regarding both numbers and funding. In Germany the aim was to bring 100,000 young unemployed people into paid employment. Originally planned for one year, it was however extended to run for a second. Its main objective is to reduce the number of young people without a vocational training certificate and/or job.

In the guidelines for the second year of the programme the target group has been slightly narrowed compared to the open definition of the first year (cf. IAP 2000). To summarise:

- non-company-based vocational training will be restricted to areas with a supply rate of apprenticeship places of less than 15 per cent over the rate of applicants;
- for vocational training in non-company-based training centres young people with qualifications given access to higher education are not eligible;
- special attention shall be given regarding the integration of young people from migrant families (at least corresponding to their percentage of unemployed young people)
- the instrument of job creation combined with training modules will be reduced; only young people who have been unemployed for 3 months or longer are eligible;
- preference is to be given to the use of wage subsidies.

Alongside interviews by the vocational guidance advisors with the applicants for vocational training and the intention to distribute the jobseekers on vacant apprenticeship places, the IAP consists of two key lines of action:

Measures to enhance integration in vocational training:

- Three-month preparation course for young people applying for vocational training.
- Apprenticeship in a non-company based training centre.
- Courses to attain the lower secondary school leaving qualification.
- ‘Work and Skills’ combining pre-vocational training and stages in company.

Specific schemes for unemployed young people:

- Upgrading or additional skills for unemployed young adults.
- Wage subsidies for unemployed young persons.
- Job creation combined with training: wage subsidy including training elements.
- Job-related accompanying measures for stabilisation in initial phase of employment.
- Social support facilitating participation in employment and training measures.

2.5.4 Target Groups and General Aims

The IAP programme is generally aimed at young people up to the age of 25 who need training or skill upgrading, or who, after a period of unemployment need to be helped into a job. The measures to enhance integration in vocational training are supposed to aid young people lacking sufficient qualifications, whereas the specific schemes are directed towards young people with special needs. Moreover it was intended that the IAP would integrate young women according to their percentage of unemployed under 25 year olds, and to address the over-proportionality of young unemployed people in the former East Germany.

2.4.5 Germany and the Luxembourg guidelines

The need to consider ways of preventing long-term youth unemployment is new in Germany. With relatively high levels of youth unemployment, it has become clear that the dual system needs to be modernised to cope with modern demands. It has also become necessary to help smooth the entry of less advantaged groups into vocational training structures. With a weakening commitment to corporatist approaches on the part of employers, the state is taking a more central role. In ensuring that interventions are introduced to ensure that no young person remains unemployed for over six months, Germany is implementing the Luxembourg guidelines and it has been suggested that these will be met by 2002 (European Youth Forum 2001).

2.6 Italy

2.6.1 Labour market situation

In many parts of the EU, youth unemployment is a temporary phase associated with difficulties in making an initial entry into the labour market. In Italy the issue is a severe lack of opportunities for young people. At the same time however, the most peculiar aspect of the Italian labour market is the extent of its regional differences. All performance indicators show that the situation in southern Italy is much worse than in the rest of the country. Here the problem is structural and relates to what is in effect a two-speed economy. Northern regions are often called 'the industrial engine of the country' while most unemployment is concentrated in the largely rural southern regions.

From January 1998 to January 1999 there was a significant increase in employment (nearly 200,000 persons, approximating 1 per cent). The increase was particularly notable in relation to female employment with a 2.5 per cent growth rate which raised the female proportion to 36 per cent of total employment. In the same period the number of part-time workers increased by 13.8 per cent in both wage dependent employment and self-employment.

However the general situation appears to remain problematic and economists have continued to make the point that the employment framework must be connected to a real improvement in macroeconomic indicators. The so called southern question (*questione del mezzogiorno*) is still the first point of the Italian political agenda in spite of many efforts to answer it, and a relatively high proportion of economic resources allocated to southern regions.

2.6.2 Labour market policy

Before the Luxembourg Summit, employment policies aimed to encourage enterprises to hire unemployed young people through a system of tax relief related to apprenticeship and training contracts. Education and vocational training systems formed what might be described as ‘watertight compartments’ with the education lobby always having precedence. Even if training systems were linked to labour market needs their role has always been more marginal, drawn upon by users only after a failure in the education system. In this way, choosing to attend training courses was not a ‘true choice’ but widely considered as a ‘damage limitation exercise’ to mask a failure in the more socially accepted ‘educational system’. This was closely connected with a decrease of self-esteem and a low level of personal motivation. Vocational training systems seemed to be antiquated, inefficient and offering low level services.

Starting from this framework the Italian Government set up a reforming process aiming at re-building the entire system so as to improve the employment situation. This process of fundamental structural reform included changes to the education system, vocational training system and the welfare system. This was (and shall be) a real revolution that took place in a context characterised by a long period of stagnation and immobility.

Within this context, Italy’s overall employment strategy aims at attaining three major objectives:

- to increase the employment content of economic growth, and in particular, to increase employment opportunities for those social groups (above all young people and women) who are under-represented in the labour market;
- to bring about sustained economic growth in the regions characterised by higher than average unemployment;
- to reform the welfare system in order to make it adequate to a changing social framework.

2.6.3 New Policies and Programmes

The raft of new policy measures introduced by the Italian Government include a de-centralisation process; the end of a public monopoly in employment services and temporary employment agencies; measures aiming at the entry of young people in the labour market; reforms connected to both the vocational training system and the educational system, as well as measures concerning the linkage between education, training and work experiences; and incentives to enterprise and entrepreneurship.

The strategy introduced 1997 is a dual one. On the one hand policies aim at supporting several indigenous best practices, while on the other the government began a wide-range of experimentation exploring and appropriating for its model some of the best practices used by the most advanced European partners.

The reform of the employment service (P.E.S.) includes

- Setting up a register of job seekers – this is to be organised according to homogeneous national-wide criteria, including the workers' personal and occupational data.
- Introduction of an 'occupational card' – this is consistent with the educational and vocational training system and will include information about work experiences, aptitudes and availability.
- Creation of an 'electronic worker's card' that shall enable the entry and constant updating of a worker's curriculum vitae. It will also facilitate consultation of hiring lists as well as training and guidance opportunities and will store evidence of a worker's willingness to accept a job or to participate in traineeship schemes, training courses, competitive examinations and personnel selection.
- Abolition of the traditional job-seekers list – this will also eliminate the system of rights and responsibilities connected with registration on this list.
- Introduction of a new definition of 'unemployment' consistent with the definition adopted by the E.U.

As well as the above initiatives, the introduction of an Employment Information System (SIL) is going to link state employment services together with private services. In 2000, the new Employment Information System became operational throughout Italy and is now at the disposal of both the public system and the private employment agencies. This network will help overcome the shortcomings of the previous system which didn't provide for the collection of vacancy data, was not brought-up-to-date in a timely fashion and worked only within regional boundaries.

Vocational Training Reform

Further policy initiatives include the introduction of the following forms of vocational apprenticeship:

- The Apprenticeship Contract – this is a special kind of job-contract in which a young apprentice gets the training necessary to become a skilled worker. The young apprentice will get two kinds of training: one given by an enterprise in the form of a job-placement, and one given by training centres outside the job-placement. The target group for this initiative is youngsters between 16-24 years old with a qualification or diploma related to the activity done at the end of the process (the maximum age can be increased to 26 in Objective 1 and 2 areas). The length of participation is from 18 months to 4 years.
- Work/Training Contracts – where an employer undertakes to give to 16-32 years olds a good knowledge of a particular job in a predetermined time scale and will receive in return fiscal benefits. The length of participation in this scheme is either 24 months or 12 months

Both forms of training allow a direct contact with the labour market and periods of on-the-job training. For companies it is an instrument that helps aid in personnel selection without any obligation of engagement. At the end of the training period, the company has to certify the experience gained by the apprentice. Policy measures also include forms of subsidised employment whereby a grant allows an individual paid working experience in a private company for a maximum of 12 months. The target group here is young people (21-32 years old) enrolled on the lists of employment offices for 30 months or more. Length of participation is 12 months. However employment grants can be applied for only in those regions with a yearly unemployment rate which is above the national average. Training system reforms also include a new qualification credit system, the establishment of compulsion for young people aged up to 18 to participate in training activities, and training experiences within enterprises prior to the completion of the educational and training courses.

While in the past, the vocational training system was widely considered second rate, in recent years its image and its social desirability has increased. The training system has implemented, for the first time, a credit system based on a recognition of training and work experiences. Every kind of job requires a number of competencies which are used at various levels (both practical and

self-related). These competencies can be divided into standard units and defined as 'credits'. This kind of credit system permits the planning of personnel courses that take into account individual experiences. This system should permit a new type of vocational training engineered around individually tailored flexible courses. Moreover it is hoped that professional training will reduce the gap between school based education and the labour market. This reform aims at giving all youngsters the possibility of having training and work as a compulsory experience. The reform provides, at the end of compulsory school based education, the choice between higher education or professional training.

Over the last few years the Social Pact has devoted special attention to the tools designed to train youths and to place them in employment. This commitment was converted into law with the progressive implementation of an obligation to attend training courses either within the school system, the regional vocational training system, or through apprenticeship schemes. Training experiences within enterprises prior to the completion of education and training courses is directly related to the establishment of compulsion for young people up to 18 years of age to participate in training activities. It aims to create a meeting point between youngsters and enterprises. The main tools are:

- Traineeship schemes
- Traineeship stages
- Vocational training stages (tirocini di orientamento)

2.6.4 Italy and the Luxembourg guidelines

With extremely high rates of youth unemployment and a weak welfare system, Italy must radically increase patterns of support in order to meet the Luxembourg guidelines. Many public services have to be introduced or modernised before reforms can be implemented. As such, it has been argued that Italy is unlikely to meet the guidelines by 2002 (indeed, new structures will not be fully in place before 2003) (European Youth Forum 2001). While some progress has been made, by Northern European standards these can be considered as minimal. Activation schemes, for example, are currently only available to young people living in areas with above average unemployment rates who have been unemployed for over 30 months.

2.7 Netherlands

2.7.1 Labour Market Situation

Due to a number of factors emerging simultaneously, Dutch unemployment decreased during the 1990s while increasing in most of the European countries.

One of the main factors explaining this development is the redistribution of employment in the Netherlands – a collective reduction of the working week meaning that the available jobs are shared among a larger section of the population. A growth in the number of part-time jobs has also been an important factor. Part-time and flexible jobs are for a large part concentrated in the service sector, the main growth engine of the Dutch economy. For example, the rise in employment in the years 1995 and 1996 can be almost wholly attributed to this sector (Central Bureau of Statistics 1997). At present, commercial and non-commercial services account for about 74 per cent of total employment (Visser and Hemerijck 1997). This growth in jobs has particularly benefited *newcomers* and *women* (re-)entering the labour market.

According to the official statistics, the decline of the unemployment rate that has occurred in the last few years has affected all employment categories: long-term and short-term, young, middle-aged and old, and males as well as females. However, remaining as problematic issues in the Dutch labour market are relatively large numbers of long-term unemployed and the situation of the disabled. In the period 1995–1998 the registered youth unemployment rate declined from 10 to 5 per cent. However, only a relatively small part of the decline in youth unemployment is due to the growth in the number of jobs, and for the largest part a consequence of the rise in, and extension of, educational participation among young people (NRC 9-2-1998). Further, in the same period of time there has been a demographic decline in the number of young people, meaning less competition in the labour market.

2.7.2 *Labour market policy*

In the Netherlands, specific programmes for unemployed youth have existed since 1984. From 1986 until 1998, unemployment measures were regulated under the strong influence of the *Activating Labour Market Policy for Youth* (AAJ). This Government policy aimed at preventing long-term unemployment amongst young people by activating them into gaining work experience via additional jobs or training courses.

The present Government policies with regard to youth and unemployed youth in particular, may be seen as the outcome of a more general process of welfare reform that began in the late 1970s and -as far as unemployment is concerned- more or less ended in the 1990s. From the beginning of that first period onwards, due to the crisis of the welfare state, economic recession and a steep rise in (youth) unemployment, the status of welfare and unemployment beneficiaries in general, but also youth and unemployed youth, started changing and eventually evolved into a new model (Veendrick 1993; van Ewijk 1994). At

the one side, following (macro) structural improvements via collectively agreed wage moderation, attention shifted to micro Labour market policies and from passive to active, or to put it differently, from demand to supply measures (van Oorschot and Engelfriet 1999). At the other side, young (unemployed) people as a group were from then on more and more categorised and classified, which eventually evolved into a regime with separate measures –as opposed to those aimed at unemployed adults.

Dutch unemployment policy was also considered to be too passive or overly concerned with stimulating the demand side of the Labour market. Too much money was spent on benefits and too little on getting unemployed people back to work. The traditional guidance approach that did exist, functioned entirely separately from the -passive- income protection system (van Oorschot and Engelfriet 1999). Therefore, it was deemed by policy makers that they should become much more inter-linked with each other and more active. In effect, there was a 'revival of the role of paid labour' (van Berkel 1991), highlighting the importance of *participation* in the regular labour market in fighting social exclusion, or, in other words, 'employment as the prime basis of social protection' (van Oorschot and Engelfriet 1999). In practice, this has led to *activating labour market policies*, with the intention of increasing the participation in paid employment by activating measures of the spending of benefit funds. A much more comprehensive approach developed in which the method to guide potential participants onto the labour market via the creation of jobs, mediation, counselling and education, was accompanied by *enforcing, disciplining* and (*dis-*) *incentive* measures.

Furthermore, local authorities, regional employment agencies and social insurance services have been allocated much more responsibility and freedom to introduce more active employment policies themselves, albeit within the duty of maintaining the comprehensive youth employment approach which had been laid down nationally (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport 1998).

2.7.3 New Policies and Programmes

The Act on the Mobilisation of Job-seekers (WiW)

The WIW is the contemporary labour market program initiated in 1998. In the first phase of this unemployment scheme, those who have recently graduated from medium and higher vocational education or university are supposed to accept any kind of job right away. Secondly, for every unemployed or school-leaver younger than 23 years of age, the organisation that pays for the benefit (the municipality or the implementation agency) together with the employment agency, draws up a plan that is aimed to find regular work. If after a year no job

has been found, the client become eligible for the WIW. The program offers the following possibilities:

- *The WIW job*, which may be regarded as an 'income guarantee' that replaces a 'benefit guarantee' and aims to equip the client with the considered necessary work experience. For this purpose, a labour contract is signed with the municipality for 2 years after which the client can be 'loaned out' to employers in the private or non-private sector. After this period, this 'WIW agreement' between the client and the municipality has to be renewed.
- *The work experience place* is meant as a direct step to regular work, and the intention is that the person in question is to be hired for a specific employment. Therefore a labour contract is made between the employer and the client. This also means that the client works according to the collective agreements for the sector in question rather than being regarded as a WIW employee. The employer receives a labour cost subsidy. After a contract-period of at least 6 months the employer has to decide whether the client is taken on permanently or not.
- *Schooling*. To have more opportunities in finding regular employment, it may be useful to follow extra education courses. WIW subsidies will finance these if they are considered to be an asset for the client. In relation to the older measures, schooling opportunities have been broadened, so that more combinations of schooling and employment are possible, including apprenticeship training.

The WIW constitutes a *closed system* approach. In theory this means that 'nobody should fall out of the boat'. This closed system approach is reflected in the *mandatory character* of the WIW: participants are allowed to refuse an *additional* WIW job twice, but they are not allowed to refuse an offer of regular work (i.e. in a work experience place). In both cases, after too many refusals, the clients' benefits may be suspended wholly or partly for a period of time (with the possibility of further suspension). However the closed system approach is very susceptible to 'full dropout': an officially not known 'no-chance' group which has no regime at all; young people who have dropped out of the family, school or work who haven't registered at all (Spies 1998).

Other, more positive financial incentives include the paying out of a municipal bonus to the client when he or she has found a job or finished a course successfully (with a maximum of 2100 Dutch guilders) and not to deduct a part

of the income of a newly found job from someone's benefits -to avoid the so-called 'poverty trap' (a maximum of 4340 Dutch guilders per year). Another incentive is that participants of the WIW, who take care of children younger than 12 years old, are eligible for child-care support.

2.7.4 Target Groups and General Aims

Instead of introducing tailor-made measures for various categories of unemployed people, as in some other countries, the Dutch model is concentrated on one program. According to age of the clients there are some small differences in the approach. The WIW 'for youth' is for the group younger than 23 years of age. After that age, the WIW 'for adults' applies. Mainly the program is offered for everyone that has been unemployed for over a year. In general terms, the WIW aims to promote the rapid transfer of job-seekers to the regular labour market and to provide for those who in varying degree are unfit to participate in the mainstream labour market (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport 1998). With regard to unemployed youth, the WIW policy pursues essentially the same aims as the earlier labour market measures and programmes.

2.7.5 The Netherlands and the Luxembourg guidelines

The Netherlands are considered to be on course to meet their commitments made under the Luxembourg guidelines by 2002. The economy is relatively buoyant and rates of youth unemployment low. Although a range of measures designed to prevent long-term youth unemployment have been operating for nearly two decades, recent changes have been made to prevent young people becoming dependent on benefits through the use of benefit sanctions.

2.8 Spain

2.8.1 Labour Market Situation

In 1995, the unemployment rate in Spain stood at 23 per cent: the highest level in the EU. From that point on, levels of unemployment decreased and by 1995 stood at 16 per cent (Eurostat 2001). The situation among young people was particularly serious. In 1995 50 per cent of 16-19 year-olds and 40 per cent of 20-24 year-olds were unemployed, declining to 41 per cent and 29 per cent respectively by 1999 (Eurostat 2001). Among all age groups, the unemployment rate is highest among females. However, once young people reach the age of 25, their unemployment rate begins to fall in line with the overall adult average. A substantial proportion of youth unemployment is long-term: in 1998, for example, 43 per cent of unemployed 20-24 year-olds had been out of work for over a year.

Unemployment in Spain has been exacerbated by the effects of recession (which has a particularly severe impact in new entrants to the labour force) and economic change. Jobs in manufacturing industry have declined while employment in the agricultural sector have reduced by more than half between 1985 and 1999. Although the service sector has expanded, there has been a corresponding increase in part-time employment which has been concentrated among females. Over a third of workers have temporary contracts and seasonal employment is common in some parts of the country.

2.8.2 Labour Market Policy

Recent labour market policy in Spain has concentrated on reducing unemployment, particularly among young people, and reducing the number of temporary contracts. Considerable emphasis has been placed on increasing participation in education and reforming vocational education which has tended to be regarded as a poor relation to academic tracks. In some respects, success in expanding the higher education sector has led to other problems. The costs of increasing access to Higher Education have been high and there is evidence that qualification inflation has resulted in a problem of under-employment. On the positive side, it has been noted that employers are able to access highly qualified labour at relatively low costs.

2.8.3 New programmes and measures

Training for the young unemployed has become one of the principal active employment policies developed in Spain during the last decade. This focus was strengthened within the National Plan of Professional Insertion in 1985. In 1998 a new Employment Plan was approved with the aim of meeting commitments made at the Luxembourg summit. This plan incorporates a National Program of Vocational Training (NPVT) which has been described as ‘a decisive stage in the construction of a dynamic new model in relationships between training and employment’ (Beneyto and Guillén 1998).

The NPVT programme unifies three aspects of training which previously operated on a relatively autonomous basis:

- Vocational training within the educational sector;
- Job training for unemployed persons;
- Lifelong learning for workers.

Within this, the Initial Vocational Training Programme is mainly directed towards young people, although it remains open to adults who wish to obtain

formal qualifications. In 1990 basic vocational training provided in secondary schools was also brought within the remit of the NPVT. With an emphasis placed on upgrading the system of education and training and providing smoother links between school and work, a range of new measures have been introduced to cater for young people who have been unemployed for more than six months. Systems of job counselling have also been enhanced with the aim of interviewing all job-seekers in order to identify barriers to labour market absorption.

The main measures introduced aim both to stimulate employment and to enhance the provision of vocational and professional training. The main mechanism for the delivery of these objectives relates to the introduction of new 'flexible' contracts and reductions in social security levies on those companies which provide training or work experience for those within certain target groups (see below). Qualified young people (with a university degree or trade qualifications) are eligible for work experience contracts which allow them to develop their skills within a work situation. Contracts last for between six months and two years and young workers salaries are set somewhat beneath established rates for the trades in question (as low as 60 per cent in the first year). Training contracts are intended to cater for 16-21 year-olds without either qualifications or skills. Contracts last for up to two years and a proportion of the working week (at least 15 per cent) has to be reserved for formal vocational training for which trainees ultimately gain formal professional certificates. In order to provide firms with incentives to issue permanent contracts, reductions in the social security levy are also granted to employers who provide permanent jobs to those under the age of 30.

2.8.4 Target Groups

- At present, the NVPT is targeted at all unemployed workers. However, the following groups have preference to participate in these actions:
 - Those over 25 who have been unemployed for more than a year.
 - Those under 25 who have been unemployed for over six months.
 - Those seeking first jobs
 - Groups of unemployed people who have special difficulties such as women returning to economic life, the handicapped and migrants.

2.8.5 Spain and the Luxembourg guidelines

Despite having the highest rates of youth unemployment in Europe, Spain has made considerable headway in the adoption of policies which will meet commitments made at the Luxembourg summit. The measures described above

have helped to reduce long-term youth unemployment and by early 2000 just 15 per cent of young people remained unemployed after six months (European Youth Forum 2001). Spain is seen as one of the countries which will have fully implemented the Luxembourg guidelines by 2002.

2.9 Sweden

2.9.1 The Labour market situation

Sweden has a long tradition of large-scale labour market programmes. Since the 1960s labour market programmes have gradually expanded and various new programmes have been added. When youth unemployment in the mid-1970s became an issue, a number of new measures and programmes were introduced with the aim of reducing unemployment among young people.

Compared to most other Western countries Sweden had, until the 1990s, very low unemployment rates. This was true also with regard to young people. Until the employment crisis of the 1990s the unemployment rates of the adults displayed very small variations and oscillated around the very low average of 1.6 per cent of the labour force. Compared to adults, the unemployment rates of the young work force were considerably higher and the variations over the business cycle more pronounced.

In the beginning of the 1990s, unemployment rates rose dramatically in Sweden. In one year (between September 1991 and September 1992) unemployment for all age groups were nearly doubled. The one group that had the highest unemployment rates were young people; in 1994 more than 14 per cent of young women and 18 per cent of young men were unemployed: around 12 per cent were on various kinds of labour market programmes.

2.9.2 Labour market Policy

This development also meant that the institutions that traditionally had been responsible for different labour market programmes for young people came under pressure. The kind of labour market programmes that had been practised during the 1980s did not seem either appropriate, or possible, to uphold due to the limited resources that were available to the state and/or the local municipalities. On the national, as well as the local, level, there was a need to develop new measures to assist those young people that had failed in making their entry to the labour market.

At the same time as unemployment among young people reached levels not previously seen. National and local authorities were faced with the challenge of developing new policies. With an ambition to take an overall responsibility for

the situation of young people, there was a need not only to assist young people to make their entry into the labour market or to give them financial support, but also to develop ways to intervene into the leisure activities of unemployed young people. This development has been described as a turn away from a 'labour-market oriented approach' towards a 'youth policy approach' in designing labour market programmes for young people (Börjeson 1995).

For these reasons some new measures were introduced which ran alongside the ones already existing – mainly the Municipal Youth Programme and the Development Guarantee. In some aspects these were different to the Swedish labour market policy tradition.

2.9.3 New programmes and measures

The Municipal Youth Programmes

Along with the many labour market and educational programmes, the role of the municipalities in labour market policy developed during the 1990s. Starting in 1995, municipalities took responsibility for unemployed young people between the age of 18 and 20. The municipality arranges full-time practical work experience or other activities for young people in what are called *municipal youth programmes* (KUP). Through such measures, young people acquire work experience, on-the-job training and social education. The activities are developed in close co-operation with the industry and adjustable to local conditions. This can be seen as a willingness to adjust the young people's competence and experiences to the local labour market and thus improve their opportunities.

The employment centre provides services in the form of a job marketplace and counselling for the period in which a youth is enrolled. An individual plan of action is drawn up for each participant in consultation with a contact person for the municipality and the employment centre. In 1997, the average time in KUP was about 3 months. Thus in comparison with governmental labour market measures, usually spreading over 6 months, the activities in KUP are short. This is partly due to the fact that the unemployed youngsters are only the responsibility of the municipality until June 30th on the year they turn 20. In addition, most municipalities hold the activities during summer. In 1997, 72 per cent of the participants completed KUP. If the individual refuses to take part in the activities offered by the local municipality, he or she has no right to economic assistance. Even young people who lack motivation must take part in the activities offered.

The Development Guarantee

The local responsibility for unemployed youths was expanded from the KUP age-range between 18 and 20 when, in 1998, a municipal *development guarantee* was introduced for all young people between the age of 20 and 24. The development guarantee requires municipalities to provide a full-time activity that will activate and develop all those unemployed young people who have not found a job and are who are not enrolled in any other programme. The goal as defined in the framework of the development guarantee is that no person under the age of 25 should be unemployed more than 100 days without being provided with a suitable education, practical experience or a job-creation measure.

The development guarantee should be a full time programme for, at the most, 12 months. The Government reimburses the municipalities for the costs of the programmes including benefits for the participants. The rate of allowance in the development guarantee is dependent on previous connection to the Labour market.

Like the KUP, the development guarantee gives municipalities the opportunity to make demands on supplementary benefit recipients so that they work to support themselves. In this respect, the development guarantee together with the municipality youth programme are new types of labour market programmes. There is a compulsory element, which means that anyone who refuses to participate can lose their entitlement.

2.9.4 Target groups and general aims

Many young people go directly from the upper secondary school to the KUP and therefore lack experience in the labour market. Only 7.9 per cent have had regular full-time employment before they participate in KUP. The percentage of non-Scandinavian citizens and occupationally-impaired people is low as these groups are often included in longer training measures and thus do not apply to the employment centre as early as other young people do. Occupationally impaired young people are not enrolled in KUP as a first measure but instead they can receive special resources provided by the employment centre and the Employability Institute.

In January 1999, more than half of all long-term unemployed people between the age of 20 and 24 were enrolled within the Development Guarantee. However, the differences between various municipalities and between regions are quite large. Six out of ten young people in the programme are men, which is the same share as among all long-term unemployed youths. Most of the participants have 2 or 3-year upper secondary school education and only very

few have higher education. In January 1999, there were no differences in the education-level between young people participating in the development guarantee and the ones still long-term unemployed. Eight per cent of the participants were foreign citizens. Among the young people outside the development guarantee and remaining in unemployment, 10 per cent were foreign citizens.

