

*action on*

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# POVERTY TODAY

## Supplement

Combat Poverty Agency

# Poverty Research Initiative

*2002-2004*

 **Combat Poverty**  
*working for the prevention  
and elimination of poverty* Agency



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## Introduction

Combat Poverty has a statutory responsibility to promote, commission and interpret research on the nature, causes and extent of poverty in Ireland. One component of Combat Poverty's research programme is the Poverty Research Initiative. This supports poverty research in the third-level education sector. The Initiative has four funding strands:

- Research Awards (RA) for academic researchers
- Fellowship Awards (FA) for doctoral research
- Visiting Research Fellowships (VRF) for policy studies in the Policy Institute, Trinity College, Dublin
- Post-Doctoral Fellowships and Post-Graduate Internships (PDF/PGI), based in Combat Poverty

The Poverty Research Initiative is in keeping with the commitment in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, *Building an Inclusive Society*, to develop data and research on poverty. This includes a proposal for a formal and separately budgeted research programme to integrate current research

activities and budgets. Combat Poverty's Poverty Research Initiative is a specific contribution to this overall programme.

This report details projects under the Poverty Research Initiative by Combat Poverty in the period 2002–2004. A summary of the funded studies is presented in a table format, based on a four-fold categorisation: employment and poverty; aspects of poverty; groups vulnerable to poverty; and policy responses to poverty. This is followed by a synopsis of each study and details of the research personnel involved.

To disseminate the findings of this funded research, Combat Poverty has recently developed a *Research Working Papers Series*. The series is intended to make the findings of high-quality research (funded by Combat Poverty) available in an accessible and low-cost format. The first papers in the series will be published on-line on the Combat Poverty website in late 2004.

# Theme 1: Employment and poverty

## **1.1 Flexible Labour Markets: qualities of employment, equalities of outcome – a comparative analysis of temporary and part-time employment (FA, 2000–2003); Dr Vanessa Gash, formerly Department of Sociology, Nuffield College, University of Oxford; gash@mpib-berlin.mpg.de**

The EU has endorsed the deregulation of the labour market as a means of enhancing labour market flexibility and generating employment growth. One mechanism that is thought to facilitate labour market flexibility is the generation of temporary or part-time contracts. This study assesses whether support for the generation of temporary and part-time jobs is an effective policy for labour market renewal, or whether it leads to labour market segmentation. This issue is investigated through analyses of the quality of atypical employment, including working conditions, wages, exposure to unemployment and/or labour market drop out, as well as the extent to which atypical employment leads to the standard employment contract, termed its 'bridging function'. Strong and consistent variation in the quality of atypical work (relative to standard contract employment) combined with evidence of a weak bridging function is taken as an indicator of labour market marginalisation for these workers. The degree to which the institutional context structures atypical worker outcome is assessed through comparative analyses of atypical worker outcome in three countries: Denmark, France and the UK. The empirical analyses are based on longitudinal data from the European Community Household Panel survey and cover the period 1994–1999.

### **Doctorate awarded 2004**

## **1.2 Flexible Employment and Inequality: The Extent and Implications of New Work Patterns (FA, 2001–2004); Breda McCabe, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto; bmccabe@chass.utoronto.ie**

This research investigates the role of flexible employment within the contemporary Irish labour market and makes international comparisons. It draws on the Work Orientations Module of the Irish version of *The International Social Survey Programme* to focus on a number of questions: (a) What is the extent of flexible forms of work in the Irish labour market? (b) What are the positive and

negative aspects associated with flexible employment? (c) What are the age, gender and educational compositions of flexible jobholders? (d) Among people in flexible jobs, is this a voluntary or involuntary choice? (e) Is there an increase in job insecurity and, if so, what strategies do people adopt in response, as manifested in the family and work domains?

### **Thesis submitted 2004**

## **1.3 Tackling Unemployment and Youth Marginalisation: How do work experiences in second-level education shape youth transitions in a comparative aspect? (FA 2003–2006); Delma Byrne, Centre for Educational Sociology, Department of Education and Society, University of Edinburgh; delmabyrne@yahoo.co.uk**

This research explores the effect of both structured and unstructured work on senior-cycle students in Ireland, in a comparative European context. The research first explores what structured and unstructured work is available to students in the countries under examination. It then examines the labour market influences on the educational attainments of those who underachieve. The research also looks at the effect of structured and unstructured work on the achievements of students. The main research methodology will be a quantitative analysis of time series data drawn from panel and labour force surveys. In addition, qualitative research will be undertaken to provide an in-depth focus on case study areas. The research hopes to contribute to a clearer understanding of the effect that structured and unstructured work has on senior-cycle students. It will also contribute to achieving a smoother transition into the labour market for young people.

### **In progress**

## **1.4 The quality of atypical employment and the poverty risks of atypical workers: a comparative analysis of the Irish and Danish context (PDF, 2004); Dr Vanessa Gash, former recipient of Combat Poverty PhD Fellowship Award and now a post-doctoral fellow at Max Planck Institute, Berlin; gash@mpib-berlin.mpg.de**

This research provides an empirical examination of the quality of atypical employment and the poverty risks of atypical workers in Ireland and, for

comparative reference, in Denmark. The research compares the job quality and poverty risks of atypical workers relative to standard contract workers. The job quality of atypical workers is analysed according to their low-pay risk and access to employer provided training. The study also reviews the employment context of atypical workers' households and its impact on atypical workers' poverty risks. The analysis of both the quality of atypical employment and the household context of atypical workers allows us to engage with the debate concerning the suitability of atypical employment as a means of (re)integrating labour market outsiders to paid employment. Labour market outsiders are, typically, workers who have greater experience of unemployment, labour market dropout and intermittent employment. The socio-demographic groups most often described as labour market outsiders are women and young people. If we find atypical workers to be disproportionately exposed to poor job quality and to poverty risk, the ability of these forms of employment to integrate labour market outsiders becomes questionable.

#### **Draft final report submitted**

**1.5 Pathways from welfare to work (PDF, 2004); Anne Coakley, Department of Sociology, National University of Ireland, Maynooth; [annecoakley@may.ie](mailto:annecoakley@may.ie)**

This research relates to welfare provision and pathways from welfare to work for mothers in social welfare-dependent households in a post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. The study will highlight the routes out of poverty and will examine the interaction between current social welfare supports and the pathways that mothers adopt in moving from caring to earning. The study provides data on the obstacles and opportunities facing mothers attempting to move out of poverty and into work. It will also provide data on the gaps in social supports for mothers and will provide information on the effectiveness of policies and programmes to meet the support needs of families in poverty.

#### **In progress**

## **Theme 2: Aspects of poverty**

**2.1 Social variation in food and nutrient intake of adults (RA, 2002); Dr Sharon Friel and Professor Cecily Kelleher, Centre for Health Promotion Studies, National University of Ireland, Galway; [sharon.friel@nuigalway.ie](mailto:sharon.friel@nuigalway.ie)**

The aim of this research is to report on the social variation in the food and nutrient intake of Irish adults. It is based on secondary data analysis of the national health and lifestyle survey, SLAN, carried out by the Centre for Health Promotion Studies. Specifically, the research examines the interrelationship between the social status indicators utilised in SLAN and the food and nutrient intake of individuals.

#### **Final report submitted**

**2.2 Policing and Social Marginalisation in Ireland (RA, 2002); Dr Aogán Mulcahy, Department of Sociology/Institute for the Study of Social Change, University College Dublin; [aogan.mulcahy@ucd.ie](mailto:aogan.mulcahy@ucd.ie)**

There are close links between social disadvantage, crime and criminal victimisation. Socially deprived areas generally exhibit higher levels of crime, disorder and victimisation than those found in more affluent areas. Among marginalised communities, conflict over crime and social order issues may undermine police-community relations in a number of ways. Low levels of public confidence in the police may reduce the levels of support they receive, which may in turn limit police effectiveness, thereby reproducing the public's initial concerns about police behaviour. This research focuses on the dynamic of police-community relations in marginalised communities and considers its implications for community safety initiatives generally.

#### **Final report submitted; to be published as a research working paper**

**2.3 Consumption patterns and measures of poverty (RA, 2002); Dr Eoghan Garvey and Dr Eithne Murphy, Department of Economics, National University of Ireland, Galway; [eoghan.garvey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:eoghan.garvey@nuigalway.ie); [eithne.murphy@nuigalway.ie](mailto:eithne.murphy@nuigalway.ie)**

To calculate conventional measures of poverty, it is necessary to assume the same typical consumption 'basket' for all income groups in the population. The aim of this research is to test the sensitivity of conventional poverty measures in situations where the assumption of a typical consumption basket is no longer taken for granted. Different groups within the population may have different 'typical baskets' based on different expenditure patterns. If the average price of one basket of goods rises at a different rate to the average price of another basket, then measures of

poverty will have to be adjusted. This research examines the necessary extent and direction, if any, that these adjustments should take.