The general aim with KUP is basically to give the municipalities the full responsibility for the occupation of their young people; including school-dropouts and unemployed. The Development Guarantee involves, besides the 100-days maximum unemployment rule, three other goals. The first is that 'unemployed people should be provided with meaningful and developmental activity on a full-time basis'.⁷ The idea is that active participation in on-the-job training and similar measures can counter the risk of 'passivity and permanent exclusion',⁸ which may be the consequence of long-term unemployment. Authorities can thereby co-ordinate payment of an allowance to young people with an activity.

The second goal is 'to develop local influence under the framework of the national Labour market policy',⁹ which can be read as giving municipal authorities the chance to influence and participate in the implementation of policy through different forms of labour market activity. As a result, municipalities have taken on a more active role in the last few years. Implementation of the programme is dependent in part on the co-operation between two important central institutions in Swedish society: the network of employment centres and municipal authorities.

The third goal is to support co-operation between municipalities and labour market authorities. This co-operation is a voluntary undertaking on the part of the municipality and is activated only by entering into an agreement whereby the municipality assumes the task of taking care of young people who are long-term unemployed. The programme is designed so that the municipality and employment centre, together with the unemployed individual, make a plan of action that will in the long run give the unemployed young person some connection to the labour market. This means that the two organisations come together and can exchange experience and knowledge. It is most common that the municipalities offer the youngsters pure practice or practice mixed with some kind of education.

⁷ AMS 1998.

⁸ AMS 1997.

⁹ Government bill 97/98:1, p. 43.

2.9.5. Sweden and the Luxembourg guidelines

With relatively low rates of unemployment and a developed welfare state, Sweden is considered to have largely implemented the Luxembourg guidelines. With a development guarantee which aims to ensure no one under the age of 25 remains unemployed for more than 100 days and a responsive, locally delivered, set of support measures, the Swedish system is designed to prevent social and economic exclusion among young people.

2.10 Concluding remarks

The countries discussed here range from those with relatively non-existent welfare systems to those with fully comprehensive systems. Some of the countries have extremely high rates of youth unemployment, while in others the majority of young people make fairly direct transitions from school to work. While all of the countries are committed to tackling long-term youth unemployment, the ways in which they do so are influenced by perceived demands of the economy. In some countries the types of programmes introduced place an emphasis on work experience or on the development of low level skills and competencies. In others, policies anticipate the future need for a highly educated labour force and use programmes as a means of developing a high skill equilibrium.

With a great variety of starting points, it is not surprising that some countries are a lot closer to implementing the Luxembourg guidelines than others. Only two of the countries studies here can be considered to have largely implemented the guidelines (Sweden and the UK) while one (Italy) is not likely to have implemented them by 2002. Clearly this unevenness leaves a lot of young people in vulnerable situations and in some circumstances leaves them with no access to basic support.

On a macro level, we suggest that the economic divisions that exist in Europe today are being reinforced through the range of initiatives being introduced. The future competitiveness and stability of Europe is dependent on an ability to operate in a knowledge-based world economy. Systems which prepare young people for lower skill positions effectively help perpetuate divisions. As such, the only way to create a level playing field is to aim to implement the most advanced set of measures (such as those operating in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands) in all of the member states.

Chapter 3

Evaluating Effective Delivery and Implementation

3.1 Introduction

This chapter critically evaluates the delivery, implementation and effectiveness of the policies and programmes designed to tackle unemployment amongst young people within the eight partner countries. Critical issues are highlighted in evaluative summaries of research outcomes supplied by each of the project research partners so as to make a preliminary identification of differences between countries and allow general comparisons to be made. It is hoped that these summaries will allow something of the thematic flavour of the research interviews which were conducted in each country to be brought to the fore. Thus where possible, the evaluative summaries will include carefully chosen excerpts of qualitative data which help give added vitality to the key points that are made. After the research summaries are reproduced, and issues of concern regarding the effective delivery and implementation of the policies and programmes under consideration are identified, a more generic concluding discussion is provided to compare and contrast these issues across the eight countries.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that precise cross-national evaluative comparisons in relation to issues of delivery, implementation or effectiveness are extremely difficult to make. As was illustrated in the last chapter, the policies and programmes under consideration vary considerably in terms of general aims, target groups and modes of delivery. Moreover there are significant differences in the relationship between the policies and programmes of each country to the Luxembourg Guidelines. Such variance exists due to a combination of differing labour market situations (which mean, for example, that the problems which the policies and programmes are designed to tackle diverge markedly in terms of depth and scale), and the separate development of traditions of both welfare and labour market policy making (which mean, for example, that the specific content of the policies and programmes differ markedly from one another). Despite these problems, we are able to identify a number of common themes.

Critical engagement with issues related to the delivery, implementation and effectiveness of the policies and programmes under consideration have to be appreciated first by identifying the issues of concern in each country and

engaging with those issues in a context specific manner. Hence the structure of this chapter which utilises evaluative research summaries identifying relevant issues supplied by country specific researchers. This chapter does not however purport to provide comprehensive coverage of issues related to policy and programme delivery, implementation and effectiveness – these are provided in Part Two of the report. Rather what it does do is to illustrate the range of both similarity and difference in areas of key concern regarding these areas in the policies and programmes designed to tackle youth unemployment in the eight partner countries. The evaluative research summaries reproduced below, and the supporting interview extracts which are included, provide a ‘snapshot’ of the views of a wide variety of administrators, practitioners and policy makers who are involved at different levels of design and delivery in labour market programmes for the young unemployed across Europe.

3.2 United Kingdom: Critical Evaluation of the New Deal for Young People

3.2.1 The Newness of New Deal

The research interviews reveal that New Deal for Young People (NDYP) is clearly viewed by those involved in both its design and delivery as constituting a decisive break with employment and training programmes of the past. Respondents point to the fact that this break is derived from two key sources: first of all, a shift away from mass, inflexible and impersonal programmes which took no account for the needs and desires of the individual, to a qualitative client centred approach where the perceived needs and interests of the individual play a key role in determining the types of counselling, training and employment experience which are made available. Here the intensive interviewing and counselling associated with the initial Gateway period (up to four months) is deemed crucial, as is the role of Personal Advisors whose relationship with clients is one of continuity throughout. The second source of New Deal’s distinctiveness derives from its focus upon job outcomes as a means of actively making benefits work to directly facilitate entry or re-entry into the labour market. Respondents each indicated in one way or another that the Gateway, the role of intensive counselling undertaken by Advisors, and the focus upon job outcomes in New Deal are positive advances from the policies and programmes of previous Governments.

3.2.2 Employability: a Measure of Success or Failure ?

A central aim of the NDYP is to increase or in some cases to create employability amongst unemployed clients through processes of counselling and advising in the Gateway, and through the training or work experience offered by the options. Employability is however a term which has multiple connotations and is therefore very difficult to define in a precise manner. This

problem of definition is clearly present throughout responses given to the question of employability in interviews where respondents tended to stress either a combination of 'hard skills' and 'soft skills' or 'soft skills' alone - a difference in emphasis which was made repeatedly by respondents in their definitions of employability. It is interesting to note that those working at the level of design tended to emphasise a 'hard and soft' skills combination while those working at the level of delivery tended to underscore the importance of soft skills. Nothing concrete should be inferred from this difference as the sample is not large enough to be representative but it may indicate something of the difficulties faced by those working at the 'sharp end' of New Deal delivery.

One way out of the problem of definition might be to take the Government's target of an NVQ Level 2 qualification for all New Deal clients as a benchmark measurement of employability. This point was put to respondents but their views on the merits of this qualification were very mixed with some arguing that it is a qualification that is not really respected by employers and that a Level 3 qualification should be aim for instead (eg, this is the TUC's recommendation), and others arguing that it does have value as a minimum target of attainment for participants and that it is a qualification which does suit the entry levels of most jobs (Senior Civil Servant, Scotland). However, the fact that NVQ Level 2 like any other qualification does not guarantee employment means that it cannot be used as the decisive criteria for measuring employability. With the definition of employability being so problematic it would seem then that its definition and measurement in relation to New Deal can only be resolved using the somewhat trite formula of 'the ability to obtain and retain employment' (Senior Civil Servant, Scotland). In the quantitative area of obtaining employment NDYP would appear to be succeeding as the Labour Government's target of lifting 250,000 young people out of unemployment in the lifetime of its first parliament (1997-2001) was according to official statistics surpassed in late 2000.

3.2.3 Evaluating Retention and Sustainability

In the retention side of the employability equation the record of New Deal is much more mixed with approximately a quarter of those attaining employment through the programme losing their jobs within thirteen weeks and returning to the unemployment register (JRF Findings: July 2000). One way of looking at this problem of the 'revolving door' – which is intrinsically linked to that of sustainability, is to see it as an unavoidable feature of the youth labour market:

The youth labour market is fairly dynamic anyway. You expect people to move in and out of employment. The New Deal isn't necessarily about

getting people into one job that they will keep for the rest of their lives. What it is about is training them and equipping them for a lifetime which is predominantly in work... What we are doing with the revolving door is a feature of labour markets in general and the fact that this is young people we are talking about

(Senior Policy Maker, Structural Unemployment, DfEE, Sheffield)

Another way of looking at the problem of retention is to recognise that the nature of the client group has begun to change as the NDYP has progressively made an impact:

I would say that in the original bunch of clients that came through in the first 12 to 18 months, it was successful in that the numbers of 18 to 24 years olds that were claiming JSA (Job Seekers Allowance) and registered as unemployed dropped dramatically... I think now though we are dealing with a different client group. In the beginning we had clients of whom a number of them were job ready and just needed a little bit of advice and a push towards employment. We are now dealing with clients who have significant problems and which are much more apparent

(NDYP & JVP Co-ordinator, Calderdale & Kirklees)

The research interviews indicate that as NDYP has steadily made an impact, the employability levels of the unemployed client group dealt with by the Employment Service has gradually decreased. Thus those job ready clients who would have succeeded had New Deal not been in place have generally found employment quite quickly after entering the Gateway, while those in need of a modicum of guidance and training have entered Options after the Gateway and have also now begun to find employment. However, those considered in most need of employability skills have come increasingly to the fore through either the revolving door of the labour market or the application of sanctions:

Well the register has got so small, I mean its at its lowest for about 20 years...In a register now of about a million they are far more noticeable and they are more difficult to move on... It is the same group of people in a smaller pod if you want... it is the same faces and names that begin to appear... they're the ones that are coming back for a second or third time – I mean I've got a lot of second time rounders. They are very complicated cases because, well, of what a lot of them are doing – obviously money isn't a problem because we would go through the sanction regime and they would get they're money stopped but they just

disappear for a couple of weeks and then once the sanction has been served they re-register again – I don't know whether its drugs or what...
(*New Deal Advisor, Glasgow*)

While a tiny minority of the individuals in this 'difficult' client group may be involved in the types of activity inferred in the above interview extract, it is also important to note that in the main this client group is made up of individuals from the most disadvantaged working class backgrounds. This client group has grown proportionately as New Deal has progressed and the way in which it is engaged with over the next few years will prove to be one of the major distinguishing marks of New Deal's success or failure:

There is a bottom percentage that I used to think was around 20% - that maybe was true at the start of New Deal but I think that percentage is now getting bigger because you are left with the difficult group... what you are left with is people who are going to have to come back for New Deal Two. It hasn't failed them but it hasn't got them to the level of job readiness that you would like them to be at. But you live in the real world, everybody ain't going to go through this process and within the first year and New Deal resolved everything for them – all I'm saying is that it is probably greater now than 20% at the bottom of the whole cake, and something different needs to be done for them'
(*ES District Manager, Glasgow*)

The need for 'something different' in dealing with the most disadvantaged clients is recognised by those working at the level of design improvement – the innovations that are needed in this area will be the focus of New Deal's development strategy over the next few years:

The Task Force thinks that the design works well for people who are nearly there but those who have more problems will not be helped – the nature, intensity and length of the assistance is not sufficient... I can see this being at the heart of the debate nationally with the UK Task Force and within government about how the New Deal has developed
(*Senior Civil Servant, Welfare to Work Planning Group (Scotland)*)

One key innovation that was suggested by a number of those respondents actively working with New Deal clients would be to level out the minimum wage structure and therefore make job attainment and retention a more attractive proposition. The vast majority of jobs obtained through New Deal are of the minimum wage variety. However the minimum wage currently operates

in a two tier structure with those aged between 18 and 22 paid at a significantly lower rate than their older counterparts and a levelling of this difference would be a move in a progressive direction - as one respondent said of young people in relation to the minimum wage - 'they just see ageism in reverse' (New Deal Advisor, Glasgow). The minimum wage was a key innovation of the Labour Government's labour market reform package in its first term of office – however both trade unions and poverty action groups view it as being set at a level so low that it makes little difference to the quality of low paid workers lives – in fact it would require to be almost doubled to raise wages to the European 'decency' threshold.

3.2.4 Assessing New Deal Delivery: the Gateway

The initial Gateway period of intensive guidance, advice and counselling which new entrants to New Deal must undertake for up to four months is generally considered by the interview respondents to be the most important aspect of the entire programme. This is because it is during this stage that clients needs are assessed, their wants and desires listened to closely and a level of compliance with the programme facilitated through processes designed to make the individual client recognise that his or her interests are being served. Within the Gateway the assignment of a Personal Advisor and the manner in which that Advisor works on a one to one basis with the client throughout the initial phase is viewed as being of paramount importance. This is signalled by the fact that New Deal Advisors are selected only from the ranks of experienced Employment Service Advisors and are given specialist training for their role.

The Advisor's role ranges from guidance and advice on career prospects and preferences, identification of vacancies or training needs, contacting potential employers and training/educational agencies, capacity building and reviewing progress. Much though or even 'the majority' (New Deal Advisor, Glasgow) of the Advisor's role can be described as counselling and Advisors are required to take an NVQ Level 3 qualification in counselling as part of their specialist training. The Advisors who were interviewed indicated that they viewed their approach to counselling as being of the holistic variety because it is often the case that almost all aspects of their clients' lifestyles require attention if employability is to be attained. This is a process that takes time and a process where the feelings of empathy and rapport that come from building up a one to one confidential relationship with clients is essential.

Amongst interview respondents the Gateway is generally viewed as a key innovation in delivering a programme which it is hoped will successfully eradicate long term unemployment amongst young people. However a number

of respondents made the point that as the programme has progressed the characteristics of the main client group has changed and it may be necessary to increase the time spent in the Gateway as this group requires more of the intensive personalised attention and counselling than the majority group of the first couple of years – at present the Gateway is inflexible in this manner with a cut-off point of four months no matter what the needs of the individual client. Moreover respondents working at the delivery end of the Gateway indicated that ever increasing bureaucracy and red-tape contributed to inflexibility, while large increases in human resources were also needed in order to build upon the successes achieved so far.

3.2.5 Assessing New Deal Delivery: the Options

If a young client has not found employment during the four months of the Gateway then he or she is required to take up one of the New Deal's four options – these range from six months subsidised employment, six months of work experience on 'benefits plus' in the voluntary sector (VS) or on the Environmental Task Force (ETF), and twelve months access to full-time education and training leading to an NVQ Level 2 qualification. The newest of these options in the UK context is that of subsidised employment whereby an employer receives £60 per week in return for taking on a New Deal client. This option has however not been as successful as first envisaged as employers have been reluctant to participate despite the wage subsidy. Interview respondents who were working at the delivery side of New Deal suggested that in their experience the wage subsidy had only a limited appeal which did not extend beyond small and medium sized enterprises and even in this sector the subsidy was not a major factor in recruitment. Answers given by New Deal Advisors and Managers make it clear that employers would rather recruit individuals who possess the requisite employability skills of both hard and soft types for the job to be done regardless of subsidy. This is clearly because of the costs in time and money of inculcating those skills in individuals – moreover this is a facet of labour supply which business does not really deem to be its responsibility:

We need clients brought to standard from the start – it means having the right skills to work in a business environment - it is at the Gateway that this should happen... the idea that business will be sympathetic to people who don't meet their needs is a myth

(Head of External Relations, Major Employer (Scotland))

This attitude to training is confirmed by a TUC's New Deal Policy Officer who made the point that in his experience 'employers often object to the fact that they have to do any training at all'.

While the full-time education and training option has proven to be a relative success in terms of both its wide ranging provision and high levels of uptake, the voluntary sector and ETF options with benefits plus have had difficulties in attracting clients. In the interviews it is indicated that a key reason for this is because clients tend not to associate these options with training for the world of real paid employment. In one sense the New Deal clients are simply reflecting the fact that in our society the types of work associated with the voluntary sector tend to be held in low esteem due to the valorisation of paid employment; while the connotations associated the Environmental Task Force are of the types of government training scheme of the past and the carrying out of jobs which are of the least skilled variety. In approaching clients to take part in the voluntary sector/ETF options (which in practice often appear to be conflated as one singular option) Advisors would appear to have to tread quite warily:

It is probably correct to say that in our experience when you mention environmental task force and voluntary sector to clients they are like ‘voluntary sector? I don’t want to work in a voluntary job’ – sometimes it is a bit of a misnomer though so I just tell them to look at the option – in Glasgow like you can have call centre training through it. Call centre training could also be through FTE or through ETF as well... I always say to clients to keep focussed on a job, on the job title and the skills not on the option.... There is a lot of crossover... at the moment there is an ETF one that started his week for classroom assistants, how do they justify that? So I don’t concentrate too much on whether its environmental or voluntary or FTE, I try to make sure that the client’s focus is on ‘what’s the job title? what’s the course? what skills is the course going to equip you with’, and ultimately that’s what employers are looking for regardless of them being tarred with ETF or VSO

(New Deal Advisor, Glasgow)

Regarding both the VS and ETF options, interview respondents all agreed that these options were those where the clients who are considered to be most ‘difficult’ are placed after their participation in the Gateway. This is because those with the highest levels of employability will find employment during the initial counselling/guidance phase and those who don’t find employment during the Gateway but who possess a modicum of employability skills will tend to be placed in full-time education and training where those skills are enhanced. Those however who do not fit either category must however ‘do something’ and as there is no fifth option that something is invariably supplied by the VS and ETF options: ‘the more successful you are in the Gateway the harder to help

those clients are, who move into options – and VS and EFF do tend to get those harder to help clients’ (Action for Employment, JVP, Grimsby).

3.2.6 Compulsion and the Benefits Regime

NDYP operates with the strictest benefits regime and the toughest sanctions for those who break it that this country has yet experienced. Compulsion is integral to NDYP’s operation because unemployed clients are made aware from their first meeting with their Advisor that compliance is mandatory and that should they fail to co-operate then benefit sanctions will apply. When the compulsory aspects of New Deal were first made public there was much criticism and it came not only from traditional sources like the trades unions or those on the Left but also from voluntary organisations and employers. Much of the public controversy has died down now but as was found in conducting the interviews it is an issue that still elicit strong views when prompted. The responses of interview respondents were very mixed in relation to the question of whether or not compulsion works or is indeed necessary. Those working at the level of design naturally defended it as both necessary to achieve New Deal’s aims and as morally just:

It is not flogging people into work but it is certainly saying to young people that you are young and unless you have a serious disability or such extreme problems that you can’t work it is not appropriate for the state to support you

(Senior Policy Maker, New Deal Task Force (UK))

At the delivery end of New Deal views differed markedly with some of the respondents expressing the argument that compulsion is necessary because of the minority who refuse all approaches for help or who are simply content to ‘play the system’. Other respondents however viewed compulsion as being unhelpful or even detrimental to their role as Advisors because it undermines the trust that is essential to the development of the Advisor/client relationship while also removing any enthusiasm on the part of clients when they are placed in employment or training:

I think they are unhelpful... What happens is the provider, the employer or whoever, has got an uphill struggle before they have even started. The thing that really gets me though is that some of these young people have been through teachers and a lot of them never got to the end of school, many of them have been through social workers, they have been through probation officers, magistrates courts processes, prison officers, you name it they’ve had it – all they have ever had all their lives is sanctions

and authority and it hasn't worked yet in terms of changing their attitudes or behaviour !

(New Deal Manager, Knowsley)

It interesting to note that a number of respondents pointed out that in relation to compulsion there is a distinctive commercial or profit making aspect to the way in which NDYP guarantees the participation of unemployed clients in training programmes provided by the various providers in the local partnerships. Over the next few years the question of compulsion will become a focus of debate once again because as the client group gets smaller in size (assuming that there is not a recession) those who are more likely not to comply are inevitably going to become more prominent and hence sanctions will come to be used more often. To date though only a very small percentage of cases have referred for sanctions and even then only half are upheld.

3.2.7 Overall Assessment of Effectiveness

Politicians and policy makers claim that New Deal has been an unmitigated success because it has surpassed its initial target of lifting 250,000 young people out of long term (six months or more) unemployment within the lifetime of the present government's first parliament. Plaudits for such success must however be qualified because it is surely a serious deficiency in the area of retention and sustainability that over a quarter of all young people passing through New Deal quickly find themselves returning to the unemployment register. Moreover the quantitative success of New Deal should also be questioned on the grounds that due to sustained economic growth after the recession of the early 1990s, demand for labour is currently at its highest since the 1960s and parts of the UK such as the south-east have reached a position of virtually full employment – hence it is arguable that large numbers of the young unemployed would have found employment had New Deal not been in existence. Should there be a recession it is then that New Deal's narrow supply side orientation will severely tested.

Aside from qualitative problems associated with the individual options (low quality qualifications, unpopularity of VS and ETF options, employers unwillingness to engage in training, etc) it was noted by a number of the respondents who operate at the levels of both design and delivery, that in terms of the options as a whole there is a problem with the way in which the training on offer does not always fit the needs of local labour markets and hence individuals may receive training in skills for which there is not necessarily a great demand. The ability to assert skills in the form of attaining employment is something which depends entirely on the structure of the local labour market.

While the matching of training to the needs of employers is currently a problematic aspect of NDYP's design and delivery there are moves afoot amongst policy makers to make the programme more flexible and hence more responsive, to the demands of local labour markets (Senior Policy Maker, New Deal Task Force (UK)). A question though that seems to remain unanswered is what is to be done when there is very little local demand for any type of skill; ie, those areas of the country where there are particularly high concentrations of unemployment and very little business or industry? Some form of demand creation would appear to be necessary as the market alone is clearly unable to solve this problem which is a product of the uneven geography of unemployment. As New Deal progresses it is young people living in areas which are invariably marked by multiple forms of deprivation who are increasingly coming make up the largest proportion of the programme's clientele. It is how New Deal engages with these young people in this Parliament which will be the defining feature of its ultimate success or failure. Unfortunately for this group, any form of interventionism is currently anathema to policy makers who appear ideologically bound to free market solutions.

3.3 Denmark: Critical Evaluation of the Policy Focus on 'the Remainder Group'

With unemployment rates for the young population currently standing at frictional levels, Danish policy is no longer primarily concerned with the struggle against youth unemployment. The introduction of new 'workfare' style legislation in 1993 was successful in mobilising large groups of the young unemployed into education and jobs by providing new work experience and educational opportunities, and, some argue through the introduction of benefit sanctions. Today, policy is concerned with securing a good educational level for the most vulnerable young people who can be described as belonging to 'the remainder group'. This group consists of between 15 and 18 percent of young people in any given year and is characterised by unstable jobs and dropping out of educational measures. Those in this grouping are not necessarily unemployed, but constantly move in and out of jobs and educational measures. The policy objective for this group is to ensure a level of completed secondary education which qualifies individuals for the demands of an ever changing labour market.

3.2.1 Assessments of Programmes aimed at 'the Remainder Group'

The basic tools for mobilising this last group are generally in place. Everywhere, individual counselling and individualised planning are held to be the right solution for the present problem. But this is also where the agreement stops as there are a number of differences in how 'the remainder group' is

perceived in the different levels of Danish policies and programmes. This last group of so called ‘difficult’ young people is different from the large proportion of the young unemployed group of the early to mid-1990s – during that period there were many young people who just needed a little push, and who were moved on quite easily. The young unemployed of the present period are more difficult to move on because their problems are more multifaceted than those who have gone through compulsory programmes of the past.

In the Ministry of Labour, a Head of Office is hesitant to point to a general characteristic of ‘the remainder group’ today:

There are just as many reasons (for being part of ‘the remainder group’) as they are young people – the only thing they have in common is not having followed through on a proper youth education. It is not an issue of weak or strong students anymore, there are many individual reasons for drop-outs. Today, the effort should be planned according to the many different forms of intelligence

A key part of the policy effort that tries to embrace and operationalise this perspective, is the Free Youth Education programme. Here, the individual is the highest priority and in conjunction with advisors creates an individual educational plan which is aimed at giving these young people the exact competencies needed for a further educational career – mostly in the creative field. In the Ministry of Education’s office of Vocational Education, the official for Free Youth Education and Production Schools made the claim that this holds no threat to the future employability of the young people involved:

I believe that the labour market of the future will be demand the young people who are creative and independent and who think a bit differently. I very much believe that this will be the type of qualification which the future demands

When looking at the planning level (local authorities and co-ordinating secretariats), a different picture of ‘the remainder group’ emerges. In Herlev Municipality, it was pointed out in interviews that there is still a basic problem with motivating the young people – especially when the new ‘strict’ legislation does not include all, and therefore loopholes can be found. The same story is told in the other side of the country in Aarhus Municipality but from a slightly different angle. In interviews it was stated that the larger part of ‘the remainder group’ consists of youth with other ethnic backgrounds than Danish – and that this group may need new ways of motivating and activating, since cultural and

academic disadvantage is preventing this group from succeeding in the Danish policy measures. In Copenhagen, the picture is the same as is illustrated in the following extract from an interview with the Head of the Secretariat of Activation, who criticises the Danish effort for its one-sidedness when it comes to education: ‘It is a matter of status when the focus is put on the educational level’. This official went on to argue that the group of young people with other ethnic backgrounds are especially difficult to motivate into education, because they’d rather have a job. Also they often have very poor academic abilities and very bad experiences from compulsory education: ‘It is obvious’ he says, (pointing to some media-stories of delinquent youth with other ethnic backgrounds) ‘that we give up on this group’. This attitude is also to an extent reflected in the objectives of the projects that the Secretariat of Activation initiates. Here, the desired goal of securing employment is primary and the educational goal is set according to this.