### **Final report submitted; to be published as a research working paper**

#### **2.4 Urban planning – empowering communities in disadvantaged urban areas (RA, 2003–2005); Dr Andrew MacLaran, Vanda Clayton, Department of Geography, Trinity College Dublin; amclaran@tcd.ie; claytonv@tcd.ie**

The significant number of changes in Irish urban planning in recent years has brought with it new opportunities for disadvantaged areas to rejuvenate their communities. In light of this, the research aims to examine the extent to which community participation has been encompassed in the wider debate about regenerating these communities. The research explores the experiences of community participation in the debate about regenerating disadvantaged urban communities. It seeks to determine the barriers to effective community participation in this process. The methodology undertaken in this research includes both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Among the data collection tools will be in-depth interviews with a sample of voluntary sector groups and semi-structured interviews with officials from the Department of the Environment and Local Government. Case studies of planning participation in contentious planning decisions will also be undertaken.

### **In progress**

#### **2.5 Fuel Poverty and Policy in Ireland and the European Union (VRF, 2002); Dr John Healy, Visiting Research Fellow, Policy Institute, Trinity College Dublin; now Policy and Research Analyst, Combat Poverty Agency; healyj@cpa.ie**

This paper reviews levels of fuel poverty across the EU using a new (consensual) methodology founded on social necessities. The paper pays particular attention to identifying and analysing:

- policy blockages that lead to fuel poverty,
- policy implications arising from these, and
- policy instruments and strategies available to alleviate fuel poverty (drawing on international experiences of fuel-poverty policy making).

The study employs longitudinal data from the European Community Household Panel to calculate

fuel poverty in 14 EU states, including Ireland. The research finds that Southern European EU member states suffer from the highest national incidences of fuel poverty. However, the national estimate of fuel poverty in Ireland is among the highest in Northern Europe and, despite Government spending in excess of €80m per annum on income supplements to mitigate fuel poverty, almost one in ten Irish households suffer from persistent fuel poverty. The incidence of fuel poverty is highest among low-income groups such as lone parents and the unemployed. The research suggests that as many as 2,000 excess winter deaths in Ireland are associated with fuel poverty and domestic inefficiency. Insufficient income and a lack of appropriate information are found to be the main barriers to successful investment by households in appropriate domestic energy efficiency. A range of possible strategies to tackle fuel poverty in Ireland is suggested.

### **Report published as Policy Institute *Studies in Public Policy*: 12**

#### **2.6 Measuring the cost of living for low-income groups (RA, 2003); Dr Eoghan Garvey and Dr Eithne Murphy, Department of Economics, University College Galway; eoghan.garvey@nuigalway.ie; eithne.murphy@nuigalway.ie**

This is a follow-up to an earlier study funded by Combat Poverty in 2002 (see 2.3 above). This study will provide more accurate indices of changes in the cost of living for a cross-sectional range of groups in Ireland. The context for this research is the finding that low-income households are more likely to be experiencing increased costs of living than other groups in society.

### **In progress**

#### **2.7 The provision of credit to low-income and welfare-dependant groups: credit unions versus moneylenders (RA, 2004); Olive McCarthy, Dr Michael Ward and Noreen Byrne, Centre for Co-operative Studies, University College Cork; o.mccarthy@ucc.ie**

Although almost every community in Ireland now has a credit union and access to a MABS scheme, moneylenders still exist and, indeed, appear to be thriving in recent years. This raises a number of questions worthy of research: (a) Why are moneylenders re-emerging in towns where there is

already a credit union service? (b) What are the policy and structural implications for credit unions and MABS schemes if they are to help people to avoid having to resort to moneylenders? This research will be confined to a study of six communities in the Munster area. The main objective of the research is to determine the extent to which credit unions are adequately serving low-income and welfare-dependent groups in the community through an analysis of:

- accessibility and transparency of the loan application process
- small-loan provision
- flexibility of loan term repayments
- debt collection processes
- understanding within the credit union of the needs of low-income and welfare-dependent groups.

Trends in each of the above over the last five to ten years will also be examined. The study will determine the extent to which credit unions make an impact on the alleviation of poverty through the provision of suitably tailored credit and the extent to which credit unions represent a viable route out of poverty for low-income and welfare dependent groups by financially stabilising and/or empowering people for the future.

**In progress**

## **Theme 3: Groups vulnerable to poverty**

**3.1 After-school care in disadvantaged rural and urban areas: making choices, having a good time and learning (RA, 2002); Dr Eilis Hennessy, Department of Psychology, University College Dublin; eilis.hennessy@ucd.ie; www.ucd.ie/~psydept/research/child/afterschool.html**

The number of children who spend some time in after-school care in Ireland has increased substantially in recent years. To date, however, this type of care remains unregulated and has attracted relatively little interest from researchers and policy makers. This research aims to further our understanding of after-school care by focusing on four contrasting services in disadvantaged areas (two in inner-city Dublin and two in the border regions). The main questions asked by the research are: Do children attending after-school services differ from their classmates in their socio-emotional development and homework? How do parents and children decide whether or not to use after-school

services? How do children's evaluations of after-school services compare to evaluations based on an objective assessment of facilities?

**Final report submitted; being published as a research working paper**

**3.2 Comparative analysis of the consequences of welfare benefits for the resettlement and integration of refugees (RA, 2002); Dr Treasa Galvin, Department of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin; tmgalvin@tcd.ie**

Over the past five years refugees have become an established feature of Irish society. Increasingly, the focus of Government policy has been on 'meeting the minimal needs of refugees' to the exclusion of any discussion on 'standard of living'. This research conducts an extensive literature review on the consequences of state welfare benefits for the resettlement and integration of refugees in Ireland and, where appropriate, places this in a comparative European context.

**In progress**

**3.3 Researching Our Lives: Teenagers, Community Worker and Academics as Collaborative Researchers (RA, 2002); Dr Anne Byrne and Dr Michelle Millar, Department of Political Science and Sociology, NUI Galway; anne.byrne@nuigalway.ie; michelle.millar@nuigalway.ie**

This research involves socio-economically disadvantaged young people in a research partnership dedicated to creative expression and the learning of basic research skills. Using a combination of methods, inspired by creative arts and new qualitative methodologies, this research investigates the possibilities and challenges of doing collaborative research. Specifically, this study will look at how to help young people to shape the research agenda and to develop, express and reflect on their own analyses of the problems and circumstances of their lives. The project will also produce a documentary based on young people's analyses of their school experiences, focusing on educational disadvantage and early school leaving.

**Final report submitted**

**3.4 Children's well-being and housing in Canada (RA, 2002); Dr Lorna Ryan and Liz Kerrins, Centre for Social and Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology; cser@dit.ie www.dit.ie/aa/cser/html**

The well-being of children is at the heart of the National Children's Strategy. This research project investigates one aspect of this issue: children's access to adequate housing and accommodation. It will explore the development of policy and practice on children's housing in Canada, where this issue is central to government strategies to enhance child well-being. The study will lead to the production of a policy paper on quality accommodation and child well-being.

**Final report submitted**

**3.5 Finding a place for themselves: the importance of housing in the integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Dublin (FA, 2001–2005); Niamh Humphries, Department of Sociology, University College Dublin; niamh.humphries@ucd.ie**

The main objective of this research is to examine the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees as they progress from initial reception to resettlement and (for some) to long-term integration in Ireland. The research will assess the policies and practices guiding these processes, with a particular focus on the accommodation and housing aspects of each of these stages. The specific aims of the work are to highlight the barriers to inclusion and integration experienced by refugees and asylum seekers, particularly the poverty traps encountered, and to examine ways in which such obstacles may be overcome.

**In progress**

**3.6 Poverty, nutritional status and access to food among asylum seekers in the Northwest of Ireland (RA, 2003); Dr Mary Manandhar, Michelle Share and Dr Fiona Hardy, North Western Health Board and Dr Sharon Friel, Centre for Health Promotion Studies, National University of Ireland, Galway; mary.manandhar@nwfb.ie; sharon.friel@nuigalway.ie**

This research endeavours to establish the experiences of asylum seekers in relation to the following three areas: (a) accessing food, (b) food poverty among this population and (c) the nutritional status of this population. This research is both

quantitative and qualitative in its methodology. A sample of 100 asylum seekers will be surveyed through the use of a questionnaire, while a further 20 semi-structured interviews will be undertaken with the group under study. Focus groups will be undertaken with asylum seeker support groups, service providers working directly with asylum seekers and hostel personnel.