During an interview in the Employment Office in Herlev, the special Youth Consultant, tries to pinpoint ‘the remainder group’. As in the Municipality, a basic issue of motivation is brought up. She points to how different ‘the remainder group’ is today, compared with the group of 1995. She divides the group into two parties of equal size: young people of other ethnic backgrounds and ‘ordinary’ Danes with motivational problems. She finds it ‘degrading’ how the compulsory schools handle young people with other ethnic backgrounds. When they arrive at the Employment Office, many of them need basic training in the Danish language after nine years of schooling – it therefore feels like starting all over again when trying to help this group. The group of ‘ordinary Danes’ are, according to her, characterised by having very unrealistic expectations to life in general as well as to their own abilities.

Even though everyone agrees that ‘the remainder group’ today is smaller than it was in 1995, there are also many who claim that ‘the remainder group’ today is much harder to mobilise because of the complicated problems this group possesses. Indeed, in a few places, such as in Herlev Municipality, there is a tendency towards a slight increase in this group – as an Official said in an interview:

Our most important task is to ensure that this group doesn’t increase, but there are signs of it doing just that. We see an increase in this group. It probably has to do with marginalisation, this development makes it more difficult to participate and it will probably call for a different kind of effort.

In the local Free Youth Education office in Odense, the idea of ‘the remainder group’ as being strongly ‘individualised’ is backed up. Here though a counsellor is very satisfied with the detachment from labour market demands and the strong fulfilment of the individual dreams. In a new evaluation of the Free Youth Education programme, it is criticised for not reaching its intended target group – ie, ‘the remainder group’. Instead, the students strongly resemble ordinary students in traditional secondary education. The counsellor supports the idea of the Danish effort being not as all-embracing as is programmatically intended:

In FYE all you have to do is to fill out some forms and show up for an orientating meeting, so if you’re completely lost you cannot really use this place for anything. It is a contradiction in terms that if you cannot take care of yourself and define what you want that you can compile an individual plan of action - its obvious.

Here no one discusses the issue of young people with other ethnic backgrounds. Only how the youngsters ‘rise to the occasion’ when they are offered their dream education. They are characterised as being tired of school, confused or lacking motivation - all the things that Free Youth Education is supposed to ‘fix’. In an interviews conducted with a representative of the UJF, a counsellor characterises ‘the remainder group’ as the same youngsters that the local authorities described. He also points out that their ‘clients’ are very difficult because of cultural background as disadvantages such as illiteracy, social background, physical or mental disabilities and substance abuse. The UJF is also meant to be ‘the final stop’ – a forced vocational education if the period of unemployment is too long.

3.3.2 Overall Assessment of Policies Targeted at ‘the Remainder Group’

As we have tried to show, ‘the remainder group’ apparently consists of two very different groups of youngsters depending upon whom is asked. The FYE operates under the Ministry of Education and shares one definition, while local authorities and the UJF, which is initiated by the Ministry of Labour, tells a different story. The question is if the different parts of the policy effort are actually talking about the same group of youngsters – or whether ‘the remainder group’ is defined according to a given Ministry. It is obvious that it is a more privileged and resourceful ‘remainder group’ seen in the FYE – while the UJF is handling the ‘worst cases’. But the UJF target group is not the top priority of the Danish ‘Education for All’ ideology – this entire part of ‘the remainder group’ is not targeted at all in the colourful brochures from the Ministry of Education – young people with other ethnic backgrounds are simply not

mentioned. As the counsellor at the UJF commented: 'We don't have secondary graduates in our system (at the UJF in Hillerød), they've all gone to Copenhagen, to attend the 'fancy' measures'.

3.4 France: Critical Evaluation of TRACE, NSNE and Qualification Adaptation Programmes

Interpretations of the main aspects of the current policies and programmes designed to tackle youth unemployment vary considerably amongst interviewed respondents. One of the more controversial respondents was Bernard Simonin (Centre of Studies on Employment) who argues that the programmes are based on a twofold paradox. First, nobody currently knows exactly which public authority is actually responsible for the struggle against youth unemployment. The greatest confusion exists between the decentralisation of professional training (due to the attempt to involve social partners in this policy) and the latest programmes that represent the involvement of the state in this issue. Not only does the state bypass the regional level to implement its policies, but it considers that municipalities, by means of 'Missions locales', are the most appropriate partners to deal with the question of the most excluded young people. Secondly Simonin points to the question of the categories of young people targeted by the various programmes – this can be considered as 'broad artistry'. If they had been organised in a rational manner the distribution of the categories of young people between the various programmes could have been the following:

- the TRACE programme for young people without qualification;
- the regional programmes and the professional training for young people of levels V and IV;
- the NSNE programme for qualified young people, essentially former students finding it difficult to get a first job.

The reality is however far more complicated. A certain shift can be highlighted which has taken place in favour of the most qualified young people who, feeling the effects of economic downturn, were obliged to go through the integration training programmes to get their first job. This phenomenon is not only true for regional programmes but also for professional training in general. Even in the framework of the TRACE programme, qualified young people can be found who encounter difficulties entering the job market because of various social problems. These need to be assisted on their route to employment.

According to Florence Lefresne (Institute of Economic and Social Research), another way of considering the effectiveness of current programmes is to

analyse their degree of proximity with the labour market. Qualification and adaptation contracts offer the best results in terms of access to employment at the end of the training activity. By 'best results' she means both the stabilisation of employment and the links between qualification and type of job. However, even in these best result cases, a difference exists between the various practices. In the food-retailing sector for example, young trainees tend to be managed as cheap labour, whereas in the food processing industry, adaptation contracts are used more systematically and we can identify a better adjustment between training and internal needs. Here again, the problem is the same: young people who benefit from these contracts tend to be the better qualified ones. This element introduces two pernicious effects: firstly, the exclusion of the low-qualified young people who should be the targeted population of labour market policies; and secondly, the overall disqualification by the system as long as qualification contracts are seen as a prerequisite for accessing the job market.

3.4.1 Assessments of Policies and Programmes

Current assessments of the TRACE programme are not entirely positive. It appears that many 'Missions locales' have found difficulties in placing young people in the framework of the TRACE programme. Numerous early departures have also been noted. Two types of obstacle are evident. On the one hand, for the more employable young people, existing openings in the labour market appear to be more attractive than the TRACE programme. Consequently they prefer to access work, even if it is in a rather precarious framework. On the other hand, for the less employable, the fact of entering an eighteen-month long programme presents no guarantee of gaining a professional training qualification. The success or failure of the programme is also strongly linked to the relationship in the local partnership between the 'Missions locales' and the 'Conseils régionaux'. In many cases, the latter tend to discredit the former as a place essentially marked by social work which is too far from the labour market to be efficient.

In relation to the qualification and adaptation contracts there is complete integration into the French institutional context. Their impact has no longer to be proved and they will certainly be consolidated in the future. The question that remains though is which groups of young people are to be involved in these contracts? The NSNE programme is designed to produce a wide range of effects (in particular, within the associative and educational sectors). The NSNE programme has already allowed a reorganisation of the way in which public services are offered:

From the start, the programme's objectives have included the will to contribute to a renewal of public policy. Implementing 'a new type of public policy' was one of the mottoes of the first draft of the instructions to the préfets. (...) Far from only aiming at matching a supposedly well known supply and demand of jobs resulting from the market's invisible hand, at the core of the programme lies the assumption that complex/professional services (engineering new jobs' contents, new qualifications) need to be built under decisive PES prerogatives in co-operation with a wide array of social actors : private firms, non-profit organisations, local authorities, training and education agencies, etc. (Barbier and Simonnin, 1999).

3.4.2 Are the Policies Youth Specific?

For Mr Tulet (Interministerial Department of Integration for Socially Excluded Young People), these policies constitute, above all, employment policies. The debate about the nature of these policies (youth or employment) has reached the network of 'Missions locales'. At the beginning, these policies were implemented to reduce the difficulties of young people rather than to influence the demand for employment. During the period that they have been in operation all the characteristics of youth policies have been encountered. This is not necessary contradictory. A youth policy is not necessarily specific. Mr Tulet claims to be committed to helping the most excluded young people in order to facilitate their social integration. The State and the network of 'Missions locales' have to play the supporting role in this process. For eighteen years, the employment situation was difficult and had consequences for health, leisure, citizenship, etc; however over a long period the representation of work has changed profoundly – at last the reality of multiple and non linear processes of transition has been accepted.

3.4.3 Changes in Counselling Models

According to Bernard Simonnin, three different forms of change should be highlighted:

First: the most fundamental change revolves around the respective roles of schooling and adult continuing education. The idea has finally been accepted that for a large number of the school leavers, professional training should be developed. Schooling now directly shapes the employability of young people.

Second: change has been introduced by the launching of the NSNE programme. This implementation constitutes a reassertion of the 1970s idea of the possibility of effectively developing a provision of services. Nevertheless, a problem is emerging around this programme insofar as this measure is used as a pre-market or a pre-recruitment process. In fact, the spirit of the program has tended to develop in an ambitious reconfiguration of the space between State and market.

Third, change has been introduced by the idea of new transition routes. This idea was really innovative and has allowed France to be seen as a pioneer within the European context. However, in the context of economic recovery, the future of the idea appears very uncertain.

3.4.4 Overall Assessment of Programmes

As most of the interviewees were unable to link employment policies and social policies, a hypothesis could be put forward to explain this difficulty: in France the connection between the two fields tends to be obscure because integration through training belongs in the first and primary instance to employment policies. Whereas the state, acting alone, is able to implement employment policies (insofar as social partners are quasi-absent from the system), it appears much more difficult to reform social policy toward young people. In this field, the State has to bargain with family associations which are commonly opposed to the regulation of unemployed young people or, more generally, of the autonomy of young people. For these associations, a young person, who has left school and who has no long-term job, is not considered a young adult but an older child who has to be cared for by his or her family. The terms of the current French debate are as follows: for as long as public authorities are to deal with unemployed and/or excluded young people, do they have to be developed in directions which sustain a logic of autonomy of the latter or do they have to help their family to cope with the burden that an older child implies? As previously suggested, the programmes designed to tackle youth unemployment vary considerably. Thus, we can formulate the hypothesis that they are based on quite different visions of youth. These differences have increased over the last two years insofar as the economic recovery has had a strong influence on social change and on the representations of youth. Over this period, youth has appeared more and more as a social and employment resource.

3.5 Germany: Critical Evaluation of Reforms of the Dual System and the Immediate Action Programme

As described in chapter 2 the main objectives of German policies against youth unemployment are the adaptation of the dual system of apprenticeship training and increasing the supply of schemes for unemployed young people categorised as 'disadvantaged'.

3.5.1 Effectiveness of Dual System Reforms

Being the main pathway to regular employment, the adaptation of the dual system is the most important policy measure, at least in a long-term perspective. As regards the quantitative dimension, the decline of apprenticeship places has been stopped and partly reversed which politicians have publicly described as

the re-vitalisation of German corporatism in the so-called 'Buendnis fuer Arbeit' (Accordance for Work). However, this only accounts for Western Germany because the East remains dependant on state subsidies and non-company-based training which has been further increased in the Immediate Action Programme. In some cases this has led to an increase of training-labour market mismatches as training providers have simply increased their facilities regardless of labour market structures.

Employment services in Eastern Germany have to cope with a high percentage of unemployed young people holding apprenticeship qualifications. Due to the lack of policies regarding sustainable economic development, the Employment Services tend to view the only solution as being the promotion of young people's mobility to Western Germany. As regards the qualitative perspective, it is not yet clear to what extent the increasing numbers in newly created training professions (mainly IT) are due to a replacement of older apprenticeship places. However, first data shows that the groups suffering most from the decline in apprenticeship places - young people with low school qualifications, migrant youth and young women - are represented even less in the new apprenticeships than in those existing hitherto.

In the interviews, social workers dealing with young people who have failed in entering regular training make the critical point that sticking to the standardised form of dual training excludes young people who are still uncertain about their life plans and occupational aspirations or those with learning difficulties. According to these social workers a more modularised system allowing for the accumulation of different singular elements of education and training and not demanding the devotion of oneself to a life-time decision might be appropriate for those with less smooth transitions, as well as for young people who increasingly prefer step-by-step transitions in order to remain flexible and to reconcile different aspects of their lives. This might reduce the high rates of dropping out and the respective effects of vulnerability. However, most policy makers and institution representatives reject this solution as being 'too philosophical' and continue to champion the appropriateness of the current standardised form of dual training and the vocational concept of work in general.

3.5.2 Effectiveness of Schemes for the Disadvantaged

As the supply of training facilities in the dual system (and the few school-based training courses) is insufficient to cater for far the number of applicants, and as routes outside the system of regular training are not recognised but considered as disadvantageous by both employers and state institutions, the "parallel

system" (Braun 2000) of 'vocational youth assistance' or 'social youth work' remains of high importance. The major part of the 'Immediate Action Programme' implemented in 1998 has been aiming at increasing pre-vocational measures and schemes aimed at improving labour market skills - both however without improving formal qualifications. With regard to the enormous increase of youth unemployment in the 1990s the quantitative objective of reaching a large numbers of young people (100,000) was dominant during the implementation process: 'It was all about having this 'road-sweeping'-effect as quickly as possible', as a Regional Expert put it in an interview. Complimenting this perspective, a Local Employment Service Officer described his function '... to stop the cause of 'unemployment' as quickly and efficiently as possible'.

After two years, national representatives were celebrating the fact that in this time more than 200,000 young people took part in measures of the programme, and hailed them as a 'vote by feet'. Local experts, although appreciating the political gesture in favour of young people and the increase of funds enabling them to do 'anything' they wanted were, however, more differentiated and sceptical in their views. In an interview, a Local Employment Service Officer referred to the programme as 'occupational therapy' (because it was unable to change the lack of jobs in the East) and social workers from smaller organisations spoke about the difficulties of 'headhunting' young people for their measures. They also complained about the competition of large scale training and schemes provided by organisations which simply extended their facilities without developing them qualitatively. Programme evaluators confirm that particularly courses aimed at young people's re-orientation have often been abused by providers to 'cream off' those participants fitting into their pre-vocational or training schemes rather than providing un-prejudiced information and orientation processes. Furthermore criticisms were aired concerning an increasingly repressive climate induced by the programme. Due to its size and wide variety of measures, the programme has been allowed to 'flush' all young unemployed people through the Employment Service and thus to categorise the so called 'deserving' from the 'undeserving', those to be supported and those to be 'punished' (by cutting benefits or rejecting applications for further support).

3.6 Italy: Critical Evaluation of Comprehensive Education & Employment Reforms

3.6.1 Employment System Reform

In chapter 2 it was noted that new and effective measures to combat youth unemployment in Italy were dependent on various reforms of the employment system. The importance of these reforms were highlighted in the interviews. At national and regional level, the Minister and one member of the Regional

Council drew particular attention to the importance of both decentralisation and the privatisation of Employment Services:

First of all, Public Employment Office reform brought the public monopoly to an end. This reform, and the decentralisation of power to regions and provinces, defines a system that emphasises territorial differences inside the labour market. At the same time, thanks to different functions such as SIL (Labour Information System), it tries to answer new processes influencing the labour market, such as globalisation. Together with the two aforementioned points, the reforms define a new era in the Employment services by use of policies of prevention aiming to hasten peoples entrance into the labour market and time of transition between one job and another. The main aims of the reforms are: a better integration between labour markets, training and the educational system.

Emila Romagna Regional Council for Vocational Training

There are at least three key aspects...Firstly: for the first time we are going out from a monopoly of the Public Employment Office towards a mixed employment service to improve the supply...Secondly: we can talk about an active labour policy without separating training from the Employment service...Thirdly: labour markets, training and the educational system are now linked one another.

Trade Union Representative Emilia Romagna

The trade union representative does however point to some aspects of reform that interfere with increasing employability for all the population:

It is difficult to make private services work, since the law that allows them to act has been followed by regulations limiting their autonomy.

Trade Union Representative Emilia Romagna

The modernisation of public employment services is distinguished by the introduction of an original institutional model. It does not involve an agency model typical of the majority of European experiences and hence does not revolve around a single nation-wide organisation. It is rather a 'protofederal' model, giving each region the task of organising its own 'regional employment system' albeit within the margins of a fixed framework of possible enterprises. At the same time however - despite the OECD and European Commission's recommendations - it does not seem to have given the central state an effective role of 'guidance and co-ordination'. This regulatory uncertainty could risk supporting and augmenting - that is not suitably opposing - the segmentation of

the national labour market, thus generating great inequalities in the provision and quality of employment services:

..there are a lot of differences from one territory to another... the Labour Ministry has monitored the actual operating situation of the reform and it has revealed a big gap between Northern and Southern services as far as functioning is concerned.

Minister Salvi, Ministry of Labour

Nonetheless, the 'regional employment system' set up by the regions, despite the qualitative and quantitative inadequacy of human and financial resources transferred to it, has some distinctive and original features. The inadequacy of human resources has though been underlined by all the interview respondents:

One of the more critical aspects regards the inadequacy of personnel to the new functions the Public Employment Services obtained after the devolution reform. To solve this problem training actions for PES employees and functionaries have been organised. Besides the problem regarding this new professional profile, there is also a quantitative problem regarding the number of personnel available at all levels. To solve this inadequacy new specialised personnel have been enrolled together with a new network of co-operation with all the local agencies which already have some experience in the intervention sector foreseen by the reform.... (*Isfol Document*)

... it is difficult to anticipate when the reform is going to be working in a completed manner, a critical point might be the adaptation capability of people working in this field...Regions must work in this direction, believing in the entire process and investing resources to promote 'reconversion

Vento Regional Council for Vocational Training

A councillor also underlines the current inadequacy of SIL (Labour Information System):

Another critical element is the delay in starting SIL (Information Labour System) since it is the national information system that has to relate the regional systems to one another. In fact the key-stone of the entire course of action provided by the reform is based on the creation of an efficient national network. The uncertainty about the final asset of SIL contributes to slow down the creation of regional integrated systems and makes the

re-conversion of the existing local networks and their integration with the national one very uncertain.

Emila Romagna Regional Council for Vocational Training

Concerning the implementation of flexible labour, there are also some criticisms made in interviews on the practical effectiveness of such measures:

As far as I am concerned, apprenticeship is the most common way young people take to enter the labour market, whereas for firms it is just a way to pay fewer taxes. For this reason there is not a real involvement of the firm to qualify the young worker who always changes his job and qualification...There is also a lack of control in order to realize the new reforms. A severe control upon apprenticeship should be brought about.

Employer at the Public Employment Office in Veneto

3.6.2 Skill Certification and Accreditation

Respondents also discussed the new credit system designed to link educational, training and work experiences:

... The ability to use training credits in different sectors of training and education is a choice that I agree with. It is positive and could not work if it did not go hand in hand with a real decentralisation of the power in the labour market – this is a different view from the ones who give the regions only a marginal role limited to co-operation and counselling actions and opinions

Regional Council for Vocational Training

In some areas the educational credit system is laughable. Firstly because it forces us to translate complex experiences into scores and the experiences are not managed directly by the school, therefore it becomes difficult to evaluate (for example voluntary apprenticeships in parishes, tango lessons...). These types of score are micro decimal and the standards differ from school to school, because each school establishes its own. Therefore even in the same town there is not a unique standard system. Moreover, some students will be disadvantaged by this system since they do not manage to perform activities which are credit convertible (for example if they live very far from the city, or because they have to work, or because they live in places where there is not any training on offer, or because they are commuters).

Teacher of a Secondary School in Ravenna

3.6.3 Counselling

Very similar views emerged about counselling from a wide variety of people interviewed. Some of them claimed that counselling must be more oriented towards the needs of labour market by which they mean that it should help young people to become aware of the resources available in their locality. Others believed that counselling should help people to become aware of their own attitude and needs. Everyone agreed with the idea of counselling as ‘a permanent process that has to cover the entire life of an individual concerning education, training and work’. A distinction was made, however, between counselling provided by Employment Services (which is faster and addressed to the labour market), and counselling provided by schools (that addresses the person and his/her own attitudes). All those interviewed agreed that individual counselling was important and should help people to realise their own abilities. However, they also argued that more practical counselling was necessary so as to orientate people towards the real possibilities available in a particular region. There were also some criticisms made about the professional skills of the Employment Services and about the lack of competence of schools to carry out counselling.

3.6.4 Conceptions of the Long Term Young Unemployed

For the most part, respondents held the view that training for professional qualifications was not appropriate for the long term unemployed. Some held the view that the young unemployed were not willing to move from their own town to find a job, while others considered the long term young unemployed to be unmotivated. Respondents also felt that the young unemployed were concentrated disadvantaged social classes. However, the Veneto interviewee tended to disagree, probably due to the large regional variations in local labour markets.

3.6.5 Overall Assessment

Recent reforms are recognised as positive by all respondents. However, it was argued that their effectiveness would be limited as a result of limited economic and human resources. Moreover, it was argued that there is a lack of central co-ordination and that each regions is effectively free to bring about reform on their own terms. This leads to a situation where there will be some areas which function poorly and others which will deliver a very high standard of service.

3.7 Netherlands: Evaluation of Compulsion, Primary starting qualifications and Processes of Convergence

3.7.1 Impact and Effects of Compulsion

The elements of compulsion and the 'closed system approach' of the WIW seems to have resulted in a significant number of unemployed young people not registering at the unemployment office or 'getting lost' during procedures and sanctions. Referring to these 'youngsters in the mist', one respondent focused in particular on the issue of young illegal migrants and asylum seekers.

In practice, rules and sanctions are imposed much more strictly upon unemployed people who younger than 23 years of age than upon 'adults' (i.e. 23 years or older). According to one respondent, the 'paternalism' that exists within the WIW for youth is found much less so within the WIW for adults (although this changing). Some respondents felt that there should not be age-barriers with regard to rights and duties: it contradicts entirely the much-advocated emphasis on 'lifelong learning', 'empowerment' and 'employability'. Indeed, the age principle frequently came across in interviews in a number of contexts. Although in first instance this remark was made with regard to minimum youth wages, this was also be applied to levels of compulsion and rights and duties.

3.7.2 Soft and Hard Skills

First of all, 'skills' are especially thought of in relation to the so-called 'Primary Starting Qualification', i.e. the minimal level of schooling needed to ensure ongoing success in the labour market, as has been defined by the Dutch government. All the respondents refer to this PSQ as being of great importance. However, although the PSQ could be more or less regarded as a 'hard' or a 'formal' skill, present reforms within the educational system seem to be concentrated on issues of competencies and lifelong learning which could be considered to some extent to be 'soft' skills. Second, within the WIW for young people, education and training play relatively minor roles: the main emphasis is on work and the related issues on skills lie somewhat between 'soft' and 'hard'. This doesn't mean that among the respondents the themes of competencies, motivation and need for self-fulfilment do not play a role within discussions surrounding future labour market and unemployment policies, but this generally doesn't take place on a policy implementation level. It could also be questioned whether those (hardcore) WIW youth, often regarded lacking of soft skills, and willingness and / or ability for obtaining a PSQ, will benefit from this possible future approach. It could perhaps be wiser to focus on 'practical' work-related skills instead of purely academic ones and perhaps to try to promote enrolment in a modernised dual system, an opinion shared by a number of respondents.

3.7.3 Processes of Convergence (European Dimension)

At both the local and national *executive levels* there is a certain amount of communication and exchange with regard to unemployment policies. At the municipal level for instance, meetings between local government officials from different European cities sometimes occur. However, these relationships do not appear to have an impact with regard to how practices are executed, whether due to too much perceived contextual difference or the idea that rules and regulations are formulated at the top without too much influence at the bottom. In any case, there is still a 'fixation' on the national context.

With regard to the national *policy-making level* however, one of the respondents speculated that perhaps there is a 'dominant European perspective' emerging on unemployment. The existence of a large number of 'social-democratic' regimes in Europe apparently fits with the adoption of seemingly similar kinds of unemployment programmes, while at the same time there are still –huge– differences in social security traditions between those countries. Another respondent, from the FNV (*Federation of Dutch Unions*), contemplated on the growing influence of European guidelines on formulating national policies. He notices this, for instance, in the one-sided approach to dealing with unemployed young people, namely the supply side, while the demand side is mostly left untouched politically. Furthermore, the attention is very much focused on the long-term unemployed and on reforms in social security regulations and institutions. European influence was also felt in certain arrangements for receiving (ESF) subsidies (public and private co-financing) and even longer periods of decision-making than on the national level. When international influences on policy *are* mentioned, most respondents refer to the influence of American ideology rather than to European perspectives. With regard to the latter, Danish and Swedish models were mentioned as being influential some ten years ago: the former JWG seems to have been derived from a Scandinavian model.

3.7.4 Overall Assessment of Effectiveness.

'Effectiveness' in the Dutch context can be understood as getting young people integrated by helping them to become *independent*. This is mostly done through getting them into employment, either by learning or by work-experience, of which the latter is the most important method. Bureaucratic effectiveness is however often measured by simple output figures at only a certain point in time, either into education or employment.

What became clear from the interviews was that for most respondents longer support and individualised guidance for young unemployed people are needed, because, as one respondent put it, 'projects do not work anymore'. Given the fact that in the Netherlands unemployment is low, those young people who are in these schemes are the ones 'at the bottom'. These people need more intensive action and counselling which integrates various departments and covers all possible facets of their individual, specific situation. These could range from issues such as socio-psychological problems, housing, education and debt. Work is only one element in this. Comprehensive, inter-departmental, case-management seems to be needed. Constraints to this are however numerous: too little staff and money, funding by output numbers and departments not working together.

The importance of the 'right' content of training programmes in the sense of educational material or types of working experience is in all cases an important point of discussion and concern. While the formal educational system and the world of work are being transformed to fit modern and future requirements, this also generates its own debate and policy impacts on the content of training programmes. This is especially so on those programmes that are laid down by unions, employers and government together, i.e. (dual) vocational trajectories - overall agreement often seems to be lacking.

3.8 Spain: Critical Evaluation of the National Action Plan for Employment

As indicated in the last chapter, training schemes for both unemployed young people and the older unemployed have become one of the principal active employment policies that have been developed in Spain during the last decade. This has been mainly so since the National Plan of Professional Insertion was signed in 1985. Other job training measures are financed by the European Social Fund through its Objective 3 Status that began in 1994. Training measures organised through these programmes form an integral part of the National Action Plan for Employment in Spain which came into being in 1998 in response to what were widely considered to be unacceptably high levels of unemployment. This action plans includes a wide range of policy measures and programmes designed to tackle unemployment in a number of different ways. However, one of the main themes to come across from the interviews related to the prevalence of temporary employment contracts.

3.8.1 What is to be Done about Temporary Contracts?

While the new programmes are seen as positive developments, it was argued that they do not address what is perhaps the largest problem facing young unemployed job-seekers and indeed many young people who are in

employment. In Spain perhaps the largest problem facing these groups is the predominance of temporary work contracts - hence the gaining of a permanent employment position is something which proves to be very difficult to attain. In fact overall temporary work contracts make up over 30% of all employment contracts in Spain and amongst young people (under 25 years of age) the figure is approximately 75% for both women and men. Thus a largest proportion of the young population are employed in insecure jobs and young people very often find themselves drifting in and out of different forms of employment over a number of years – this does nothing for gaining professional competency in a particular occupation and detracts from any form of occupational loyalty as work experiences are short and often discontinuous. Equally the incentive of finding a job is removed as the insecurity generated by temporary contracts means that stability cannot be achieved and goals in life cannot be planned.

Spain has the longest school to work transition period in Europe and proportionately the longest stay in the parental home during this period. These factors do help to lessen the burden of insecure temporary employment and the consequent dropping in and out of the labour market for young people. However if Spain is to modernise and converge economically and socially with the rest of Europe it will have to address the problem of temporary contracts despite resistance from employers who would be subject to employment rights legislation. The new employment reforms do not really address the problem of temporary contracts and until they do unemployment amongst young people will continue to be a serious problem in Spain.

3.9 Sweden: Critical Evaluation of Decentralisation in Labour Market Policies and Programmes

Among most actors in the Swedish context, there has been an agreement that there is a need for specific measures and/or labour market programs targeting young people. This has been the case since the early 1980s when the first programmes aimed directly towards young people were implemented. This agreement exists between different political parties, as well as representatives from different sectors (labour market, education etc.) and also other public and private actors at both the national and the local levels of Swedish society. Therefore, the debate around these measures and programmes has been focusing on *how* these measures and programmes should be designed as opposed to whether they should in fact be in existence.

This debate has mainly been influenced by the general discussion about the direction of labour market policy. Active Swedish labour market policies have a

relatively long tradition, and the measures aimed at young people have from the beginning been moulded in the frame of this tradition. In recent years discussions about the future direction of youth-measures, and reforms in the way in which they operate, have served as a way of testing new ways of intervening within labour market policy as a whole. Traditionally, labour market policy has been a central issue of political life, and it has had a close connection to (Keynesian) macro-economic policies. The national authority, AMS, has had a strong position and a dominating influence on the content and direction of labour market policy.

During recent years, this strong central approach as well as (Keynesian) macro-economic policy has been questioned. Instead there have been moves towards decentralisation through giving the municipalities greater responsibility – this is often motivated by the notion that this would provide better conditions for local co-operation. Another clear direction of change has been a tendency towards a new balance between rights and obligations within labour market policy, and in the same way within social policy as well.

3.9.1 Assessment of Labour Market Programmes for the Young Unemployed

New labour market measures aimed at young people have in part meant a (continued) effort to develop the education system, and in part a series of measures of a kind closely connected to various supportive aspects of traditional labour market policy.

Criticisms of these measures which emerged from research interviews can be summarised through the following inter-linked points:

- *Various youth measures have been tied up in detailed regulations, which has led to an implementation that has been too inflexible, and therefore:*
- *Agencies of implementation have only had very limited autonomy to adjust the directions and contents of the measures to different local and individual situations.*
- *Furthermore, the results of the measures are often questioned, and it is a widely held opinion that too many young people have been stuck in a closed circle between different measures and unemployment.*

Through the new measures introduced in the late 1990s, local authorities were given a greater responsibility. The respondents experiences show that this is indeed the case in some places – though not everywhere – and this has also meant that new ways of working and co-operation have been tested. In certain cases there is evidence to suggest that this decentralisation really has created

better opportunities for young people to influence the programme measures themselves.

3.9.2 Assessment of Educational Programmes for the Young Unemployed

Even though educational policy has traditionally played an important role in youth-oriented measures against unemployment, the division between educational policy and labour market policy has always been very clear. However, in recent years and at the same time as local actors have been given a broader responsibility for the youth-measures, there have been openings for new connections between school, social authorities and labour market authorities. This has in some cases resulted in the development of new forms of training, where education in school is combined with practice in a workplace.

Recurrent in the debate on educational policy, have been suggestions about different forms of ‘apprentice-like’ education, with the general idea of combining theoretical studies in school with practical experience in a workplace. However, research interviews show that these suggestions have generally met strong resistance, since the idea of an apprentice system is contrary to the notion that everyone passing upper secondary school shall be prepared for and directed towards higher education. Thus, in this field it is possible to see the still persisting power of the strong educational policy tradition – however at the same time changes within the framework of labour market policy are presenting openings for the development of new ways of operating.

3.9.3 Overall Assessment

The issue of whether the new measures have been more effective is difficult to evaluate. One way of making an assessment is to look quantitatively and see if they tend to lead to positions in the regular labour market – so far however the evidence for such an assessment is too limited. It would take longitudinal follow-up studies, which at present are absent. The question of efficiency in this sense has therefore to be regarded as unanswered.

What might be added to the picture presented here though – given that the concept of integration is the main objective to be evaluated in this report – is that when the Swedish labour market measures for young people were assembled as an answer to the situation in the 1990s, the notion of integration was seldom – if ever – the issue. The main objective of the contemporary labour market measures for young unemployed Swedes was not really to integrate them in the labour market, but above all to get them off unemployment and into programmatic measures – preparing them for the labour market and in the

meantime keeping them not unemployed or employed, but occupied. In a way this policy was really something that was carried through while waiting for an economic upturn and an overall improvement in job opportunities. In discussing the efficiency of this model one must really make clear what objectives the model was supposed to live up to. And the primary objective was not integration of young unemployed people into the labour market.

3.10 Conclusion: A Critical Examination of Delivery, Implementation and Effectiveness in a Pan-European Context

It is clear from the evaluative research summaries reproduced above, that the issues affecting the implementation, delivery and effectiveness of programmes and policies designed to tackle unemployment amongst young people vary considerably across the eight countries. Equally, the levels of success or failure that can be ascribed to each countries programmes in this area of policy making are also very different. However, while this is the case due to a combination of the particular labour market situations occupied by each of the researched countries, and the diversity of policy making traditions existing between them, the research does nevertheless also suggest a number of broad similarities in both the mechanisms of implementation and in the problems encountered regarding the effectiveness of delivery which can be highlighted as evidence of convergence.

Each of the partner countries has, albeit to different degrees, adopted a supply-side orientation in terms of labour market policy where the primary goal is to increase the employability of the young unemployed. Across the eight countries, the focus has been to inculcate soft skills through processes of individualised motivational counselling, and to enhance hard skills through access to educational opportunities and/or work experience/vocational training programmes. Some countries such as Italy and Spain are at the beginning of a long implementation process utilising this type of strategy, others such as the UK, France and Germany are entering new phases of relatively recently established programmes utilising this strategy, and still others such as Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands have much longer established programmes which have utilised this strategy for at least the last decade. From the evidence included in the evaluative research summaries, problems associated with this supply-side approach regarding its effectiveness would appear to be a common experience.

Primary amongst these problems is the existence of geographical areas of concentrated unemployment characterised by deprivation, where there is little or no business and hence little demand for labour. Young people living in these

areas are working class, often of a minority ethnic background and suffer from multiple disadvantage and social exclusion. As programmes to increase employability are established on a national or regional basis it is this group of young people who benefit least and are increasingly left behind, while those living in more 'enterprise friendly' environments or who need a modicum of advice, education or experience benefit the most. Indeed, in a number of countries it was argued that the best training places were monopolised by those from more privileged positions while the most disadvantaged were poorly served.

In the UK, for example, one of the strongest messages of the evaluative research summary is that it is this most disadvantaged client group which is growing proportionately as New Deal has progressed, while the Danish research highlights this problem in stark terms with its critical analysis of the current policy focus on what it calls 'the remainder group'. Moreover, the German research summary points to the way in which the figures on participation which purport to show the success of present policies hide the fact that in the eastern part of the country there is simply a lack of jobs; whereas in the Italian context some of the respondents pointed out that the regional economic/labour market divide between north and south would appear to be in danger of being widened in the wake of current reforms. This problem of the uneven geographical spread of unemployment is not something that can be tackled by supply-side 'employability' solutions alone – it requires a (currently unfashionable across Europe) demand-side 'employment' solution to work in tandem with it.

On 'the other side of the same coin' exists another commonly shared problem with the supply-side orientation. This is the mis-match of supply to demand in areas where demand for labour is high. Programmes which are supposed to reproduce the type of labour with requisite skills that employers demand are often not delivering – here the Swedish case is a good example where even with a high level of decentralisation of programmes to local municipalities, employers are not being supplied with the types of skills they require: evidence from the research summaries suggests that this is equally the case in all the partner countries. A more specific example which backs up this argument comes from the UK example where the New Deal incorporates a subsidised employment option which gives employers financial incentives for training young apprentices or giving work experience – however it is proving to be not nearly as popular amongst employers as the government envisaged. Evidence shows that this is because employers want labour to be trained and ready skilled – they simply do not want to bear the costs in time and money of training without a guaranteed outcome. In Denmark a similar subsidised employment

scheme was abandoned earlier in the 1990s because it simply did not work. The message of the research which is present in each of the evaluative research summaries is thus clearly that supply must match demand and to achieve this greater local flexibility must be allowed in the way in which programmes are implemented.

In relation to the most disadvantaged groups of young people it would also appear that across the researched countries it is this grouping – the very grouping the programmes are meant to reach – who often benefit least from the policies designed to tackle youth unemployment. The French research summary for example shows that in relation to the qualification adaptation contracts it is the better qualified who have prospered through this programme, while the examples given in the last paragraph regarding ‘the remainder group’ in Denmark and the changing nature of the UK New Deal client group reinforce this crucial point. Meanwhile the German summary highlights a related issue which is reflected in some of the respondents concerns that the programmes have been used to categorise the young unemployed into those ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ of help and benefits – a hark back to what in the UK is referred to as Victorian moralism. In fact in the UK the dominant political discourse in relation to unemployment of all types is one of ‘rights and responsibilities’ which the Government uses when advancing the case for welfare reform and justifying the punitive sanctions regime which is integral to its New Deal for the unemployed. A new conception of citizenship to be enforced by a new moral order where paid productive employment is held up as the ultimate standard, is being propagated through the inter-related discourses of social exclusion/inclusion, the ‘underclass’ and ‘culture of dependency’. As can be seen from the evaluative research summaries, these discourses (often influenced by ideas linked to US workfare) are currently being echoed throughout Europe (see for example the Italian, Dutch, French and Swedish research summaries) and would appear to be the common ideological cement binding together policies and programmes aimed at tackling unemployment of both youth and adult varieties.

While on the one hand these discourses emphasise new rights for the young unemployed – eg, education and training opportunities, they also place new responsibilities on their shoulders which mean (albeit in different ways depending on context) that they must display some form of active orientation to the labour market or strict sanctions will be applied in relation to their benefits. Although varying in terms of severity, all the researched countries have forms of compulsion in place vis-à-vis their programmes for the young unemployed. Evaluative summaries from across the countries show however that the question

of compulsion remains a controversial one and the question of its effectiveness an unresolved issue. In the Danish case compulsion was judged a general success in dealing with the client group who made up the largest proportion of the young unemployed in the early 1990s – however it is questionable whether it will work for the so called ‘remainder group’ because as the Dutch summary intimates many of this ‘difficult’ group will simply disappear from welfare registers and be lost to the system – hardly a strategy for social inclusion and integration. As the UK summary illustrates those working at the sharp end of programme delivery tend not to favour compulsion as it undermines the trust which is necessary for counselling to operate in a non-threatening manner.

In conclusion it can be seen that across the eight countries there is a dominant supply side orientation towards employability regarding the labour market policies and programmes oriented towards unemployed young people. This common emphasis means that although there are many differences of detail, on a general level there are common mechanisms of implementation and delivery which in turn have generated common problems of effectiveness. These problems revolve around an inability to deal with the uneven geography of unemployment, a tendency to leave behind the most disadvantaged, the mismatch of labour supply to demand, inflexibility of programme delivery, and the reinforcement of social exclusion which categorisation and compulsion brings.

PART TWO

Chapter 4

Theorising Youth and Models of Integration

4.1 Introduction

Within a European context, development is often seen as a process of modernisation which challenges local lifestyles and creates an ongoing search for guidelines to further European integration. However, modernisation is not simply a process confined to the Europe, but is an ongoing political and economic development which operates at a global level. Processes of Europeanisation may be seen as a form of political and economic solution to this ongoing and over-arching development of global modernisation. The difference between these two models for the understanding of policy development is rather important. Model one gives a portrait of European policy as a challenge to local life and policies. Model two indicates that the *necessary* process of global modernisation may be helped, or indeed shaped, by European policies. Equally, in the first model a contradiction may develop between European development and local or national interests. In the second model, all European countries may agree or disagree about the challenges of global modernisation, but as it is an economic developmental reality, whatever the outcome of such debate, they have to adjust political development to this process. In considering this second model it also becomes plain that modernisation is both a multi-faceted global and multi-faceted local process, and that although it is governed by the same developmental logic the way this logic works itself out in reality may take different local forms.

Thus to understand the development of young people vis-à-vis employment and unemployment in Europe it seems important to reconsider the different understandings of policy and modernisation and their forms and consequences for youth transitions. Youth development and (un)employment should be seen as a common European issue of modernisation, but at the same time as an issue where contextual pictures are local, practical policies vary and the possible interventions that can be made are dependent on the local reality of modernisation. This ‘modernisation’ perspective refers to all countries and before a common European perspective can develop it is important to reflect upon the developmental or ‘modernisation’ perspectives, as they exist in different countries and local communities in Europe.

Without going into detailed discussion of modern societies and the development and contradictions of post or late modernity, it is possible to point to the simple fact that modernisation in its broad sense, refers to an ongoing and all consuming process which is always a combination of several institutional, economic and social developments. In a broad sense modernisation refers to a to the changing conditions and restrictions of modern living.¹⁰ In this way modernisation does not directly influence job, education or youth, yet have an important indirect influence. Modernisation is more a combination of developments and changes inside working conditions, educational structures, institutions, political life – and youth life (Giddens, Beck, Lash) Laursen & Mørch 1998). Thus it is important to consider the ways in which processes of modernisation influence labour market conditions, educational institutions and youth life itself.

The modernisation perspective is a significant framework which must be taken into account when trying to understand youth development and (un)employment because the conception of ‘youth’ itself is a modern social construction which changes according to modern living conditions. This is especially important when considering the different possibilities involved in ‘youth transitions’ (ie, the movement between family, education and labour market). The complex set of problems which develop when transitional patterns change is something which must be analysed in order to identify the roots of problems of youth unemployment. (Bois-Reymond, M. du 1998)¹¹ In the following discussion we will utilise the modernisation perspective to consider three areas of key significance to youth (un)employment: labour market conditions, youth life development and education.

4.2 Modernisation and the labour market

The ongoing development of the modern labour market has created new challenges. The global development of national labour markets has throughout the late 20th and early 21st century been characterised by the advent of information technology. Traditional sectors and forms of production have become increasingly outmoded in advanced capitalist economies due to the introduction of new information services and high technology control of production processes. What has come to be termed ‘the knowledge based

¹⁰ It is widely accepted that the development of modern life can be dated from around the end of the 18th century onwards (the development of the bourgeois society) with late or post modernity as the processes generated after WW2. (Giddens 1990). For practical reasons modernity is seen here as a broad process going back to the establishment of the bourgeois society and is an ongoing process. So, when nothing else is specified, the term modern society refers to the broad process of modern development. The concept modernity is used here to focus upon the actual developments of today’s society.

¹¹ Bois-Reymond, M. du: ‘I Don’t Want to Commit Myself Yet.’ Young Peoples Life Concepts. Journal of Youth Studies, Vol. 1, 63-79. 1998

economy' has important implications for all European societies¹². In many respects, the growth of the 'information society' represents a social change in which human capital has developed new meaning. This new meaning is not only confined to the labour force but also extends to what constitutes individual knowledge and competencies. The knowledge based economy of course throws down a challenge to the learning and training systems throughout the world because the idea of knowledge itself is changing. Whereas the individual beforehand was successful through attaining formal qualifications, today 'knowledge' is increasingly conceived and measured in relation to the attaining of what can be described as personal 'competencies'.

If we characterise the traditional labour market of the classical industrial era as consisting of simple, stable areas of large scale employment (such as agriculture, manufacturing and so on), the labour market of today is characterised as being more segmented and subject to large fluctuations. New types of jobs regularly emerge and traditional labour market trajectories become increasingly uncertain. In this context, educational qualifications may no longer be a guarantee of employment in the way in which they once were.

These developments create new problems in the area of youth unemployment. Youth unemployment is – as any other kind of unemployment – basically due to an imbalance between supply and demand. But youth unemployment also asks questions as to how societies can qualify young people for the labour market. How can we create perfect educational measures? How can we ensure individual employability? As can be seen through the evidence of preceding chapters, one answer that has been widely implemented across Europe, has been to strengthen the supply side. The question from the other side of the unemployment equation is how to create a demand. While some European societies are successfully balancing supply and demand, other countries are experiencing difficulties in establishing a labour market with a strong economic growth that will absorb the new labour force. To ensure the demand of the labour market, one has to engage with current debates in economic theory where great disagreement. Whether the labour market should be controlled or free, regulated or left for the powers of Adam Smith's 'the invisible hand' is a never ending discussion.

The development of the information society has had a dynamic effect on the labour market and, to an extent, has undermined educational planning. Education is a long-term process and is frequently too inflexible to respond

¹² The reduction of the traditional areas of employment is not only due to new technology, but also to a welfare development since the II. World War and therefore the arising of the service sector, which in some European countries amount up 50% of all employment (See Esping-Andersen (1990))

quickly to rapidly changing labour market demands. In these contexts, how can we then ensure the right qualifications for the new labour force and how are we to interpret concepts such as 'employability'? These debates turn our attention to labour supply, but it can be difficult to predict the types of skills and qualifications that will be in demand in the labour market of the future. Hence qualifications can be outdated before they are even used. As such, we need a new understanding of learning and education.

Throughout Europe, new ideas of competence are being developed. Today we talk about personal competence, flexibility, social competence and networking. These terms represent a new emphasis on the individual 'inside' the learning process. The focus is put on the ability to learn rather than specific qualifications. The individual is to be equipped with tools for constant learning that will offer some individual security. But how can we create a labour force that capable of constantly adapting to change? This is the new challenge which must be addressed.

4.3 Youth Unemployment and social integration

As this report is concerned with strategies against youth unemployment, it is necessary to point to some basic facts of unemployment, and youth unemployment in particular. As the basis of the welfare systems is participation through work, significant unemployment comes to be seen as a symptom of crisis. The economic side of unemployment is of course obvious, but also *the social aspect* of unemployment has become increasingly important during the last thirty years. It is difficult to combine social integration and unemployment, as unemployment is by definition *non-participation*. The social problems which unemployment causes have become obvious in all countries, but the economic instability that traditionally causes unemployment is difficult to avoid. As Esping-Andersen (1990) points out, different welfare regimes handle this instability different, through variations in support systems, pensions and labour supply programs. This is due to differences in welfare ideology and institutional structures.

But for all welfare states, the struggle against unemployment is the same. The weighting of the supply or the demand side varies drastically, but the overall goal is the same¹³. Unemployment was traditionally considered to be a temporary situation, unless the individual lacked motivation¹⁴. The development through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s showed us that unemployment can be long

¹³ Esping-Andersen, Gøsta: "The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism", Polity Press 1990

¹⁴ Classical economic theory and monetarists consider the imbalance between supply and demand to be due to the price of labour. If the price of labour was right, the demand would always occur. As the theory on the labour market has developed, more perspectives are present today, for instance the problem of the lack of qualifications.

term even when individuals are highly motivated. The growing pressure on the development of qualifications and competencies combined with the still more rapid social exclusion of the unemployed resulted in immobile and very costly groups of unemployed.

Unemployment leads to problems of social integration and for young people obtaining a reasonable job is central to social success and personal satisfaction. The situation of the young unemployed population is unique as the educational system tends to be the key to finding employment and to successful transitions. If the links between education and the labour market are weak – and we suggest that they are likely to weaken considerably in the labour market of the future – the institutional structure of the education is threatened. Although educational systems have a number of purposes, for young people the motive to study for qualifications frequently lies in the promise of employment and social integration. The problem lies in motivating a young person to return to education when, judged in terms of labour market outcomes, previous educational participation has been seen as unsuccessful.

Here we need to be aware that in all European countries there are groups of young people who are not only unemployed, but who are vulnerable as a result of a range of inter-linked problems. They may lack qualifications and/or other basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, and may not possess the types of ‘soft-skills’ valued by employers. In the knowledge society, these groups are particularly vulnerable.

4.4 Youth and social integration

Youth unemployment itself poses challenges for our understanding of the terms ‘youth’ and ‘employment’. How we understand employment or unemployment is related to the organisation of the labour market. In an agriculture economy, for example, unemployment is experienced in a different way to how it is experienced in the industrial or modern wage-labour market. The concept of youth also challenges our understanding of youth and employment. Historically, youth can be viewed as a social construction of an age group awareness which arose directly out of the placing of young people in schools and educational systems. Children and young persons became and were recognised as youth by taking part in school life. (Aries, Mørch, Gillis)¹⁵ And, as Musgrove writes, educators and tailors created youth (Musgrove 65).¹⁶ Youth as a category arose from the development of modern society from the end of the 18th century.

¹⁵ See Ariès, Ph.: Centuries of Childhood. Pinquin London 1973, Mørch, S.: At forske i ungdom. Rubikon. Copenhagen 1985), Gillis, J.R.: Youth and History. N.Y. 1981

¹⁶ Musgrove, F.: Youth and Social Order. Indiana 1965

Today also, the construction of youth and youth life occurs in different local contexts but seems to follow the needs and possibilities for children or young persons to have an education. In rural areas the transition from childhood to adulthood may be rapid and youth as a life phase may have a low recognition. But in modern urban contexts, educational and youth life are interrelated and this life phase becomes increasingly protracted. The concept of young adults has been used to refer to this modern situation.¹⁷

So, basically youth is not part of labour market, but of educational life. In this perspective youth unemployment seems to be a contradiction in terms. This contradiction of youth both points to a historical reality and a modern truth. Today modern educational and commercial life has established youth an important social category. As the recognition of young people as 'youth' has developed in Europe the question of where to place young people has become a political issue. Should they be in school or should they be in the labour market? Should young people have the rights to a job or to education? Are young people unemployed or are they uneducated? And should youth unemployment initiatives focus on education or on job measures?

On the practical level this particular issue is determined by the local political and labour market conditions, as the need for low or unskilled labour varies. In low skill economies, young people can move directly to unskilled jobs and can achieve adult status quite rapidly without experiencing a prolonged youth-life.

However, youth is not only constructed through local labour market demands but in its broadest sense is a societal category developed by educational systems and young people themselves as part of a modern education society and commercial and market created lifestyles. Youth has become a political construct of modernisation and poses a set of challenges for all European societies. Youth seems to be not only a modern construction but a late modern necessity.¹⁸ Therefore interventions in youth life, such as training for unemployed youth, must be regarded as part of a broader youth policy and youth life construction.

4.5 Youth life perspectives

Without committing to one specific theory of youth, it is possible to illustrate some challenges that exist in understanding modern youth and modern youth life.

¹⁷ Sven Mørch: Young adults. *Yearbook* vol 2 . Psychological Laboratory, København 1995/6

¹⁸ It is interesting to see e.g. in Denmark that marginalised "ethnic youth groups" often are better helped by job-measures than education.

Youth development can be analysed according to two dimensions in youth life and youth life understanding. On the one hand young people are between the statuses childhood and adulthood, but on the other they are becoming individualised under some specific societal conditions. In psychological analysis the focus has mostly been directed to the child-adult change, mostly seen as a biological change effecting the individual. The basic concept in this perspective is adolescence, which is inspired from the work of Hall (1904)¹⁹, and which refers to a stage in psychological development. The other dimension on the transition from childhood to adulthood focuses the individualisation process as a social construction, and it points to a transition process as a societal organised movement from private family upbringing through school and education into labour market positions. This concept of youth and youth-life that highlights processes of individualisation has emerged from a sociological perspective. Here the transition process has been studied in educational and labour market research²⁰ and the individualisation process has tended to be linked to youth cultures.²¹

With youth being regarded both as a transition and an individualisation process, youth life is presented as a societal construction lived and changed by young people themselves. And, as a societal construction, it is constantly changing as part of the general modernisation of societies. Youth is simultaneously a biographical, a local and a modern construction.

To intervene in youth life does not only mean to influence or change young people but is about constructing youth in a changing world. And modern European societies have been seen as changing from class differentiated societies to modern consumer and market societies. Social inequalities therefore start to be regarded not so much as a result of unequal social class background but as a consequence of individual failure in coping with societal conditions, especially educational demands. However, many class structures and conditions still exist which influences this development of social integration and 'modern individualisation'²² Behind the marginalisation process of modern educational societies a class structure still functions.

¹⁹ Hall, G.S.: Adolescence, Its Psychology and its relation to Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education. N.Y. 1904

²⁰ For an overview see Furlong, A. and F. : Young People and Social Change. Open University Press. Buckingham 1997.

²¹ The youth culture perspective has had a big influence in especially Scandinavian youth research. But originally it was inspired from The Birmingham school. E.g. Cohen. P. Subcultural Conflict and Working Class Community. in Working Papers in Cultural Studies. no. 2 Birmingham University 1972, G. Mungham & G. Pearson (eds.): Working Class Youth Culture. London 1976, Hall, S. & T. Jefferson: Resistance through Rituals. London 1976. An interesting connection between culture and transition was developed in Willis books. e.g. Willis, P. Learning to Labour. Farnborough: Saxon House 1977, Willis, P. Common Culture. Open University Press. 1990

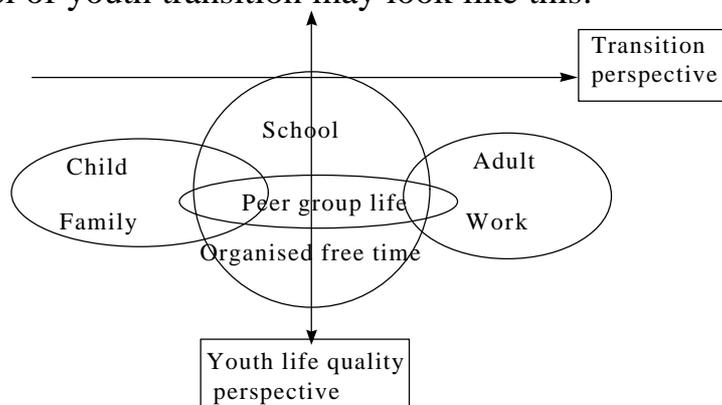
²² Furlong and Cartmel 1997.

Understood in this way, social inequalities in modern societies can be regarded as part of the social differentiation process and education becomes central for individual job and life success. This is also reflected in the policies on youth unemployment as increasingly unemployment measures are educational. Education defines youth and establishes the basis of youth competencies and employability. Therefore education seem to be the tool for employability. However, at the same time education does not provide guaranties. Employability refers not only to the qualifications but also to the labour market demands. And in a changing labour market, due to the ‘modernisation of traditionally economies and as a result of the general speed of change, individual competencies are increasingly important.

4.6 Youth transitions

Perspectives on youth transition and in a process of transformation from a ‘structural change system’ to an ‘individual change system’. Here there are two perspectives. One focuses on becoming ‘societal’ which is part of the social integration process. The second stresses the development of employability which is part of the production process.

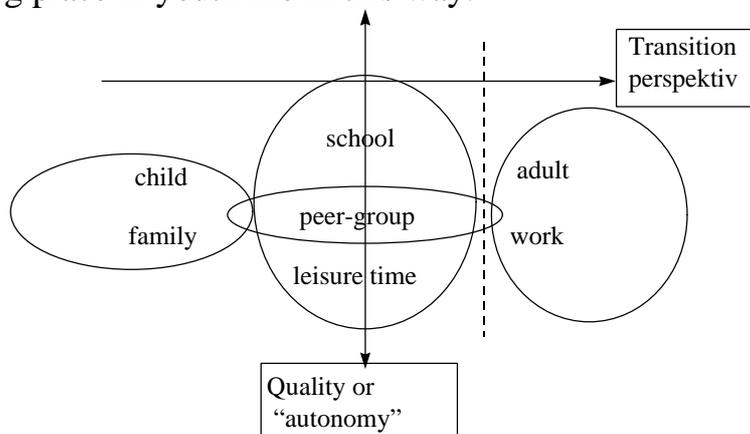
A general model of youth transition may look like this:



Here youth life is about education, leisure activities and peer group contexts. In most European countries youth life takes place in all of these arenas which, together form the transition perspective. Youth transitions are facilitated by qualities of life contexts at different points in time.

Transition patterns change over time. Since the 1960 the construction of youth life has become less dependent on employment situations Youth cultures in particular has become increasingly important and has become a common point of reference to many young people. Here also educational institutions have become more self-referential rather than focused on transition and adult life perspectives. Rather they begin to focus on individual developmental processes as a part of a process of

autonomy to young people. Young people are increasingly seen as responsible for their own development. In many youth contexts the goal of employability has changed to a goal of autonomy and participation. We may illustrate the changes which are taking place in youth life in this way:



The new perspective which arises from this situation leads to the relationship between youth life and adult life *becoming indirect*. For young people it means that they increasingly feel formal education to stand in opposition to their ‘personal’ lives and, as a result, educational systems come under pressure to change their curriculum and to find new ways of planning education. This situation creates great difficulties for many young people. If they fully engage in modern youth life they may lose their connection to adult life. Individual trajectories may become to ‘private’ and a new qualitative situation arises.

If youth life is becoming more autonomous, how do we conceptualise the relationship between youth and adult life in a way that is meaningful to policy makers and young people themselves? What factors guarantee success in adult life and how should the criteria for social integration and employability be defined?

From a societal perspective young people may make private choices which result in personal development but not necessarily to social integration or employability. From an individual perspective it becomes difficult to identify the ‘right’ courses of action. A combination of high individual expectations and strong competencies in the individual become necessary to navigate in a very open world. Thus *the challenge of modern ‘indirect’ youth life revolves around the construction of ‘transformational’ competencies, which guarantee social integration and employability.*

Youth life is increasingly becoming a broad and common youth life culture which involves all young people. However, at the same time there is a hidden agenda of which many young people remain unaware. Youth life creates

qualities for later life and therefore a competition for the future exists underneath the common youth life culture. This problem is especially serious in educational curricula where many youngsters are not aware of the serious consequences of bad academic performance until they experience barriers for further education and jobs. Youth and educational life in itself differentiates young people according to adult life perspectives. It creates success or marginalisation, but it is difficult to see if the individual trajectory leads to employment or unemployment, social integration or social marginalisation.

4.7 Transitions and competence

The changing perspectives on youth transitions we have highlighted are linked to a variety of problems. Sometimes educational trajectories do not lead directly to jobs, sometimes job opportunities are poor and sometimes gender or racial prejudices block job opportunities. As a result of these processes, marginalisation can occur.

The changes in the general labour market also have other consequences. Current thinking about young people's trajectories link successful social integration with labour market outcomes. Yet in today's 'flexible' labour market the idea of having a 'regular' or 'steady' is not always sustainable. The modern labour market involves rapidly changing technology and forms of knowledge. Life long learning has become a new reality and school and education are no longer the exclusive preserves of young people.

In this context, instead of specific stages of life we should perhaps talk about 'fragmented contextualisation' as highlighting a world a *network of contexts* affect different aspects of development.²³ People constantly move between the contexts of education and jobs through their lives. With this being the case, basic educational systems need to be changed. Instead of having a common curriculum for all children and youngsters, perhaps a greater variety of curricula should be developed.

The role of education as the basic element of social integration therefore is changing with modernisation. The process of social integration and individualisation seems to function in new ways. A shift takes place from the traditional model of socialisation of the individual to a process of structuration or societalisation, a process which supports the individual participation within the overall process of societal development.

²³ See Mørch, S.: Informal Learning and Social Contexts. in: Walther A & Barbara Stauber (eds.): Lifelong Learning in Europe. Differences and Divisions. Neuling Verlag. Tübingen 1999

The change may be illustrated very simply as a change between two different modes of social integration:

from society to individual (model 1)

from individual to society (model 2)

In model 1, social institutions and especially educational institutions are engaged in the development of individuals and individual qualifications. The overall process may be seen as a process of socialisation. In model 2 the issue increasingly comes down to the securing of a 'societal responsible perspective' in individualisation. Here individualisation demands new social structures and practices and therefore a process of structuration.

It can often appear as if today's model 2 individualisation is the problematic. Individualisation has a tendency to function in a very private way. Young people develop a 'What's in it for me' perspective, with consequences for processes of social integration. Modern individualisation is a situation of autonomy, but as a social process autonomy both seems to be what exists and what is expected. Young people themselves are expected to be able to take part and influence their lives, but this autonomy can look like a societal rather than an individual quality. Today and in modern youth life situations we find ourselves in a position where young people may be very well integrated in educational systems. At the same time they may have become individualised in such a way that they experience some contradictions between their own life and societal conditions.

In model 1, school and educational qualifications are the tools for individual development and social integration. By following established educational trajectories, young people will develop job-appropriate qualifications. In model 2, young people are faced with the challenge of developing competencies which both secure employability and social integration. Competencies which structurate their own employability. And the change between model 1 and 2 can be seen both as a general development occurring within Europe and a local contextual development. As a change in the social integration processes it has broad consequences for educational thinking, employability and individual development.

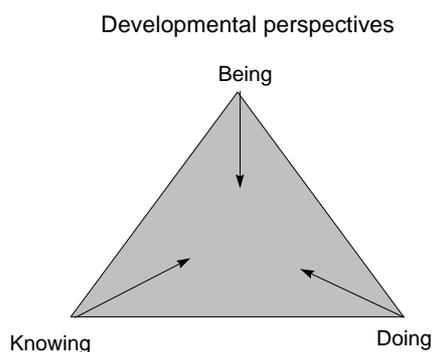
4.8 Knowledge and competence

The role of modern technology, especially information technology, is important to an understanding the changes in youth life, educational life and the social integration processes. IT permits access to immense amounts of knowledge. It thus challenges former knowledge monopolies, especially those of the teachers.

Authorities' legitimacy can therefore be undermined by the free access of information and practical activities may be informed by the Internet. Authorities loose power. Knowledge can be found anywhere. Knowledge itself is no longer the problem, it is the contextualisation of knowledge which is important.

These new developments demand an understanding of knowledge and individual development. Today knowledgeability is not about having knowledge but about the *use* of knowledge and the ability to translate contextual problems into information queries. In this way not knowledge but *competence* to solve problems becomes the issue. Knowledge in itself does not make a person competent. To have competence means to be able to solve problems. But for to be competent it is important to have or to be able to find knowledge. This is the new challenge for educational systems.

Competencies also refers to relations. The competent person is able to relate him/herself to some context. To be competent means to be competent for doing something. Competence can be understood through the following model:



The model illustrates that the ways in which individual development is about being, knowing and doing. They are all important aspects of being able to manage social life. At the same time the different aspects of individual development may be focused in different situations and social contexts. Schools are focusing at knowledge development, religious institutions focuses at the being dimension and sport-clubs at the doing perspective. But also historically a differentiation among social contexts has developed. In the classic bourgeois school in the 20th century the 'being' dimension was seen as the most important. Classics, Latin and Greek all built the foundation of being an educated person. To have a position in society people needed to be 'educated'. So, the experience of being and identity was a class identity. Being 'educated' provided opportunities for doing something.

Around the turn of the 20th century this changed. Technical developments and industrialisation created a need for more knowledge for more people. Schools developed their own curricula as the road young people had to follow to become knowledgeable for the real world. Especially the 'practical subjects' became the important means in this process. To have a job followed practically from educational trajectories. Education made people able to do something.

With the development of formal education, practical learning or apprenticeship was left out. In this way education developed as the opposite to practical 'on-the-spot' learning. Educational institutions gave the students knowledge, but did not necessarily make them 'doers'. Apprenticeships, on the other hand, focused the opposite perspective: that of 'doing'. Knowledge was not the issue, but the transforming of practices. In this way knowing and doing were separated.

4.9 Forms of competence

Today the discussion in education centres on the importance of the different aspects of development. Which competencies may develop in educational systems? What does modern development and competence mean? And how may competencies lead to employability?

As social class background has become less important in some societies, the dimension of being is today focused at the individual being or the individual identity problems. Also, the knowing dimension has changed. Today many fields of knowledge exist and compete in the educational systems. The doing perspective, too, have changed. New challenges have developed in modern labour markets which are constantly changing. Practical learning needs knowledge and personal development. Practical skill do not define job functions but the job defines the necessary skills. This development requires abilities to reflect and analyse situations and contexts, not only having the tools for specific job demands.

From the model it is possible to identify the sorts of competencies which are required in this new situation. On the one hand, we may look at abstract competence as a relation between being and knowing. This competence is closely connected to educational system and especially upper secondary or grammar schools. In its relation to the job market and the development of employability, however, abstract competence is not very useful.

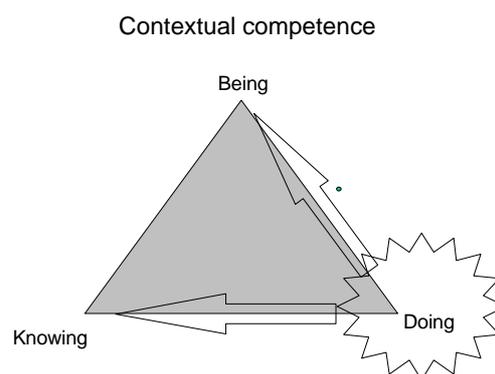
Another form of competence exists which falls in-between knowing and doing. It may be called a labour marked competence. In educational systems this competence develops when knowledge is reflected according to the doing

perspective or the labour market demands. If the relation between being and doing is focused, we may talk about social competence. However, in the educational system social competence is often defined according to individual being and not the job demands.

As a new concept for individual qualifications, competence does not necessarily point to social integration or employability. The discussions and reflections about the development of competence as being *competent to master* the modern world do however often neglect one important point. Competencies are not only individual qualities, they are contextual qualities and expresses relations. So, competence points to challenges in social contexts. And the selection of contexts for competencies seems to make all the difference.

The fact that the awareness of the competence perspective mostly developed when modern companies introduced computer technology may illustrate this perspective. This new work situation created different demands for the employees. They need be able to use the computers in the work situation and become competent in a contextual way.

If we hold on to this understanding we might see that competence belongs to the context and that 'being' and 'knowing' may only be seen as means for acting competently. In this understanding, 'knowing' and 'being' do not define competence, although competence is build on being and knowing. The content of being and knowing should be developed according to the contextual competence which might be illustrated like this:



Many aspects of modern life demand competence which in turn originates from knowing and being. This situation may not be new in any way but the modern demands, the new technologies have helped to develop our attention on the role of competence.

4.10 Competence and learning in praxis

The contemporary interest in lifelong learning and especially in 'learning in practice' (Lave, Wenger, Weich, Argyris, Shöhn) follows this development. The inspiration from the apprenticeship models to develop a new learning concept is both of theoretical and practical concern. It illustrates an interest in finding new ways of learning, which may develop contextual competencies. On the one hand, learning by practice seems to focus the 'doing' perspective in learning. It relates the learning processes to the contexts of practice. In this way knowledge for doing is developed and new ways of doing things inspire the knowledge perspective. On the other hand, practice learning is a socialisation process. It integrates individuals in the social contexts and as such it develops participation. It moves the individual from 'legitimate peripheral participation' to contextual participation. This makes the participatory process not only a socialisation process (model 1) but a structuration process. (model 2). Learning in practice therefore may be used to establish a social integration process which at the same time could develop employability.

The possible use of a practice learning perspectives should also be seen in relation to the situation of unemployment measures. As previously mentioned, unemployed youth differ between European contexts and according to both job opportunities and educational careers. They may be in need of an education or a job. The development of educational systems over Europe seems to offer more or less the same opportunities for education and for this reason for being 'youth'. School systems may differ, but the difference relates more to the modernisation process of youth development. In the Nordic countries most youth have the same opportunities and therefore a broad youth-life situation. Only a small part of young people will not have education and youth-life. In the southern part of Europe the picture is somewhat different.

In a modern youth-life situation, educational failure is not necessarily a result of a lack of opportunities for learning and education. Rather the educational demands are becoming so difficult that many young people give up trying to use the educational system. Also, this situation is made difficult because educational institutions are mostly focusing the 'knowing' dimension in the triangle development model. This makes the educational situation a 'one success track' situation in which no room exists for other lines of development. Educational systems in this way marginalise groups of youngsters who are not able to be successful in educational and school contexts.

Therefore in some contexts social inequality exists and differentiates young people according to education and job opportunities. In other contexts opportunities for education is more equal. The important point is that educational systems may marginalise groups of young people. Among the unemployed we need to recognise that some young people are looking for a job while others are looking for an education.

Some of these challenges in modernisation process, especially processes of social integration, employability and the general youth situation, are important to an appreciation of the actual measures which are used in different European contexts. Although there are differences in contexts, the same developments are taking place across Europe. Here the perspective of 'practice learning' points to the possible developments that may take place in youth unemployment measures. The 'practice learning' perspective gives opportunities for the development of both the learning process and the structuration process. And by contextualising the learning process, it becomes possible to secure the development of individual employability.

Chapter 5

Integration Through Training ? Explaining Variations Between Policy Objectives and Delivery

5.1 Policy Objectives and Delivery in a Changing Europe

In a very classical way (Edelman, 1977; Jones, 1970), the aim of this chapter is to assess the variations between displayed objectives of policies in the countries studied and the realities of their implementation. Each country has to cope with various and numerous difficulties in its implementation of integration policies for young people. As the implemented schemes in all the countries appear to be relatively recent and constantly readjusted, we will adopt, for the analysis, the traditional but still enlightened precautions recommended by Barret and Fudge (1981). They stressed the need 'to consider implementation as a policy/action continuum in which an interactive and negotiative process is taking place over time between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends' (p.25) (Quoted by Ham & Hill, 1993, p.131).

In a wider perspective, the reforms of integration through training policies are taking place in a global evolution of the role of national states. The fluid situation in terms of power (and of confusion of powers) created by the European integration process can not only be interpreted in terms of the withdrawal of state power. The formation of the European Union has in fact been consciously driven by national states which have knowingly used closer integration to transform their economies, their welfare systems and state apparatuses. In many ways the national states can be viewed as having defined a European system of constraints to justify domestic reforms. That is not all however because the European integration process has its own institutional and political dynamic that greatly exceeds the control of the states. Unquestionably, the formation of the European governance creates a change of scale that provokes a vertical and horizontal dilution of the national state. It has lost its monopoly and has to cope with, for instance, intergovernmental networks that are overtaking and by-passing it. This is an essential element to the thesis that national states are relaxing their hold. Local authorities, marginal interest groups, within the national political system, have found, in the formation of the European political area, the opportunity to organise themselves trans-nationally at a European level. The game has opened up in new way, giving in some cases more autonomy and opportunities to actors (Le Galès, 1999; p. 650).

In fact, in recent years, all the countries studied through this project have put on the agenda the issue of integration through training for young people. This move is due to an overall awareness of the high rates of youth unemployment across the countries but also to an awareness of global demands regarding the modernisation of welfare systems. As young people represent a category of population for whom the transition to work appears both problematic and essential to ensure the future of welfare (and economic) systems, the countries have implemented sets of schemes whose common objective has been to improve the transition from school to work. Either in the mainstream of the European Union (Compston, 1997) or in the framework of national traditions (King, 1995), they have emphasised this issue by introducing large and ambitious reforms to tackle youth unemployment. In doing so, national and regional governments, and the professionals in charge of schemes, have had to cope with mismatches and constant shifts due to the processes of implementation.

The problems of implementation are linked to multidimensional factors, not only due to the contents and ambiguities of the policy-making processes (at national and local levels), or to the influence of globalisation and European welfare reforms, but also to the socio-economic contexts (rates of youth unemployment, types of actors involved, path-dependency effects, respective roles of the state, family and social partners toward young people, etc.). In this situation, each country has to overcome a specific range of difficulties to implement the said policies and to produce end results. Having said this, a number of transversal analytical frameworks can be utilised to analyse the ongoing variations between policy and implementation across the eight countries. Among these are the differentiation of integration schemes, the implications of the relationship between local and national levels, the role of partnerships, the integration schemes facing young people, models of counselling and the emergence of ‘unemployment industries’.

5.2 Differentiation of Integration Schemes

In the sector of integration through training, all the country studies reveal a twofold pressure that determines the specific nature of the policies under consideration. On the one hand, each country is placed under global pressure to reform their welfare systems and in doing so, their employment policies toward young people. On the other hand, the reforms are taking place in national contexts that are determined by social, economic, cultural and historical traditions that place an emphasis upon strong path-dependant trajectories (Pierson, 1996). Taking these pressures as read, dimensions of these policies

can be examined to compare their implementation. These dimensions include their strengths and weaknesses, their diversity and flexibility, and the stringency of their delivery.

5.3 Strengths and Weaknesses

Across the eight countries studied, the question of youth unemployment has recently led to new experimentation or, at least, to rationalisation of former situations. Each scheme or programme studied can be characterised by a desire for renewal and a better response to the issue of integration and the problem of youth unemployment. All schemes are however criss-crossed by a set of strengths and weaknesses that affect their implementation and success. In most countries, the strengths and weaknesses of the integration schemes appear paradoxically to be closely linked (such as the clarity of the objectives, the quantitative aspects of the programmes, the self-evidence of the given limits of youth). If, for instance, the quantitative aspects of certain schemes are analysed, we can either argue that a clear threshold (95 % of educated young people in the Danish case, for instance) constitutes a strong measure of success, or deem that such a given objective represents a weakness insofar as it tends to ignore some cultural, social and even financial constraints. A similar analysis could be developed concerning the aims of the German and French programmes whose procedures are very precise but which in fact, do not necessarily correspond to the experiences of young people and could explain the large number of 'dropouts'. Beyond this type of connection, the strengths of the various programmes appear influenced both by the previous national situation and the intensity of the political will to reform this field of intervention:

- The Spanish programmes could be characterised by *an attempt at rationalisation* of the former situation. This attempt is not presented as a major change but as something that may, possibly, get results. This situation has been well illustrated by one of the interviewees: 'I think that the National Employment Plan is not very ambitious! It's the same as it was before, although they talk about fighting against long-term unemployment, preventive actions versus palliative actions, active measures versus passive measures... I think that there is nothing new! From my point of view, it is very traditional and conservative, and it hasn't any new element! And I reckon that, in the end, what counts is how the plans are carried out, more than what is done. Because there is nothing more to invent about what we have to do!' (Excerpt from the Spanish Report)
- Italian policy aims at *promoting an integrated and ambitious package of reforms* which aim to increase the employment opportunities for young people,

to bring about sustained economic growth in the regions characterised by higher unemployment, and to reform the welfare system (reduction of the burden of taxation, with special regard to the burden weighing on labour; development of social consultation, reform of public administration and processes of de-centralisation)

- The Swedish, German and French policies can be characterised by the *substantial resources devoted to the recent schemes*, together with a strong support from public opinion. Although each country has adopted a specific set of policies, the political will that oversees these schemes appears, if partly symbolic, at least very strong. The programmes are structured around quantitative goals that act more or less as a trigger (Weaver, 1990) and that justify by themselves the implementation of policies.
- The Danish, Dutch and British policies focus on the *introduction of a qualitative and individualised approach*, together with the existence of various options offered to young people. On these points, the three cases are particularly explicit. In the British case for example, the New Deal for Young people is assessed by respondents as constituting a decisive ‘shift away from mass, inflexible and impersonal programmes which took no account of the needs and desires of the individual, to a qualitative client centred approach where the perceived needs and interests of the individual play a key role in determining the types of counselling, training and employment on offer. The period associated with the initial Gateway period (up to four months) is deemed crucial, as is the role of Personal Advisor whose relationship with clients is one of continuity throughout’ (UK 2nd National Report).

On the other hand, the weaknesses of the schemes are tied to both global and national pressures. The *shared weaknesses* (at least in most of the cases) are related to:

**the ways of relating demand and supply of work to each other.*

‘Finally, placement and outflow seem to be more an issue of relating demand and supply to each other’ (excerpt from the Dutch Report) ; ‘In many cases, professional training is chosen according to organisational facilities (equipment, personnel) and is not in tune with local labour market needs’ (excerpt from the German Report). “A problem of the Swedish labour market is that the businesses and occupations that are expanding often have different needs of qualifications and skills to those the job-seekers provide’ (excerpt from the Swedish Report).

**the rudimentary definitions of youth (its transition and role within society).*

‘Another key opinion we have found in the interviews implies that youth is a “temporary fact”, youth is a “matter of age”, in a word, it is a transition, it is a stage in life. This conception of youth reflects the implementation of the programmes directed towards young people and implies progress. Nevertheless, the people in charge of them do not take into account other aspects of major importance for young people due to their consequences. For instance, the extent of casual labour, the continuous entry-exit of the labour market, the period of waiting, the number of courses taken, and the long period of residence with their families’. (excerpt from the Spanish Report).

**the uncertainty concerning the public authorities which are competent for dealing with young people.*

‘Nobody currently knows which public authority is competent for the struggle against youth unemployment. The greatest confusion exists between the decentralisation of professional training due to the attempt to involve social partners in this policy and the latest programmes that represent a token of the crucial interest of the State in this issue. Not only does the latter not lean on the regional level to implement its policies, but it considers that municipalities, by means of “Missions locales”, are the most appropriate partners to deal with the question of the most excluded young people’ (excerpt from the French Report). ‘The role of youth policy with regard to youth transitions is influenced by the rather weak role of national youth policy. The Ministry of Youth provides mainly legal frameworks for the monitoring of youth policies whereas main responsibilities are held at the level of local authorities’ (excerpt from the German Report).

**the definition of motivation and employability which remain loose and ambiguous*

‘With the definition of employability being so problematic it would seem then that its definition and measurement in relation to the New Deal can only be resolved using the somewhat trite formula of the ability to obtain and retain employment’ (excerpt from the 2nd UK Report). Several reports also underline the existence of yo-yo effects as far as youth unemployment is concerned (Spain, Germany, UK). This element tends, of course, to weaken the legitimacy of the programmes: ‘However, those considered in most need of employability skills have come increasingly to the fore through either the revolving door of the labour market or the application of sanctions’(excerpt from the 2nd UK Report).

**Some weaknesses are mainly related to particular national characteristics.*

In this sense, they can be considered as path-dependence processes. In fact, as Pierson (1996) has demonstrated, they reveal processes of routinisation, effects of co-ordination and adaptive anticipation which, when they are combined, represent obstacles to any change of stature. Thus:

- *the Italian schemes lack human and economic resources as well as evaluation of the policies
- *the Spanish policies can be characterised by their lack of innovation
- *the British programmes have introduced a system of social control which could be detrimental to the precariousness of certain groups of young people
- *the German policies seem to more or less ignore the evolution of the labour market structure
- *the French programmes lack co-ordination between actors and efficiency as far as excluded young people are considered
- *the Dutch case has to cope with the negative effects of privatisation of parts of the public sector
- *the Danish policies have failed to include young people from minority ethnic backgrounds (fieldwork in Copenhagen illustrated that, for example, young people from the Danish ‘colony’ of Greenland are at particular risk of exclusion), or those with mental health problems;
- * the Swedish schemes have led to a situation where, apart from higher education, a young person has nowadays less choice to enter the labour market and has to cope with narrowed forms of transition.

5.4 Diversity and Flexibility

Most of the countries studied have to deal with the increasing diversity of actors, sectors, territories and agencies concerned in the launching of integration through training policies for young people. This can certainly be considered as a global trend in social policies in the context of Europe (Liebfried and Pierson, 1998). Nevertheless, it appears particularly true in the field of unemployment policies: ‘Individual countries are decentralising their systems and introducing greater local discretion, often coupled with introducing more competition in the delivery of public employment services... In many countries ... there is also a trend to integrate and co-ordinate the services of a whole range of agencies, from vocational guidance and employment advice through to welfare and social assistance services, into what are described as “one-stop” or “one-counter” services. The aim is to improve effectiveness and individual and employer access through the creation of a more coherent and integrated gateway to benefits and services’ (Finn, 2000, p.44). These moves have a considerable

impact in all the countries studied in increasing the complexity of the implementation of policies.

As an example the French situation illustrates this general trend. Since the beginning of the eighties, the local authorities (at regional and municipal levels) are supposed devise answers to the problem of youth unemployment. Despite the laws of decentralisation and the creation of the 'Missions locales pour l'emploi des jeunes', the central state does however still intervene in this issue. This is done not only by directly launching new schemes (e.g. the NSNE programmes) but also by introducing new actors (e.g. the Ministry of Education, and the National police force) without regulating the relationships between the different arenas. In France, the issue of integration of young people falls within the competence of each public authority. This seems to represent, above all, a brake for public action insofar as the multiplicity of actors introduces more confusion than co-operation or co-ordination.

As a consequence of this diversification, at the implementation level, the professionals have to fight against the lack of flexibility due to the overall short-term conceptions of the programmes and against the diversity (and even sometimes the contradictions) of aims. This trend seems particularly visible in the German case: the professionals 'saw also a general lack of flexibility in structure and handling of employment service measures, e.g. regarding length of measures or eligibility criteria not respecting individual needs. From their perspective these effects are further worsened by the short-sightedness of institutional actors measuring success of projects and courses with regard only to the rate of placements (in further employment training)'. In most of the countries, the schemes include very strict quantitative objectives that are hanging largely over implementation insofar as they are considered as more central than the struggle against the precariousness of young people's transition routes.

5.5 Stringency of Delivery

Stringency of the delivery is another element of importance when considering the differentiation of integration schemes. In fact, if the stringency of the delivery represents a problem for implementation, it is also closely linked to the attempt to adapt welfare states to a professed scarcity of resources while maintaining a certain level of social protection. As argued by Waddan (1997, p. 170): 'The problematic messages emerging from the welfare state debate can be briefly encapsulated as follows: 1. The popular desire to reduce the tax burden implying a need for government to downsize the welfare state, versus the popularity of some of the most expensive Government programmes; 2. The

changed nature of economic competition which left the business community demanding lower tax rates in order to provide incentives for business and high income earners, versus the need for the state to protect those who lost their economic security as a result of these economic forces beyond their control’.

Consequently, at implementation level, the degree of stringency varies mainly according to two factors: the closing of the labour market and the importance of workfare conceptions. The first factor has been largely developed in the Swedish and German cases. In the Swedish case, the result of this situation, leads to a monotype of proposal: ‘the main strategy to meet the development of the labour market and to lower the high unemployment rate has been more educational efforts. Further, the goal with many of the labour market measures has been to get the unemployed into education. The reason for this is that the lower educated among young people is perceived as a result of a mismatch between supply and demand’.

In the German case, the stringency of delivery varies according to territorial and sectoral factors. In East Germany and in ‘traditional sectors’ (such as manufacturing), the closing of the labour market has heightened negative effects. This scarcity includes many consequences like the lack of modularised pathways. For instance, as the report says, ‘mainly in rural areas, many young people opt for “legitimate dropping out”. They complete their apprenticeship- in order to avoid the stigma of having dropped out- and then start a new one, go back to school, or prefer working in unqualified jobs’. Another consequence is that young people are often offered only one placement: ‘instead of giving way to young people’s curiosity to explore different fields often young people are offered just one placement with the expectation that they will apply for training in exactly this company’.

The second factor that influences the stringency of the delivery is related to the development of workfare conceptions as a means of tackling dependency and, more broadly, of maintaining a high level of social protection. Although this factor is gaining in importance throughout Europe today (in particular, under the influence of economic globalisation but also due to moves towards transversal reforms, see Rhodes, 1997, and Deacon, 2001), it has not the same impact according to the countries studied. In fact, the Netherlands, Denmark and United Kingdom appear currently more concerned by workfare conceptions even though each of them has introduced its own definition of the notion. The adoption of such a conception represents an important shift in the way of designing and organising the struggle against social risks. This shift has been

importantly summarised by Torfing (1999) who considers that the different implementations are determined by the terms of their welfare-workfare mix :

Welfare-Workfare Mix

Welfare policies	Workfare policies
* entrenched and re-distributive welfare system	* more contingent and “integrative-productivist” welfare system
* passive provisions based upon safety-net metaphor	* active provisions based upon trampoline metaphor
* unconditional rights and almost no obligations	* conditional rights linked to obligations
* expectation that benefits will increase	* expectation of failure of cost reduction

Torfing J. (1999), “Workfare with welfare: recent reforms of the Danish welfare state”, *Journal of European Social Policy*, vol9, n°1, p. 8.

In the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands, the notion of workfare is considered by the state as a useful means of stopping young people settling in ‘dependency’ and of helping them to (re-) integrate into society. Workfare conceptions appear as a mix of an individualised process (notion of project or route) and of benefit sanctions. The latter constitutes a large part of the stringency of the delivery insofar as it links individual routes and achievements to the payment of benefits. Nevertheless, the balance between these elements is not the same across these countries. In the UK, the emphasis lies on compliance and sanctions whereas in Denmark and the Netherlands it lies in activation and the promotion of skills.

Stringency of the delivery is sometimes introduced quite subtly: ‘Very much in the same way that Human Resource Management operates to assert control in workplaces through a process of negotiating consent and compliance by using various devices to create an illusion of common interests and goals, the New Deal also operates through a process of negotiated consent. In the New Deal Gateway clients are constantly encouraged to identify their interests and desires with the aims of seeking employment, attaining employability skills and to recognise that paid employment is the only way to attain a fulfilling and satisfying lifestyle’ (excerpt from the British 2nd Report).

5.6 The Relationship Between Local and National Levels: the Role of Partnerships

A crucial element of variations between policy objectives and delivery is, of course, linked to the quality and structure of the relationship between different levels of implementation and to what is commonly designated as ‘partnership’. The question of the relationship between local and national levels is potentially problematic in the analysis of the implementation process. A policy elaborated at national level always has to cope with the previous situation at local level, with the capacity of local authorities and local society to receive and then integrate the new scheme. The aims of a national policy are always more or less achieved at local level and its implementation leads, most of the time, to territorial disparities (Borraz and Loncle, 2000). In our area of study, the question is all the more important as the decentralisation process appears to be linked with the reformulation of integration through training policies. As Finn (2000, p.45) argues: ‘The reality is that more flexible institutional arrangements are a key element of a more “localised” employment policy which is vital to respond to the partially connected, differentiated, local labour markets that increasingly make up what have too often been treated as homogeneous national and regional labour markets’. Nevertheless, while these disparities exist in all the countries under the terminology of “territorialisation”, it appears much more acute in some of the countries studied. This is particularly so in the case of Germany with the integration of East-Germany, of Italy with the North-South cleavage and of Spain in its regional decentralisation process. In the UK regional disparities in labour markets also create problems for national policy – in the south-east for example there is currently almost full employment whereas particularly in the peripheral areas of northern cities unemployment runs at levels in excess of 25%.

With Germany, the question of the relationship between national and local levels appears as a real challenge insofar as it is related to the Unification of 1989 that introduced deep changes in the welfare system. As the German report demonstrates it: ‘One of the most important public interpretations for high unemployment is the German unification of 1989. On the one hand, this has led to a fundamental restructuring of the East German labour market with the loss of about 3 million jobs compared to the situation under the ‘socialist’ regime. This is reflected by unemployment figures of 10.5% in the West and 19.5% in the East in 1998.’ On the other hand, public spending has increased considerably requiring the raising of taxes and social security contributions of both employers and employees, which has, according to employers reduced companies employment potentials’. In the sector of integration through training, this question has an important impact because of the great disparities of rates of

unemployment between West and East. Although the programme is elaborated as a national one, its implementation has little in common between East and West: 'Comments of those concerned with the implementation of the programme varied between East and West and between small and big training providing agencies. Before the backdrop of the lack of jobs and any perspective of economic improvement in East Germany the local employment service officer approved the legitimacy of doing "anything" to get young people from the street. However he criticised the fact that in the Eastern regions the main problem was the lack of jobs, not of instruments to ease young people's labour market entrance' (excerpt from the German report).

In Italy, the unemployment rates vary considerably between North and South (from a range of 2% to 5.5% in the North to more than 20 % in the South in 1998), reproducing what is henceforth referred to as the North-South cleavage. The reasons for this cleavage and their impact on the political process have been well highlighted by Fargion (1997, p. 149): 'The political process in southern Italy displays remarkably different features to the centre-north: pre-political particularism; an instrumental approach to politics; an absence of collective action; and vertical channels of articulation and aggregation of demand'. Put together, these characteristics can explain the favour given to the creation of a national system of competence and to the Agreement between central government and the regions in February 2000. Although the interviewees underline at first the question of mobility across the EU, a perception is given that may also have been raised to avoid the risk of inequality between young people. 'Training credits are very important because they give the educational system and students a new autonomy. It must be very clear what is going to be considered and what is not, to avoid people wasting their time. Defining standards will be very important and it will require a co-ordination about what can be obtained at school and what can be obtained outside it' (excerpt from the Italian report).

In Spain, the question of the relationship between national and local levels is hindered by the process of regionalisation that has a potential impact on integration through training. In the same way as the two previous situations, the rates of unemployment still appear very contrasted according to the regions (17.7% in Navarra, 22.8% in Valencia, 28.6% in Basque Country, in 2000). In the sector of integration through training, a decentralisation reform has been implemented that has transferred the competence of the National Employment Institute to the Autonomous communities. This reform has, at least, two consequences. Firstly, as the Spanish report argues 'from then until now, the major competence of the Autonomous communities on the subject of

employment and training, as well as the increase in the amount of EU funding and the coming of new policies and measures developing the Employment plans, have stimulated even more the policy of the civil service concluding agreements on the subject of fighting unemployment with all type of bodies'. Secondly and in more general terms, it raises the question of the equality of access to the labour market for young people and it presents the risk of emphasising the existing disparities between regions. Having said that, some authors, in the health sector, for instance, argue that this risk does not really exist: 'The dynamics of health care policy during the 1990s also allow us to draw some conclusions as to the consequences of regional decentralisation for efficiency and equity in health care policy. As for efficiency, empirical evidence suggests that the Spanish regions are much more dynamic than the centre in reforming previously inefficient services, and in introducing policy innovations. As for equity, in contrast to pessimistic forecasts of increasing differences in policies and in the treatment of citizens across territorial boundaries, the evidence indicates a diffusion of policy innovations which may involve a redistribution of knowledge and expertise from the richer to the poorer regions' (Rico, 1997; p.129).

Although they do not necessarily refer to the same types of actors, the question of partnership, of its coherence, cohesion and integration appear also transversal. A lot has been written on the limited impact of partnership, of its marginal role on social exclusion (Geddes and Alii, 2000, Le Galès and Loncle, 2001). Nevertheless, in the framework of integration through training, local partnerships appear central to reach the goals of schemes and programmes. As Finn (2000, p. 47) underlines, beyond the diversity of experiences, local partnerships generally share certain common objectives: 'they are intended to overcome the local fragmentation and incoherence between different agencies and programmes. They provide a forum that can allow groups to combine their resources to develop complementary projects that provide multidimensional responses to complex individual and collective problems. They can allow a more extensive and accessible range of services to be provided through the creation of "one-stop shops" and integrated back-to-work strategies'. As this quotation shows, a lot is expected of local partnerships and the Research Reports tend to confirm this with the interviewees giving sometimes an incandescent power to partnership. 'All the interviewees show the need to co-ordinate effectively all the available resources for labour insertion and the fight against unemployment. They affirm that co-ordination is the only way of reaching efficiency and effectiveness: on the one hand, it will reduce public expenditure (avoiding duplicity of measures) and, on the other hand, it will be

easier for the unemployed to know where to go' (excerpt from the Spanish report).

However, the problem is that the success of a partnership depends on the meeting of several factors which are themselves changing (individuals, processes, temporalities) (Loncle, 2000). The success of partnerships depends also on the agreement of objectives which is not necessarily a foregone conclusion: 'The result suggests a non-negligible divergence between the objectives of the local politicians and the national objectives for the labour market policy, as manifested in official documents. The committee members in the municipalities seem to put some emphasis on population goals and getting people off social assistance and into labour market programmes – in other words, a greater emphasis on marginal groups. This could impinge on the fulfilment of national objectives regarding mobility of the unemployed and the efficiency of measures, (excerpt from the Swedish report).

5.7 Integration Schemes and Young People

A third pole of mismatches in implementation concerns the ways in which integration schemes are reaching, accompanying and counselling young people. Perhaps more than previous programmes, current schemes of integration through training are taking great care to target groups of young people, to individualise their intervention and to promote the role of counselling for young people. The key feature of these three elements is that they are completely transversal and shared by all the countries. As Finn (2000, p. 45) has argued, these elements play a part in post-Fordist reforms of welfare systems: 'A key element of these reforms has been to engineer a significant change in the nature of the relationship between individuals and bureaucracies (...). This is linked with the opportunity to create a more individualised service for the unemployed where individual action plans or "routes" can be devised with different measures being linked to the characteristics, motivation and needs of the person. To service this evolving approach many countries have introduced specialised employment advisers or case managers to create new front-line services providing the gateway to programmes, jobs and support at the same time as enforcing the new active obligations of those receiving benefits'. But, as is always the case with implementation, shifts and pernicious effects can be highlighted in relation to target groups, individualisation and counselling methods.

5.8 Shifting Target Groups

As has been shown at the beginning of this chapter, the policies of integration through training often aim to reach specific groups of young people. The list of

specific groups may be the following: early school leavers, low qualified youth, migrant youth, young women, youth from deprived areas, working class youth, multiple social problems youth and so on. What is emphasised by some of the national reports is the difficulties of schemes to reach properly their target groups by integrating them into the labour market.

At the implementation level, the global failure of the schemes lies in the difficult connection between the battle against unemployment and the war against social difficulties (socially excluded young people, migrant young people, young women). While most public authorities appear aware of the accumulation of handicaps for certain groups of young people, and while they tend to implement specific schemes toward these groups, they appear quite unable to overcome the multidimensional characteristics of exclusion. As a consequence, either the schemes do not properly reach their target groups or they contribute to the stigmatisation of the targeted young people.

To illustrate these shifts, we can refer to the French and British cases. In the French case, the State has implemented a specific scheme – the TRACE (access to employment pathways) programme - in order to take into account the most excluded young people. Despite this scheme, it seems impossible to reach properly the most excluded and to promote their transition to work. As Lefresne argues (2000): ‘Youth employment policy has undergone structural changes since the late 1970’s. It is tending to affect young people with increasingly high-level skills (mirroring the general rise in the level of those completing their basic education). The question is why is it so difficult to reach groups with low-level qualifications, for whom the problems of finding work are much more acuteⁱ Even the recent TRACE programme, which is at the heart of the French National Action Plan for Employment, attests to the difficulty of including the most disadvantaged groups: one young person in two joining the programme already possesses a vocational diploma. The minimal involvement of social partners in helping young people to find work, on the one hand, and partnership problems within the public authorities (illustrated by the awkwardness of regionalising vocational training), on the other, are probably central to an analysis of this relative failure of employment policies’.

In the British case, the question of disadvantaged young people is also central and affects individuals with working class backgrounds. As several of the interviewees pointed out: ‘There is a bottom percentage that I used to think was around 20 %; that maybe was true at the start of the New Deal but I think that percentage is now getting bigger because you are left with the difficult group... what you are left with is people who are going to have to come back for the

New Deal Two. It hasn't failed them but it hasn't got them to the level of job readiness that you would like them to be at. But you live in the real world, everybody ain't going to go through this process and within the first year New Deal has resolved everything for them – all I'm saying is that it is probably greater now than 20 % at the bottom of the whole cake, and something different needs to be done for them'; 'The Task Force thinks that the design works well for people who are nearly there but those who have more problems will not be helped – the nature, intensity and length of the assistance is not sufficient...I can see this being at the heart of the debate nationally with the UK Task Force and within government about how the New Deal has developed' (Except from the 2nd UK Report).

5.9 Effects of Individualisation

The notion of individualisation, of individual assessment is present in the set of programmes developed by the eight countries studied. This is no surprise in this comment, as individualisation is part of current global reform of welfare systems. The Spanish report defines clearly what is the aim of this general trend : 'this assessment has "à la carte" aims; by means of individualised information and his/her characteristics (diploma, personal situation, preferences, desires, motivations) it aims to transfer the necessary personal skills and attitudes, suitable for a realistic decision-making and adapted to the personal and social possibilities of each individual. This assessment tries to guarantee the access to concrete information, according to the individual's needs and facilitating access to a job, overcoming the difficulties of the insertion of the young person'. This definition helps to define what positive effects are expected from individualisation.

Nevertheless, at least two types of negative effects have been also underlined by the reports.

- The first negative effect of individualisation is to lock young people in the employment programmes. This risk has been underlined by the Swedish report: 'as a couple of new labour market programmes for young people were introduced in the 1990's, the possibilities of participating in other programmes available for the rest of the population have been restricted. Added to the fact that economic compensation in the youth programmes is considerably lower, this means that young people, with, for instance children of their own to take care of, have no other options but to apply for social assistance. These changes give another light to the labour market programmes as citizen "rights" in the name of democracy'.

- The second negative effect of individualisation is to link the cause of failure to individual shortcomings and to obscure the structural reasons for that poverty (Lagrée, 1983, Levitas, 1996). As has been shown in the French and British cases, the discourse of individualisation can be translated as 'if you do not integrate society, it is because you lack something'. To put it in the British context: 'If clients' employability skills fail them at this initial Gateway stage they are offered education, employment experience or training options to improve those skills. While the majority of clients are successful in asserting their employability after proceeding through one of the Options, those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds or who reside in areas where the density of unemployment is especially high, either find themselves back at the Gateway for more or less the same or may indeed drop out of the welfare system altogether. Those who have found employment may also though soon find themselves back at the Gateway sooner than later due to the vagaries of the new flexible post-Fordist economy'.

5.10 Models of Counselling

Not all of the research reports elaborate in detail how counselling is put into practice. This may stem from an information gap on the subject, the apparent non-issue of counselling, or perhaps that counselling itself is in an 'embryonic state' and has been of little importance to a particular national context until relatively recently. Nevertheless, approaches that are mentioned are for instance holistic, network, trajectory model, stepping stones, etc. and reflect different types of guidance organisation and imply - but not always - different levels of 'guidance intensity'. In relation to employment programmes, the latter differs in theory according to the perceived needs of clients: those who are considered to be in need of less help, receive - in general - less attention. It is thus not the case that (intensive and individual) counselling is a common method of dealing with all young people thus offering continuous counselling from early education onwards. The countries that come closest to this are Sweden and especially Denmark.

In the cases of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, the amount of support for unemployed young people is identified by a phase-model, whereby the clients' distance to the labour market is measured. For those who are relatively near the labour market, perhaps a short course will be sufficient and a 'laissez-faire' attitude is adopted for a while. For others, especially those who are considered to be more distant or very distant to the labour market, more intensive support is called for. At the most extreme, this would imply a 'holistic'

approach, covering in theory all the different aspects of why perhaps someone is unemployed, or in more general terms, is in a precarious 'life' situation.

However, there is also the possibility of a too great implicit or explicit emphasis on supporting or indeed creating 'model young people' by governments and the executive agencies of unemployment programs. In the case of a local area in the Dutch city of Rotterdam for instance, it seemed that young applicants with more difficult backgrounds were considered to be more adequately helped by other, more specialised institutions. From an analysis it nevertheless became clear that these young people were often required to contact these agencies more or less themselves – the task of giving active guidance was passed on. Furthermore, when young people did actually actively seek out these agencies there sometimes existed an active 'keep out' mentality built on the fear that taking in problem young would negatively affect their 'track record'. This tendency occurs especially in cases of 'output financing' and when output results are supposed to be published publicly (Veenman, 1999). What happens then, is that only those unemployed youngsters are helped that more or less 'fit' the notion of 'model youth', and those who don't, are the ones that are deprived of what is much needed support. Similar situations regarding 'problem young people' and output figures exist in the United Kingdom as well, where employment centres are required to meet closely monitored performance targets – this is especially so in relation to 'getting people off the unemployment register' and hence off state benefits.

On a general level, (intensive) counselling methods that are used in labour market programmes and less so in the educational system, can be seen as an outcome (or by-product) of the dominant supply-side measures that have become so widespread in dealing with the unemployed. The 'individualisation of unemployment' (i.e. employability) requires of course an individual approach. Counselling then is perceived as essentially a good thing, making way for an approach that, in theory, recognises the needs and interests of individual clients, instead of the 'inflexible and impersonal mass programmes' that took no account of such needs at all (UK 2nd National Report). However, although a holistic approach may thus be deemed important, the communication between different departments that is essential for this approach is in the countries under discussion certainly not optimal yet, to say the least. The co-operation between departments is often characterised by 'chain responsibility', in other words, each agency is responsible for (only) that part of the trajectory of which they are responsible with regards to its content. Consequently, nobody is responsible for the whole trajectory and young people tend to 'get lost' along the

way, as for instance is the case in the Netherlands (Spies, 1998; Veenman, 1999).

5.11 Contradictory Implications of Different Counselling Contexts and Target Groups

Within employment programmes, counselling can be seen as a method of gaining *control* over clients. This is done by a process of 'negotiated consent', by creating the illusion of common goals and interests. Clients are constantly encouraged to identify their interests and desires with the aim of finding employment, attaining employability skills and 'to recognise that paid employment is the only way to attain a fulfilling and satisfying lifestyle' (UK 2nd National Report). Within that frame of reference, counselling in *unemployment programs* is therefore meant to narrow down Options within a relatively short period of time, while counselling within an *educational setting* is often much more positively geared to possibilities, orientation, a longer time frame, etc. Denmark may be a good example for the latter form, while in other countries as well, the need at least, for 'permanent counselling' is articulated, from early education onwards (especially in Germany).

Thus notably in the case of the United Kingdom, the term 'holistic' comes to imply a negative situation, far more related to responsibilities, individual traits and social (dis-) abilities. In that sense, the holistic counselling approach may be regarded as a 're-socialisation approach' (UK 2nd National Report), whereby problems have to be tackled by techniques of empathy, re-motivation, but also through (soft) pressure, i.e. the carrot and the stick principle. Contrasted to this, there is also the understanding of the term in relation to the negotiation rights and the provision of a power-balance, meaning that a counselling situation should be neutral and without the threat of possible punishment in the background. A (formal) educational setting is more likely to resemble this latter situation. Individual counselling is sometimes / often based on assumptions concerning the causes of unemployment. These are, especially in the cases of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, sought in the ideological conception of an 'underclass' and a 'culture of dependency'. Counselling, including the emphasis on 'rights and responsibilities', becomes then a process of re-socialisation; from a deviant subculture to the dominant norm (UK 2nd National Report). Finally, it is often so that individual, intensive and long-term counselling is hampered by a lack of time, expertise and resources, as for example was mentioned in the cases of Germany and the Netherlands.

Another issue involves the possibility of miscommunication between client and Advisor. This may stem from the already earlier mentioned 'cultural bias', but

also from different, often implicit expectations of both actors. The underlying reasons that are mentioned in Reports include for instance the lack of a permanent guidance counsellor or the often too formal use of the language of agencies. Consequently, if counselling help does not take place in an adequate manner or is reacted upon negatively, young people will be reinforced in their deprived situation and they will be offered no chance to improve their circumstances. Furthermore, questions must be raised in how far counselling actually helps young people in making right choices, etc. and whether young people perceive counselling as helpful and meaningful. Equally, the notion of a normal biography and an emphasis on the function of institutions as mediators between individuals and the labour market, seems very strong and leads often to (structural) bias replication, especially with regard to women and ethnic minorities. The latter group may also be experience difficulties in counselling processes due to language problems, cultural differences and the dominant discourse in relation to young people (as for example in Denmark where, very simply put, education is regarded as the answer to everything).

5.12 Conclusion: the Emergence of ‘Unemployment Industries’ due to Privatisation and Subsidiarity

This final section of this chapter is, like the others, related to the general reforms of welfare systems. The emergence of ‘unemployment industries’ appear to be more or less present in all the countries studied and is related to the privatisation of training delivery which can take a number of different forms. Young (1986) identifies seven distinct forms of the process, including ‘the selling of public sector assets and the contracting out of services to the private sector. The privatisation of welfare delivery is included both of these forms, as well as the encouragement of welfare provision by the private sector as an alternative to public sector provision, and the application of market principles to the operations of delivery agencies... Thus privatisation involves much wider and deeper changes than is usually appreciated’.

In the field of integration through training, the introduction of private companies has in turn introduced new methods and influences to the management of public services. These changes have been particularly highlighted in the Dutch and Spanish reports. As the Dutch report demonstrates, the privatisation process is giving rise to a lot of controversy: ‘On the one hand, some see advantages, as local policy-makers are for instance not forced by law anymore to do business exclusively with public providers of employment, training places, trajectories, assessment programmes, etc. and policy-sectors have to think more in terms of result. On the other hand, the opening up of the “unemployment market” for private companies, but also the fact that

(privatised) public sectors involved in this now also have to work according to the same conditions, leads to the fear that “input” or “buying in” and these “output” numbers are becoming more and more important’. From the same perspective, the Spanish reports recommends caution toward the privatisation process: ‘In the interviews, the necessity to re-pose the question and to co-ordinate this market “unemployed-subsidy” is clear. They criticise the fact that the market creates a self-referring dynamic where it happens to go looking for the unemployed and seeking the subsidies... This brings to question the whole purpose of the situation, the agreements with the private markets should be limited, with programmes operating as long as possible with available state resources, as in the case of training, and envisaging the conclusion of agreements with non-profit-making bodies such as NGOs’.

This last element of the problems of implementation relates to the threats that are hanging over welfare systems in terms of neo-liberal retrenchment. Welfare systems have currently to deal with the issue of their conflict with the deregulating, privatising and liberalising logic of globalisation and the pressures that this logic has on their capacity to take care of their traditional vulnerable target groups (children, young people and disabled and elderly people). More broadly this chapter shows, at the implementation level, the deeply rooted difficulties for national systems to fulfil the aims of integration through training policies in the contexts of European integration and of welfare reform.

Chapter 6

Explaining Structural Variations in Youth Employment Policies

6.1 Concepts of Youth and Youth Unemployment in the Context of Different Welfare Regimes and Transition Systems

Probably the most influential contribution to the social scientific comparison of modern welfare societies has been the concept of 'regimes' of 'welfare capitalism' developed by Esping-Andersen (1990). By reconstructing historical constellations of social, political and cultural hegemony he suggests three types of welfare systems: social-democratic (mainly Scandinavian countries), liberal (mainly Great Britain and North America) and conservative (West and South Europe). While influential, this model of welfare regimes has also provoked much criticism and development. One critical perspective put forward by Lewis and Ostner (1994) regards the gender perspective, i.e. the access of women to social security. Here depending upon the level of women's dependence on individual employment or on an employed husband they distinguish strong from weak 'male breadwinner models'. Another critical development of Esping-Andersen's model is that advanced by Gallie and Paugam (2000) who suggest that the specificity of social contexts need to be given more attention when categorising different forms of welfare regime. For example, in southern Europe it is widely accepted that the family should continue to operate as a support mechanism to compensate the weakly developed welfare state.

Whatever the model developed though, the fields of welfare and labour market regulation and their supportive subsystems (systems of education and training) are considered to have logic of their own. According to Allmendinger (1989) 'standardisation' and 'stratification' are the most important distinctive criteria of education and training systems. Whilst standardisation refers to the comparability of courses and qualifications, stratification refers to the selectivity of schools and the varied levels of labour market recognition of different courses and qualifications. It will be shown in the following sections of this chapter that only some of the countries under investigation do operate in accordance with the welfare regime models they are normally allocated to directly and there are also some hybrid constellations – this is especially the case if recent reforms and developments are taken into account.

It is clear that welfare and employment regimes as well as structures of education and training are the main factors which influence policies against

youth unemployment. In accordance with Esping-Andersen, these constellations might be referred to as 'transition regimes' (Walther, 2000). Labour market structures, institutional settings and cultural patterns merge and create assumptions of 'normality' which govern both the definition of problems and the logic of policy measures adopted. In the following sections of this chapter the concepts of youth inherent to the different national policies will be analysed. This will take place through two steps. First, these concepts will be questioned with regard to the developmental tasks (cf. Havighurst, 1975) that these policies allocate to young people, the dominant explanations for youth unemployment which are inherent to them, and to what extent they support workfare or activation programmes. The latter programmes can be seen as the new 'post-modern' way to address young unemployed people. The second sub-section will assess the focus of policies and the main target groups which they address in relation to respective labour market contexts.

6.2 Assumptions Regarding the Developmental Objectives of Young People

It is clear from the empirical research data that there is evidence to suggest that country to country the prime societal/developmental objectives of young people are socially and institutionally defined in different ways. The following ideal types can be constructed which help to illustrate this difference: economic independence (UK); adaptation to social position (Germany); construction of individual biographies (Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, France); and the struggle to create an independent status (Italy and Spain). These ideal types (explained in more detail below) help to give some clarity to the shifting picture across the researched countries with regards to the prime developmental/societal objectives of young people. It should however be recognised that these objectives are generally inter-linked and operate alongside each other in the eight countries - the emphasis here is on *primary* objectives. The research reveals distinctive differences in focus and emphasis, while also identifying current shifts in these areas which stem from political decisions, policy making and institutional demands.

Primary Objective: Economic Independence

If older than 18, in the *United Kingdom* young people are expected to show a clear career and labour market orientation. This orientation should either be through an academic route or through direct entrance to the labour market. This is the case even if it means the acceptance of low wages and 'bad jobs'. From a labour market and socio-political view, over 18s are seen as adults. To a certain extent this also means that they are considered as citizens as they have the right to individual job seeker's allowance or to housing benefits (albeit at reduced rates). The emphasis however for young people is on being considered as labour

market protagonists who are economically responsible for their own lives. This coincides with the liberal welfare regime which assumes individual labour market performance to be the most efficient and just distributor of social positions and life chances. The lower the rates of youth unemployment, the more directly these assumptions are put into practice by policies and state institutions.

Primary Objective: Adaptation to Social Positions

In *Germany*, the most important function of education in general (given the selective structure of schooling) and the dual system of vocational training in particular, remains the allocation of individuals to different social positions. This means both the qualification for, and the internalisation of, respective social/labour market roles and selection with regard to positions of different status. Navigation through the system of education primarily means to become eligible for selection, to decide in favour of a particular direction and to undergo a thorough socialisation process. Young people are considered disadvantaged if they do not enter a prescribed vocational pathway – such disadvantage may be due to poor orientations, qualifications or other deficits and may also be derived from social segmentation (according to education, gender, ethnicity, class and region).

Primary Objective: Constructing Individual Biographies

Denmark is the country in which policies are most oriented towards facilitating the ability of individuals to construct their own biographies. Counsellors and politicians on all levels consider reflection upon, and active negotiation of, the processes of individualisation to be the most important issue in youth life. This means that orientation and making choices are viewed as basic constituents of being young. Being young is interpreted as being in education for education's sake (to facilitate educated decision making) as opposed to being in the education system as mode of orientation towards the labour market. Young people considered to be problematic - referred to in this study as belonging to a 'remainder group' are those who are perceived to refuse to play an active role in shaping their own youth lives and the transition to adulthood. In the Danish system of 'edufare' it might also be the case that sometimes those young people preferring jobs to education are also considered problematic.

In *Sweden* the concept of youth has experienced a considerable shift from an orientation towards labour market integration to a more biography-oriented approach. Institutions seem to have accepted that youth has diversified through the fragmentation of life conditions that is concomitant to modernisation. It has been accepted that individual conditions as well as individual aspirations and

needs have to be taken into account. Therefore developmental tasks centring on economic independence and qualification for particular jobs and social roles are seen as singular but inter-linked aspects of the wider task facilitate the construction of individual identities.

In *France* there is a situation where a hierarchical education-related concept of youth development has recently experienced major modifications and shifted to a conception of youth which is beginning to recognise the necessity of individual biographical orientation and search processes. Increasingly it is acknowledged that if directions are not clear, young people have to be provided with a status that includes the right to benefits sufficient for an independent life. New programmes acknowledging the diversification and fragmentation of pathways from school to work and from youth to adulthood have been introduced.

The *Netherlands* is also a country where the dominant concept of youth has shifted from a predominantly allocative-educational function towards the expectation of individuals developing and constructing their own flexible biographies. Compared to the other cases in this model however there is also an increasing expectation of young people to achieve economic independence. This accounts for those with low qualifications or those rejecting education and training as well as those in higher education for whom double trajectories (or a dual system by fact) between study and flexi-jobs have increasingly become the norm.

Primary Objective: Recognised Status

In both *Italy* and *Spain*, society and state have failed to provide young people with an institutional status. This means that the developmental tasks of youth are not specifically identified by government but left to other societal sectors (eg, families, church, third sector) for further definition and regulation with the family being the most important social actor structuring youth life. At the same time however – and obviously necessarily for providing families with the means for an extended phase of child upbringing – labour market regulation has for a long time been confined to secure the (male) adult workforce. Thus structures of social reproduction in relation to young people are partly hidden and exist informally. Young people have to cope with a long wait of up to ten years after school before getting an opportunity to enter the labour market on a regular basis. Before this they engage in accumulating cultural capital and/or experience in occasional jobs either in the formal or informal economy. For many coming from families with poor economic and social capital, transitions are highly precarious. However, in certain social and regional contexts access to informal

work can also be a resource in the sense of providing work experience, contacts with employers as well as social recognition and self-confidence. Given the structural deficit regarding the regulation of youth transition, experts characterise the achievement of social and economic independence from the family as the main developmental task for young people in these countries.

The table reproduced below gives an overview of the primary developmental/societal objectives for young people as presently defined in each researched country, and indicates where current policies have begun to alter developmental trajectories in this area.

Different Concepts of the Objectives of Youth Development

<i>No defined status</i>	<i>Adaptation to social positions</i>	<i>Economic independence</i>	<i>Individual biography</i>
	Italy →		
	Spain →		
	Germany		
		Great Britain	
	→		Netherlands →
	→		France →
	→		Sweden →
			Denmark

6.3 Explanations for Youth Unemployment

Plausible connections can be made between interpretations and explanations of youth unemployment dominating in different transition systems, and respective assumptions regarding the development/societal tasks of youth.

Youth Unemployment as an 'Underclass' Problem

The ascription of youth unemployment as resulting from individual behaviour prevails primarily in the *United Kingdom*. In the context of a dynamic service economy and the expansion of the New Deal programme for 18 to 24 year olds, those remaining unemployed are considered to be reluctant to engage in education, training or employment due their being mired in a 'culture of dependency' upon welfare benefits. Similar interpretations have begun to gain prominence in the *Netherlands* where unemployment is increasingly restricted to young people from ethnic minority groups who are seen as 'not willing'.

Youth Unemployment due to Disadvantage

In *Germany* the main concept explaining youth unemployment is disadvantage. This is related to the notion of individual deficits regarding learning capabilities, social behaviour or language skills. This concept derives from the combination of a selective school system, a standardised vocational training system and a paternal welfare state with the aspiration to 'care' for all young people. Disadvantage thus serves as a criterion of eligibility (or selection) for pre-vocational measures and training schemes provided by social youth work / vocational youth assistance agencies. Disadvantage at the same time smoothes the process of social allocation. There is some overlap with the explanations prevailing in the *Netherlands*, *France* and *Denmark*.

Youth Unemployment due to Jobless Growth

France is the context in which policies conceive youth unemployment most clearly as the result of a lack of jobs. The objective of 'Emploi-jeunes' is to promote the shift towards the service economy by creating jobs in those sectors where market dynamics are less developed (social services).

Youth Unemployment due to Labour Market Segmentation and Qualification mismatch

Young people in *Italy* and *Spain* are in the main vulnerable to risks of unemployment and exclusion. There are two key reasons for this: the first is labour market segmentation according to age which keeps young people broadly out of regular work places – this problem is even more acute for young women or in regions with a mainly rural economic structure. The second, is a considerable qualification mismatch between supply and demand. The mainly school based education and training system increasingly fails in meeting employers' needs. This does not only concern young people with low qualifications but also those with post-compulsory and higher education certificates. Due to recent reforms leading to a differentiation of education and training systems, problem groups are increasingly identified and subjected to specific programmes.

In *Denmark* and *Sweden* it is mainly the shift towards high-qualified jobs in the IT sector which is seen as cause of youth unemployment. Widening the pathways to higher education and the widespread provision of short IT oriented courses reflect this assumption. Due to the high value of individual choice, lack of qualification is broadly interpreted as lack of motivation due to failures in the educational system or labour market institutions as opposed to failures on the part of the individual.

This brief overview shows that there are obvious differences between policies based on structure-related conceptions of youth unemployment and more individualised ones. The latter conception further divides into approaches in which individuals are the carriers of structural problems in as much as they suffer from a general qualification mismatch and thus have the 'wrong' qualifications, and those in which individuals are blamed for being unemployed. This accounts for the underclass model but partly also for the disadvantage model.

6.4 Young People and Workfare

Before proceeding to analyse the different designs of policies against unemployment in more detail, a point needs to be made regarding the relationship between concepts of youth and the implementation of workfare policies - policies which can be characterised as the most recent – and perhaps even most post-modern – approach in welfare and labour market policy making (Carter, 1997). This approach represents a rigid application of the principle of 'rights and responsibilities' in which welfare policies have been re-formulated by both neo-liberal and social-democratic 'Third Way' Governments. Workfare means that for young people (state-funded) unemployment is made an impossible option: either you do something or we cut your benefits! Only if a young person can support their unemployment by private means can he or she be unemployed.

In the member states under investigation in this research, it is mainly in the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark where workfare policies are actively referred to (although similar tendencies are visible in Germany, France and Sweden). Referring to the concepts of youth institutionalised in these countries 'independence' and 'activity' stand out as key developmental objectives. These terms are applied almost exclusively in an economic sense in the UK, and mainly in a biographical sense in Denmark, leaving the Netherlands somewhere in-between. This is also reflected in the differences in putting welfare and labour market programmes into practice: in the UK, the financial level of Job Seekers Allowance is rather low, the options available are pre-defined and – unless available in the local context – do not allow for individual variations. At the same time, the compulsory aspect of the New Deal programme is dealt with quite overtly. In Denmark the income level of benefits is considerably higher and the necessity of individuals' motivation for individually tailored trajectories is much more important than strict adaptation to the dictates of the programme. The differences between these applications of the rights and responsibilities discourse derive also from different explanations of youth unemployment. In Britain the New Deal programme is closely connected to the idea of a deviant

'underclass' of unemployed who have developed a culture of dependency (MacDonald 1998). Workfare is the means to force these individuals into *economic* independence and activity. In Denmark however measures and programmes addressing unemployed young people do not primarily react to the fact of unemployment but to individual lack of *biographic* orientation and activity. These differences should be reflected by using the term workfare in a more accurate manner and hence confining its use to the British (and Dutch) policies, whilst the Danish policies meet the criteria for being described in terms of participatory 'activation' (cf. Van Berkel, 2000).

If we compare these three countries with the other cases we find that a prerequisite for workfare and activation measures is the unconditional individual access to social benefits that can be made the subject of pressure. This means that despite the importance of independence as prime developmental task of young people, such independence is recognised as a status embodied with welfare rights. Excepting Sweden – which can be placed closest to these countries – in the other countries, young people's guaranteed access to benefits is limited or non-existent. In Germany and France, we therefore find an increase in 'either-or' regulation of benefits for those who receive them, but no explicit workfare programme. In Italy and Spain the idea of workfare is quite abstract as young people are not able to claim benefits anyway. Thus in many countries institutions lack the instrument of pressure. However, this means that in many countries also the other side of the bargain – jobs or programmes, are scarce.

6.5 Modelling Integration Policies

It is self-evident that specific concepts of youth and youth unemployment lead to different answers to the challenge of youth unemployment. In this section attention will be directed to the main policy strains or types of measures characteristic of the different national transition systems. The previous section highlighted the variance of young people's access to social protection and the consequence of this in relation to the implementation of workfare strategies. In the following section national policies will be analysed and compared in relation to the priority given to labour market policies (in a strict sense), to general education, to vocational training, and to youth policy. As above, clarity of comparison will be aided by the use of ideal typical models.

Employment-Oriented Approaches

UK: In correspondence with the attainment of economic independence as the prime objective of youth life, the vast majority of British policies against youth unemployment are labour market related. This is visible in the quantitative

significance of the employment Option in the New Deal and is related to the underclass concept in explaining youth unemployment by the notion young people's unwillingness to work. Workfare policies represent an approach which prevents deviation from the employment-oriented route. Moreover, if on a formal level New Deal provides a diversity of Options, the substantive reality of the New Deal is that there are only four available routes and each is either directly or indirectly oriented to the labour market. In relation to educational or training Options workfare may be interpreted more in terms of 'learnfare' or 'trainfare' – however both have a content that has as an ultimate aim of insertion into the labour market.

Netherlands: In the previous comparisons made in this Report, the Dutch system has appeared as the moderate version of the British model whereby the attainment of economic independence is stressed and youth oriented policies and programmes against unemployment are constructed with labour market integration as the ultimate goal. This comparison extends to the role of workfare at the core of Dutch policy. Nevertheless, in the Netherlands this discourse is restricted to low-qualified young people and is questioned with regard to its correspondence with the objectives of the dominant lifelong learning discourse, and the forecast of a shift from low to highly skilled jobs in the economy.

France: Though completely different from the situation in Britain and the Netherlands, French policies may be characterised as predominantly employment-oriented. However in the French case certain ambiguities are apparent. On the one hand France operates a powerful and highly differentiated education system which for a long time was the hegemonic actor in the transition system. On the other hand, aspects of youth policy which acknowledge, support and protect transitions as life situations with a social status of their own can be pointed to in the TRACE programme or the practices of 'Missions Locales'. The strongest employment-related aspect is the 'emploi jeunes' programme which is a large scale public sector job creation scheme. Due to its relevance to the debate centred on economic policy where France is to a certain extent 'bucking' the supply side trend in Europe (also in terms of funding) it may be appropriate to characterise recent French policy as demand led employment-oriented. Compared to the British case – and here the youth policy approach and the labour market approach join in the framework of the French institutionalism (compared to the British liberalism) – the issue is less to force individuals to show an active behaviour, rather than to provide them with the opportunities to live independent lives.

Training-Related approaches

Germany: The transition system in which vocational training plays the most important role is without a doubt Germany. Vocational training continues to be seen as the only adequate route to qualified employment (except higher education which however is restricted to one third of the younger population). The specificity of the dual system makes availability of training places dependent on employers' investment and willingness. This means that in times of labour market contraction or demographic expansion the competition for apprenticeship places increases. Additional non-company-based training is introduced only to a limited extent, new pathways of education and training are deliberately not developed. The problem is solved largely by pre-vocational courses into which unemployed young people are placed in order to bridge a one year gap until new apprenticeship places are supplied. It is argued that during this 'gap year' they acquire skills enabling trainability and thus engendering success in the race for scarce training places. The social basis of this arrangement is the structure of social corporatism in which all involved fear to lose influence if additional structures are introduced. Thus, the system is restricted to react self-referentially within its systemic or institutional borders. In *Spain* and *Italy*, the modernisation of vocational training also plays an important role as part of a comprehensive reform of both labour market regulation and the education system (see below).

Education-Related approaches

Denmark: The transition system with the clearest educational crede is the Danish one. It distinguishes from the others in as much as it questions the priority of employment orientation in any educational or training programme. Instead, individual development towards a participating and subjectively meaningful biography is at the centre of public interest. Employment-related issues only matter in as much as they support this goal. This extends to the direction of activation policies which do not primarily expect young people to engage in the labour market but rather in developing their biographies in the context of the education system.

Italy and Spain: In Italy and Spain, the approach currently being taken can be best characterised as fundamental reform of the education (and training) system as a whole. School age has been extended and vocational education and training have been integrated into a comprehensive framework. These reforms reflect a paradoxical situation: on the one side they aim at reducing the gap between education and employment, yet on the other side they aim at meeting the necessity of a system able to integrate young people as long as they do not have the possibility to enter the labour market and as long as labour market

programmes fail in reducing the precariousness of young people's working conditions. This creates an interesting situation in which at the same time, progressive aspects of educational reforms (i.e. the credit system in Italy or the integration of professional schools in Spain in a comprehensive framework) are introduced, while the education system's first function is to serve as a warehouse. In the long run however, this is legitimate if young people experience education as worth-while in terms of improving their individual biography instead of leading to a dead end. In both countries parallel labour market policies are currently being developed. The impact of these changes on youth transitions is however as yet unclear.

Youth Policy Approach

Sweden: Perhaps it is overstating the case to characterise the Swedish policy approach in addressing youth transitions as a youth political one because in recent decades both educational reforms and labour market programmes have been driven forward as a reaction to the high youth unemployment of the early 90s. Describing it as youth political may though be legitimate due to its legal foundation (thus empowering the youth policy perspective as a possible corrective to the 'hard' policy strains) and at the same time for heuristical reasons. Subjecting education and labour market policies to a youth political corrective – in the sense of youth life in transition considers on the one hand that education and work remain the central structural demands which young people have to cope with in their lives. At the same however time it considers that coping with these demands has to start from the individuals' experiences and aspirations, thus emphasising the human capital oriented aspects in education and labour markets. A central problem in realising such an approach is the necessity to co-ordinate all relevant policies at the local level which might also lead to regional discrepancies between local contexts in which this positive outcome has been achieved and others in which it remains on the level of rhetoric.

How is the youth policy orientation implemented in other contexts? In *Denmark*, one could say that it is perhaps even more developed – but not in a youth political manner – rather in an educational one. In other words, if young people prefer to go straight to the labour market in order to have an income to afford an individual life style it is not on the (youth) political agenda to support them in doing so. This is an orientation which also seems to emerge in *France* where the youth political perspective has gained ground along-side the increase of labour market approaches. Partly, the state recognises a diversification and fragmentation of youth, the support being increased for both early labour market entry to state-subsidised jobs and financial and counselling support for de-

standardised transitions. The discussion on permanency of benefits paid to young people in transition underlines this. In *Germany* the youth policy aspects are reduced to those considered as ‘disadvantaged’ and are conceptualised as additional (compensatory) socio-pedagogical support. This seems quite similar to *Britain* – however in the UK there is less patience and tolerance towards young people. They get their 'second chance' once and then are considered as deviant, whilst in Germany they risk to be held on a continuous second chance track.

In Italy and Spain, except from increasing educational pathways no specific youth political approach can be found. On the contrary, in Italy where until recently youth information centres integrated a professional orientation with a broader information and counselling approach - the recent reform of labour market policy has reduced this youth political influence by re-organising professional counselling and guidance in a predominantly labour market oriented framework. The table provided below gives an typological overview of the policies designed to tackle unemployment amongst young people and their objectives in the eight researched countries:

Table 2: Main Objectives of Policies Against Youth Unemployment

	<i>Main policy areas</i>	<i>Objectives of policies</i>
DENMARK	Education	Education for individualisation through an activation policy (Learnfare?)
FRANCE	Employment	State provides employment for social integration
GERMANY	Training	State and social partners provide training and pre-vocational measures for skilled jobs -> normal biography
ITALY	Education – Training (+ Employment)	Comprehensive reform of school, vocational training and employment policies
NETHERLANDS	Employment	Labour market programmes under (watered down) workfare principles
SPAIN	Education Training (+ Employment)	Reform of education system plus labour market programmes
SWEDEN	Youth	Reform of education system plus labour market programmes in a youth policy perspective
UNITED KINGDOM	Employment	Reform of vocational training, further education and labour market programmes under workfare principles

6.6 Main Target Groups for Policies

Policies cannot only be distinguished with regard to their underlying assumptions, general areas of focus and practical measures, but also with regard to their priority target groups. In this case the identification of target groups depends on concepts of youth and youth unemployment. It can be assumed that policies may refer to:

- *Youth in general* if transitions are considered as potentially risky
- *Specific groups* considered to suffer from *structures of segmentation*
- *Problem groups* considered as vulnerable due to *individual deficits*

The major difference between policies in their identification of target groups derives from whether youth unemployment or labour market vulnerability is ascribed *individually* (e.g. deficits) or *structurally* (e.g. lack of jobs, segmentation)

Policies Addressing Youth in General

In some cases national policies address all young people with regard to their transitions to work without selecting particular groups. These policies are based on the assumption that youth unemployment and risky transitions are a general, structural problem due to labour market segmentation or jobless growth. Such general assumptions can be found in *France* where the ‘emploi-jeunes’ aims at an increase of labour market entrance options in general or in *Spain and Italy* where policies are struggling with the structural deficit affecting the highly qualified as well as low qualified youth. In *Denmark and Sweden* very generalised options work together with individualising measures for problem groups. Individual choice and development are high priority objectives with regard to all young people regardless of qualifications, gender or ethnicity. However, in as much some groups apparently fail to appreciate, or engage in, developing individual plans, problem-group oriented approaches have been introduced. Although problematic because of the danger of reproducing the precariousness of young people’s working conditions, the introduction of youth wages or allowing for fixed-term contracts in the case of employing young people, such measures of de-regulation represent structure-related policies which refer to structural properties of youth labour markets rather than to individual deficits.

Policies Addressing Specific Groups on a Structure-Related Basis

Other policies identify specific groups to be affected more than others by societal and labour market structures of segmentation: inequality according to

gender, geographical or ethnic origin may fall under this category. For example, the extension of regular (but non-company-based) training in *East Germany* is based upon the assumption that – regardless of their individual resources – young people in East Germany have only a small chance of entering recognised training compared to *West Germany* due to the weak labour market structure. Also the encouragement of migrant entrepreneurs to implement apprenticeship places mainly for migrant youth points in this direction. Another example are the self-employment schemes for young women in *Italy* aiming not only at women’s narrow professional choices but empowering them to capitalise on their skills and abilities in the context of a labour market controlled by patriarchal structures of recruitment. In certain cases even low qualifications are seen and dealt with as a structural problem. For example in *Denmark*, the free youth education has been introduced as a motivational incentive for early school leavers and/or migrant youth to stay on in the education system instead of opting for a direct transition to low qualified labour market segments.

Policies Addressing Problem Groups Through an Individualising Perspective

Finally, there are programmes and measures addressing selected groups on the basis of ascribing labour market disadvantages to individual deficits. Individual disadvantages can be physical disabilities but also low qualifications or difficulties in behavioural adaptation to social expectations. The ‘underclass’ concept adds the assumption of ‘lack of willingness’ to these deficiencies, i.e. the ascription of deviance. The type of practical measures which are derived from these assumptions concerning their target group leads either to specifically adjusted educational tracks or employment settings, or to schemes for re-education, re-training and re-qualification. This accounts for the *British New Deal*, for the pre-vocational measures in the context of Social Youth Work in *Germany*, for the WIW measures in the *Netherlands* and for schemes targeted at ethnic minority youth in *Denmark*. The individual- deficit or deviance-perspective increases where the labour market recovers with regard to those remaining in the practical programmes, or unemployed.

Then there are programmes such as the schemes for early school leavers in *Sweden*, or the TRACE programme in *France* which combine individualising (compensatory re-education) and structure-related aspects (status and income). However, there are also cases in which disadvantages identified as structural are turned into individual deficits by the measures introduced. For example, young unemployed women in *Germany* suffer from gendered segmentation as they mostly have higher qualifications compared to young men. They are placed into pre-vocational schemes in the area of home-economics and this choice is legitimised with assumption derived from traditional female socialisation. Thus

structural disadvantage is turned into individual disadvantage and lack of skills. The same accounts for youth from ethnic minorities. Language problems are one-dimensionally ascribed as an individual deficit rather than blaming the failure of the school system to integrate migrant youth and validate their bi-cultural strengths.

The relationship between ascription of disadvantage and policies against youth unemployment may be illustrated by the following model:

Fig. 2: Ascription of Disadvantage and Policy Types

Concept of disadvantage/ Type of policies	Individualising policies	Structure-related policies
<p><i>Objective (e.g. disabilities)</i></p> <p>Individual deficits</p> <p><i>Constructed by education, competition, welfare</i></p>	<p>Compensatory pre-vocational measures (Germany, France, Denmark)</p> <p>Workfare (Netherlands, Britain)</p>	<p>Wage subsidies (Germany, Britain, Netherlands, Sweden)</p> <p>Broadening access to education (Britain, Denmark, Spain)</p>
<p>Structural barriers</p> <p><i>(e.g. segmentation)</i></p>	<p>Pre-vocational schemes (Germany)</p> <p>Language courses for migrants (Germany)</p> <p>Short term skilling courses (Spain, Italy)</p>	<p>Wage subsidies (Italy, Netherlands, Britain)</p> <p>Self-employment (Italy, Netherlands, Britain)</p> <p>Public employment (France)</p>

Cooling Out  Empowering

In general, individualising approaches – if referring to individual deficits – can be described as mechanisms of ‘cooling-out’ (Goffman 1963), as they primarily aim at smoothing social selection in contexts of participation and democratic freedom of choice. An exception might be projects that deliberately aim at empowering young people by respecting their professional interests, their aspirations and their biographical needs - as expressed by themselves (cf. Rappaport 1981) – or which try to organise resources, spaces and opportunities for individuals to develop in this direction (Banha et al. 2000; Walther 2000). Table 2 below provides an overview of the key target groups with which the

policies against youth unemployment aim to engage in the eight researched countries:

Tab. 2: Main Target Groups of Policies Against Youth Unemployment

	<i>GB</i>	<i>NL</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>Early school leavers</i>	X	X	X	X		X		
<i>Low qualified youth</i>	X	X			X			
<i>Ethnic minorities</i> ²⁴		X	X	X	X	X		
<i>Young women</i>							X	X
<i>Youth from weak areas</i>	X				X	X	X	X
<i>Multiple social problems (drugs, legality etc.)</i>		X			X	X		

6.7 Relationships Between Policies and Labour Market Contexts

Alongside institutional structures and cultural patterns, it is obvious that labour market structures and employment regimes influence national policies against youth unemployment. As indicated above, it is in contexts with relatively low unemployment that individualising approaches are most dominant. From the (ideological) assumption that with ‘normal’ qualifications and orientations people get employed, the conclusion is drawn that those who are unemployed must have an individual problem that inhibits them from being employed. This is increasingly the case in *Britain*, this is also the case in *Denmark* and in the *Netherlands* (while there are also hints of this view in *Sweden*). In *Germany* this is still the case despite youth unemployment having increased considerably in the last decade. Here, the combination of a selective school system, a standardised system of vocational training, and a corporatist ‘normalising’ welfare state impedes a shift to a more structure-oriented approach. The lack of a dynamic employment environment also derives from the continuing necessity of accreditation to enter qualified work. These certifications however – due to the dual system – again depends on the labour market providing apprenticeship places. In *France*, a long period of high youth unemployment has led to a change in public opinion and to the adoption of structure-related perspectives alongside individualising ones. The tradition of strong state engagement in the

²⁴ In some countries we find that groups of young people that may be related to as ethnic minorities in terms of social categories whilst being addressed by policies as national citizens (e.g. young maghrebians in France, young Russians with German origins in Germany). Whilst this may be justified as being politically correct it may contribute to ethnicity-related reproduction of social inequality.

labour market (in this case in protecting individuals against the market) is visible in the recent programmes. In *Spain* and *Italy*, individual perspectives are rather weak as the structural problem is obvious – not only a deficit with regard to education and training, but a segmented labour market keeping the younger generation out or in precarious temporary working conditions. This extends even further in rural areas and with regard to young women.

6.8 Identifying Mismatches and Relating them to Different Labour Market Contexts and Target Groups

Clearly, issues of employment and unemployment should in the first instance be related to macro socio-economic and demographic developments (Van Berkel, 2000). Whether there is 'work for everyone' is - very simply put - firstly a question of adding and subtracting. How many people are wanted and how many people are available? In any case, demographic developments were explicitly mentioned as having contributed significantly to decreasing youth unemployment with regard to at least three of the countries under discussion: the United Kingdom, Italy and the Netherlands.

Besides this however, there are other factors that are of importance, covering and crosscutting at different levels of analysis and complicating this above-mentioned situation. Among them there are, firstly, the interaction of the national, regional and local labour markets which have to be taken into account. On a national level, there could be employment possibilities in abundance, but what if this is concentrated only in one part of the country and the mobility possibilities are minimal? Secondly, there could be a mismatch between demand and supply on a structural and also a skill group level. On the demand side, this could be a consequence of the existing national structure of the economy (dominance of agricultural, industrial or service sectors) or due to the structural transition that occurs when one economic sector becomes more important than the other one. The mismatch would then come into being, when at the supply side, i.e. the output of education, does not fit the existing or changing labour market. This may for instance mean that young people who hold the lowest types of qualification are structurally excluded from work because companies expect higher levels of education than before. Furthermore, at the individual level, this is felt by an unemployed person who possesses the wrong diploma or the wrong type of professional qualification in relation to the (local) demand for employees. Then he or she has to make choices: remain unemployed and wait for better times, start training to raise one's qualifications and skills via education, training or work experience, or perhaps make a career switch. Finally, the youth labour market is much more fluid than the labour market for 'adults' and is affected most (and always firstly) by economic

restructuring and cycles of recession and growth (for UK see Robinson, 1994). It also seems the case that in a number of countries the youth labour market is (becoming increasingly) segmented, with fewer possibilities of moving upwards to a job that is 'safe'.

All the countries under discussion are more or less confronted with uneven regional and urban / rural economic development, and a labour market which is more receptive in some parts of the country and in some parts is less. In Germany and Italy this problem manifests itself the most, namely between the western and eastern parts of Germany and between the northern and southern parts of Italy (in both cases relatively little and relatively high unemployment respectively). With regard to Germany, special attention should be given to the re-unification of the country, whereby an enormous restructuring of the economy and the labour market has taken place. In the case of Italy, the persisting structural divergence between the urban North and the rural South is often referred to as the 'two-speed economy' or the 'southern question'.

Furthermore, Italy shares with Spain the situation of an economic structure that is still characterised by the use of cheap and semi-skilled labour, a dominance of the industrial and agricultural sectors, and negative macro-economic performance during the last few decades. While the latter situation is slowly changing to a more favourable one, both countries are in the process of economic restructuring and are experiencing government reforms of economic policy and education, training and employment. Simultaneously, participation in (higher) education and (short) professional training have grown in these two countries too, while at the same time drop-out rates remain relatively high according to European standards. In Italy, the majority of the long-term unemployed are young people who are seeking their first job and are often highly educated. This situation is also a sign of little (initial) structural demand for that particular type and level of labour, i.e. an economy not growing and changing fast enough to fit the bigger proportion of higher educated persons in the labour force. Furthermore, it is also a consequence of the traditional labour market structure in Italy, in which more or less 'steady' employment is reserved for adult workers, and young people have to wait until they can enter this 'mature' labour market. As in Italy - but on a far larger scale, in Spain, insufficient structural labour demand is solved through mechanisms of 'occupational rotation': young people are especially found in jobs with flexible, short-term contracts and are forced to regularly move from one job to another, alternating with periods of unemployment. In Italy, another solution to this structural mismatch and a formal economy providing (too) little demand for labour may be found in casual employment through the informal or 'black'

economy, while the social and economic effects of unemployment itself are buffered by the family (Tronti *et al.*, 1997).

The phenomenon of the increasing importance of flexible, part-time jobs in the youth labour market - and the segmentation that may be both a cause and a consequence - can also be found in the other countries under discussion. In contrast with Italy and Spain however, and apart from Germany and France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark experience at present a period of relatively favourable economic growth and a receptive labour market. The issues of debate in these countries tend to focus on the transformation that is taking place from an industrial to a post-industrial (service based) economy. In other words: the disappearance of 'traditional' manufacturing jobs that require little qualification, and a new demand for higher qualifications, broader skills, the ability to learn throughout the life course and a much more dynamic and insecure labour market. It is the apparently necessary adjustment of the future labour force supply to the changing (future) demands of the labour market with regard to qualifications, skills, etc. that seems to be important here. Consequently, it is the content and structure of education, training systems and public employment services; and the relationship between these, and the changing economy and labour market, which is considered to be a problematic mismatch. Debates centring on how this can be improved are underway and while actual reform goes ahead. In all these countries, one can for instance observe a shift in participation to both higher educational types and from vocational to general education; vocational education itself becoming more 'scholarised'. Even unemployment programmes seem to stress flexibilised 'post-modern' learning and intrinsic values that are considered to be important in obtaining a job, while public - and increasingly privatised - employment services, are to become more flexible and provide better and more efficient services. In any case, education, whether broadly or narrowly defined, has become a key-word nearly everywhere, most extremely so in the case of Denmark, where the issue of the labour market does not seem to play a role anymore at all - only individual development.

Paradoxically, while young people become more and more broadly educated, in response to, or at least in relation to present-day labour market developments, clear knowledge on the value of competencies has lessened, in turn leading to the call for more formal clarity from employersⁱⁱ. This may thus provide a new form of potential (future) mismatching. Furthermore, (traditional) practical vocational training is increasingly 'swept under the rug'. In a number of countries, this is already leading to shortages in certain professions. At the same time though, the choice of an education or a profession that is becoming scarce

in demand or even extinct, may lead to the possibility of following a 'misleading trajectory' (EGRIS, 2001).

Finally, another paradox exists in how employment agencies treat unemployed young people. From a number of country reports it becomes clear, that, officially, discourses are in accordance with structural economic change and the related different attitudes and skills that are needed (lifelong learning, etc.). However, at the local level the practical aim and implementation of unemployment programmes themselves, are often still geared towards getting someone as soon as possible into a paid job (see for example Sweden and the Netherlands).

Given these circumstances and their negative consequences with regard to the changing factors influencing demand and supply, it is possible to broadly 'filter out' those groups that are at risk. First of all, the apparent 'nature' of the youth labour market makes young people in general vulnerable to changes on the demand-side when recession comes. This is common in all of the countries under discussion, but is explicitly mentioned in the Research Reports on Spain, Italy, Great Britain and the Netherlands. This situation is further exacerbated by socio-economic developments, whereby the youth labour market already was, or is becoming more and more segmented and detached from the 'adult' labour market. This 'youth labour market' is defined through temporary jobs, part-time arrangements (especially with regard to females), low pay, etc. and sometimes by little possibility of 'getting out'.

Secondly, for all countries it is clear that labour market demand, both in plain numbers and in relation to the type of skills or education needed, depends on the overall structure of the economy and its labour market and the uneven distribution over regions, cities, etc. Italy, Spain and Germany could be mentioned as the most prescient examples where uneven regional economic development has created broad geographical areas of unemployment and socially excluded people.

Thirdly, Italy and Spain are experiencing situations of strong labour market segmentation and mismatch in a process where the economy is still modernising, mass educational participation is still developing, and both countries have a recent history of low labour market participation and high unemployment rates. For one thing, this means that very generally speaking, there is 'simply' not enough labour market demand to fit the supply of both those young people who enter the labour market early, i.e. a quantitative mismatch. In Italy, the situation has evolved of a very postponed entrance of

young people to the labour market and the young unemployed are socially taken care of within the family structure. Furthermore, there exists a qualitative mismatch between demand and supply due to the higher output of the educational system which requires enough jobs at higher and / or different skill grades, but are not sufficiently available yet. Consequently, both lower educated *and* higher educated are at a high risk of becoming unemployed, and in the latter case also 'underemployed'. Flexible work, part-time jobs, etc., may in these cases therefore also be regarded as signs of a 'catching up' economy. Government policy is aimed at on the one hand promoting (vocational) training and education, to reduce the mismatches, and on the other hand, promoting permanent contracts and a more stable labour market.

Fourthly, in those countries where a transition is being made from an industrial to a post-industrial economy, all those young people with relatively low qualifications are at risk. The labour market will demand more and more higher qualifications and young people who subscribe to the importance of continuing education – life long if necessary. Those who don't and rather aim to enter the labour market (too) soon, are often young people – especially males - who originate from lower class backgrounds and / or an ethnic minorities. At least with regard to the Netherlands, unemployment does not seem to occur directly (because of excess in supply), but indirectly after a downward displacement process (Van Berkel, 2000), whereby the higher educated accept lower level, part-time, lower paid jobs and push downward those who were there before them. These displacement and 'crowding out' effects are however probably not only tied to this phenomenon, but also to more ordinary economic movements, as for instance recession.

Fifthly, especially in the North Western European countries, unemployment programmes seem to be more and more filled with a residual group of young people who have a low level of education or young people who lack the social skills that are demanded. This can for instance be noticed in the United Kingdom, where the nature of the client group is changing and, according to the 'revolving door principle', individuals switch back and forth between temporary training jobs and full unemployment without ever really leaving the system..

6.9 Concepts of Employability

Although at present the term 'employability' is widely used in official documents and by policy-makers and executives in all the countries under discussion, a definition is rarely given, and if it is given, it tends to be vague. Furthermore, the term is certainly not new and its meaning(s) has/have changed over time. According to Versloot et al. (1998, p.43), three distinct periods of

different meanings can be distinguished up until now. Firstly, the 1970s and the period before that, where the concept was related to the objective of 'full employment' (or at least participation) and was aimed at the creation of additional jobs by government who tried to do so by raising the 'usability' of specific disadvantaged groups. Secondly, the 1980s, during which the accent was on flexibility within firms and organisations, a more flexible workforce within the organisation and stricter demands with regard to the recruitment and selection of personnel. Thirdly, during the 1990s the emphasis changed yet again to a focus on the individual labour market career and self-responsibility, self-coping and self-management. Flexibility is now primarily demanded only of employees and job seekers.

Of the inter-linked underlying causes related to these developments, is firstly the 'neo-liberal' political discourse that is currently hegemonic, and which functions to intentionally or unintentionally hide issues related to structural cleavages (for instance issues of class, gender, ethnicity, the working of labour market and educational systems). In many cases, political rhetoric still delivers unemployment programmes as if national economies and labour markets were starting from the position of a full-employment situation. Secondly there is the crisis of the welfare state and the 'hardening' of social welfare policies ('from welfare to workfare') during at least the last decade, whereby individual beneficiaries have to be 'activated'. Thirdly, is the relationship to (global) economic change, the restructuring of labour market demand and the changing transition between this demand and the formal educational system. Fourthly and finally is a more general development towards individualisation in society whereby integration becomes more and more an individual, life-long effort that demands the capacity of actively making – 'the right'- choices.

In general, the country specific research interviews reflect the situation that the perspective of the individual has become the key reference point of all debate. At the same time, within this overall framework of individualisation, differentiation exists in the exact *content* of the concept and the *ways* in which to achieve employability between the countries. If these then are compared to each other with regard to these two elements, the following diagram can be put together. Note that the exact placement of countries should be considered in relative terms, in relation to the other countries in the diagram, and not in absolute terms:

FIGURE 3: Employability and Policy Emphasis

EMPLOYABILITY (CONTENT)	POLICY EMPHASIS	
	<i>Institutional / structural / formal</i>	<i>Biographical / individual / informal</i>
<i>Formal, hard skills, attained qualifications</i>	Germany, Italy, Spain France The Netherlands United Kingdom Sweden Denmark	
<i>Informal, social skills, personal characteristics, individual development</i>		

Employability as Trainability

The highly institutionalised transition (‘Dual’) system together with a major decline in training and employment possibilities during the 1990s, has in Germany led to the conclusion that this particular system does not automatically provide social integration in the sense of stable employment. There are only adjustments to already existing structures and programmes that address young people’s trainability, assessing motivation and abilities, etc. that are sought within this modernisation. An East-German employment officer characterised one new programme, JUMP, as an ‘occupational therapy’ without a coherent strategy. Employability in Germany above all means 'trainability', i.e. the ability to enter and cope with vocational training itself. Those who fail to attain a regular vocational training certificate are considered ‘not mature’ and ‘not prepared’. The German transition policy can at a very general level be described as the ‘pedagogisation of structural labour market problems’ (Stauber & Walther 2000). At the same time, most policy-makers and executive interviewees do admit however, that vocational orientation has become more

difficult, and education, training, as well as life planning have become a life-long endeavour instead of a single decision.

Employability as Accreditation

In Italy and Spain, at present the emphasis is on restructuring the transition between school and work through reforms in the educational system and public and employment institutions (in the latter case for instance through privatisation). Employability is seen as the importance of obtaining formal skills (attempting national, standard 'credit' system for levels of competence) and qualifications, especially vocational ones. The increase of the formal age of compulsory education and the higher rates of educational participation of young people in both countries, reflect the growing importance of having basic and higher levels of education.

Employability as the Ability to Attain (and Retain) Paid Employment

In the United Kingdom, welfare system reforms have led to a labour market supply side 'welfare to work' program which seeks to increase the employability of those who are unemployed, by furnishing them with the requisite skills that employers demand. The primary focus on employment is regarded as the key point of the New Deal; ie, making benefits work to directly facilitate entry or re-entry into the labour market. The enhancement of 'work-readiness' is sought through assistance in the process of searching for, and accessing employment and in the way that individuals are prompted to identify their interest as soon as possible. The assessment of one's employability takes place via the placement in one of three possible categories. These are, firstly, high employability (enough experience and qualifications, help needed to find a job, career advice). Secondly, medium employability (some increase in 'job readiness' vis-à-vis education or training is necessary). And thirdly, low employability (significant increase in 'job readiness' is necessary; need for obtaining a skill or qualification, to gain work experience or to have help to enhance confidence or motivation).

In the Netherlands, a similar approach to that operating the United Kingdom can be found, although the WIW for youth, as the JWG, was already in working order a number of years before the Luxembourg Agreements of 1997. Policy debate seems to be taking place between the reforms of public unemployment institutions (through privatisation and decentralisation), the educational system (formalising informally obtained competencies), and a welfare to work model with strong emphasis on individual responsibilities. However, while the necessity of (higher) education, lifelong learning and other 'post-industrial' economic issues are certainly important within scientific and political

discussions, at the practical policy level, at least with regard to unemployment programmes, the emphasis is still very much on work-related transitions. With regard to employability measures ('primary starting qualification', informal qualifications, recognition of obtained competencies, etc.), the same situation applies. But in general, every interviewee subscribed to the (future) importance of lifelong learning and the importance of attaining 'ability'-types of qualifications, i.e. competencies, for instance the notion of developing a so-called 'career identity' (Meijers, 1998).

Employability as Accreditation and Individual Competency

In France, employability seems to be strongly linked with the level of diplomas, particularly at the beginning of working life. However, as young people today are more qualified than ever (although education remains paramount in importance), the issue becomes one of experience, competencies and 'cultural references'. The existing 'insertion' policies (TRACE, NSNE, etc.) are there (amongst others) to open up new employment possibilities at different skill levels and are concerned with the category of young people who have the greatest difficulties of integration, not only in employment but also in the social field. Simultaneously, there is a broad and strong discussion on the changing world of work and its impact on socialisation by work. One author sees this change and the vocabulary attached to it as a development away from thinking in terms of 'unified systems' (Castel, 1988). While according to another, it reflects a transition from a 'simple' integration or exclusion system to a more complex one within which 'you can not find any unified group or any global social norm shared by education or imposed by social control' (Bailleau, 1991). Training, public policies, etc. should therefore become wider and not only orientated towards needs of education and protection.

Employability as Educational and Personal Competencies

In Sweden, policy attention is especially focused on the educational system in relation to the 'structural change in Swedish working life'. Reform of the educational system is meant to 'provide both broader and deeper skills as compared with earlier (traditional) vocational training'. The increasing national and international economic importance of information will bring new occupations and ways of work, requiring higher levels of skill (in work as well in society as a whole) and the necessity of systems of lifelong learning. The Swedish 'Board on Competence Enhancement' has put emphasis on 'basic competencies', i.e. curiosity, ability to learn, to communicate, to solve problems, as well as basic knowledge and personal skills. The latter include 'social competence' which in turn supports interest in, and the preconditions for a continuous learning - in everyday life, working life and in studies. The ambition

is to create a 'youth education system' and youth labour market programs that are supportive of this goal.

Employability Replaced by Personal Competency ?

Denmark may be considered to be the most extreme of all the countries, in the sense that there is a 'very clear focus on developing the individual and ensuring ones motivation (for education)'. Another keyword is competence, which is seen in the context of *personal developmental qualities*. Formal qualifications are more or less considered to be outdated and competence is both at policy and implementation levels understood as independence, flexibility and individuality ('contextual knowledgeability'). Consequently, those who do not get on at school and drop out, have to be *re-socialised* (through re-education). The process of learning and understanding as well as developing your own individualism is central and the *end* is becoming of less and less importance.

6.10 Conclusion: Integration Policies

What can be observed from the different country reports, is that firstly the perspective on integration and the policies that are a consequence of it, in a number of countries seem to shift from a work oriented perspective towards an 'integration = education' or 'integration through education' perspective. More and more, education, and especially recurring education (i.e. lifelong learning), is considered to be *the* solution to the more general transformation to new economic and labour market conditions and situations of deteriorating labour market terms for young people. This trend can be seen most clearly in Sweden and in Denmark. In both these countries, reforms within the educational system itself (where vocational education is getting less practical, more general, more theoretical, etc.) and within labour market programmes reflect this development. As obtaining a longer education becomes of prime importance, it is at the same time also important that labour market programmes support this ideal. This means that in the Swedish case, 'the programmes for young people who lack basic education have more and more been designed to make it easier (...) to return to school rather than functioning as an alternative to school'. Furthermore, 'often the school works together with the employment-centres in encouraging young people to attain or retain studies in upper secondary school'. Even more so in Denmark the policy is focussed on solving youth unemployment through education. Typically then, instead of introducing labour market programmes, a vast amount of education-oriented programmes have been established.

In contrast, Spain and Italy are countries where in general the issue of integration is still perceived as above all, a labour market or employment

problem. Although in Spain especially, educational participation is slowly catching up in relation to other European countries, the main part of the labour force in both countries is not highly qualified, a problem which is related these countries' traditional economic structures. Therefore much energy is put in trying to make the conditions for young in the labour market better by trying to promote indefinite-term contracts and other contract conditions. According to the Spanish report, 'the excessive precariousness of the labour market, mostly due to its high turnover and temporary nature, means that young people are not able to make plans for their future'. Education and training is mostly sought in labour market related practical training, and vocational education is geared more towards the labour market demand for professional skills instead of educational ones.

The German system of integration is somewhat comparable to the situation in Spain and Italy in the sense that it also concentrates on integration through vocational, i.e. professional training. However, the Dual System in Germany is already highly institutionalised and considered to be an important prerequisite for successful integration. At the same time however this system is in crisis because of a rigid inflexible structure which is not able to change while the economy and the labour market does.

Finally, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and France represent positions somewhat between Sweden and Denmark on the one hand, and Spain and Italy on the other. In the Netherlands, attention is given to reforms of the educational system (introducing, as in Sweden, more theoretically orientated vocational programmes) and promoting the attainment of (lifelong) learning skills via the 'Studyhouse' construction in secondary education and the 'primary starting qualification'. Conversely though, the focus of unemployment programmes is still primarily to get young unemployed people into a job as soon possible. Those unemployed young people who flow back into education are also not considered clients anymore. The latter situation holds true also for the UK. As with the Dutch WIW, the New Deal focuses on facilitating the entry or re-entry onto the labour market as its primary target. In this conception, according to the UK report, work equals social inclusion that in turn equals full citizenship. The British educational system seems on the other hand largely to be left alone with regard to reforms except as regards the increasing involvement of the Further Education (largely vocational) in delivery of the New Deal programme. In France not much information is available on possible reforms within the educational structure. But here also, the training programmes (for unemployed young people) are often focussed on work-based learning, short terms

traineeships, etc., albeit seemingly less compulsive than is the case in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

Unconventional as it may seem, problem issues generated by fragmented life courses and the difficulty of achieving social integration through work, have in a number of cases been tackled with –or at least accompanied by- less flexibility in training programmes. Although much effort is put into harmonising and integrating different systems of education, training, unemployment programmes, etc., public policies that aim to integrate young people into society actually seem to have become narrower, whether this is defined in terms of education or in terms of work. Especially in Denmark, but also in Sweden, the apparent ‘weakening of integration through work’ has made education replacing ‘work’ as the prime method of integrating young people. To quote the Swedish report: ‘to get in touch with working life today, there are less options now than before aside from higher education’. Likewise, integration through work in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom occurs along strictly set out pathways: either full-time education or work / training. Concomitantly though within educational systems there is often quite a lot of flexibility and opportunity for choice due to various reforms. Furthermore, this means also deteriorating labour market positions for those in the most weak and disadvantaged situations; ie, those who ‘just want to work’, may be stigmatised as having learning, social or psychological problems, etc. It could well be that there is a schism developing between those who are in labour market programmes (little qualified and in and out of flexible jobs all the time) and those who are in (higher) education and will pick up the ‘proper’ jobs later on. This possibility is explicitly mentioned in most of the national reports. What should also be kept in mind is that for instance in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the vast majority of (full-time) students and pupils have part-time jobs, and this situation is crowding out those (little-qualified youth) who were traditionally working (full-time) in these jobs. Consequently, early part-time work experience seems to become a part of the wider life experience of those who are in a flexible educational system. This is a development that will perhaps take place soon also in other countries, deteriorating even further the labour market conditions for those who are full-time in the labour market or in unemployment programmes.

6.11 The way ahead.

In Europe today, there is a widespread recognition that the younger generation will provide the human capital upon which we are reliant to compete in a global economy and provide future prosperity for all citizens. Within this, there is a commitment to reduce levels of youth unemployment and ensure that young

people develop the education and competencies that will allow them to operate in the dynamic knowledge based economies of the future.

However, while ideas may be converging, we still live in a Europe that is characterised by uneven patterns of economic and social development. The countries we have studied range from those with extremely weak welfare systems to those with fully comprehensive systems. Rates of youth unemployment and the types of opportunities available to young people display a very wide variation. The eight countries studied here are all committed to reducing long-term youth unemployment. However, the types of initiative that have been introduced are influenced by perceived demands of the economy. In some countries the types of programmes introduced place an emphasis on work experience or on the development of low level skills and competencies. In others, policies anticipate the future need for a highly educated labour force and use programmes as a means of developing a high skill equilibrium.

It is suggested here that the economic divisions that exist in Europe today are being reinforced through the range of initiatives being introduced and that programmes that prepare young people for lower skill positions may be helping perpetuate such divisions.

Indeed, while the Luxembourg guidelines provide a framework within which member states can begin to develop youth unemployment measures based on some common criteria, it is suggested that it is difficult to achieve in a Europe that is still characterised by uneven patterns of economic and social development. Even when the guidelines have been fully implemented by all countries, opportunities for young people (and hence the ability of countries to respond to global economic pressures) will remain very uneven.

It is suggested that the next set of guidelines should focus on promoting the shift from employment orientated to educational orientated models and from the development of skills to the enhancement of competencies. To achieve this, it will be necessary for an equalisation of the proportion of GNP which countries commit to education and social welfare policies, perhaps with Community support from structural funds.

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