**In progress**

**3.7 Young Carers in Cork (RA, 2003); Dr Cathal O'Connell and Joe Finnerty, Department of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork; c.oconnell@ucc.ie; jfinnerty@ucc.ie**

This research seeks to understand the relationship between young carers and factors that leave them at the risk of poverty and social exclusion. The research endeavours to establish a background to the phenomenon of young carers and the impact of the caring role on young carers. The perspectives of carers will be established from the point of view of those being cared for. The services currently available for young carers will also be established and how these services can be better utilised. The research is primarily qualitative and it gathers information from a survey of 25 young carers through one-to-one personal interviews. There will also be a smaller number of interviews with adults being cared for, along with focused interviews with key stakeholders.

**In progress**

**3.8 Access to grocery & financial services for the elderly poor (RA, 2003); Dr Anthony Parker and Fiona Kelly, Centre for Retail Studies, University College Dublin; tonyparker@ucd.ie; fiona.kelly@ucd.ie**

This research focuses on the accessibility to basic grocery and financial services for older people on low incomes. The assessment of the accessibility to grocery services and financial services will include an examination of their physical and social issues. Included in this is the determination of the proximity of the outlets and the choice of products available, etc. The research will analyse the locational aspects of retail services in relation to older people in two areas in Dublin. It will also explore older consumers' opinions of retail services. This will be examined both quantitatively and qualitatively. The attitudes of retail service suppliers will be looked at in order to gain an insight into the strategic nature of retail

service provision. The research will establish recommendations on how retail services can be more accessible for the elderly poor.

#### In progress

**3.9 Hearing the voices of children and young people living in areas of disadvantage in relation their leisure and recreational needs (RA, 2004); Dr Jean Whyte and Dr Paula Maycock, The Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin; ccentre@tcd.ie; jwhyte@tcd.ie; pmaycock@tcd.ie**

The aim of the study is to generate primary findings that map the issues in the provision of leisure and recreational opportunities for young people aged 13–18 living in areas characterised by social and economic disadvantage. The research will seek to

- provide an in-depth analysis of the free-time activities currently employed by young people over a period of nine months and of the issues raised by them in relation to their well-being and the provision of leisure and recreation facilities in their neighbourhoods
- identify challenges or threats to well-being posed by current free-time activities
- establish the obstacles and enablers to the provision of leisure and recreational facilities as seen by providers
- inform policy developments, such as the child and young person well-being indicators and the provision of leisure facilities for this age group, proposed under the National Children's Strategy
- raise political awareness of the reality of living in areas of social and economic disadvantage and the possibilities available for participation in activities considered to be the norm in young people's lives so that the desires and needs of young people living in such areas are reflected in relevant policy
- provide information that can be used to support initiatives in this area and put in place preventative measures to counteract threats to well-being that are likely to be found within elements of the present situation.

#### In progress

## Theme 4: Policy responses to poverty

**4.1 Poverty as a violation of the right to a minimum level of resources (RA, 2002); Sara Cantillon and Judy Walsh, Equality Studies Centre, University College Dublin; sara.cantillon@tud.ie; judy.walsh@ucd.ie**

This research proposes that social and economic rights can provide a framework for redressing economic injustice and linking anti-poverty initiatives at local, national and global levels. Specifically, it explores how legal accountability is necessary to reflect the centrality of social and economic rights. It considers the implications for the legal system of an attempt to provide for the implementation of the right to an adequate standard of living. This paper will form the basis of a core postgraduate course to be taught to students in the Equality Studies Centre, University College Dublin. A modified version of this course will be taught on an outreach programme targeted at local and community activists.

#### In progress

**4.2 Social housing for the future: can housing associations meet the challenge? (VRF, 2001); Simon Brook, Visiting Research Fellow, Policy Institute, Trinity College Dublin**

This study focuses on the role that voluntary housing associations can play in providing social housing in Ireland. It provides a detailed analysis of the administrative system in place for housing associations and of the various actors involved. It also analyses their capacity to deliver on the National Development Plan (NDP) commitment of 4,000 housing association completions by 2006. (This work was published in February 2002.)

**Report published as Policy Institute *Studies in Public Policy*: 8**

**4.3 Cost of healthy eating (RA, 2003); Dr Sharon Friel, Centre for Health and Promotion Studies, National University of Ireland, Galway; sharon.friel@nuigalway.ie**

This research examines the costs of healthy eating for three disadvantaged groups in Ireland – lone parents, low-income families and older people. The three research questions are: (a) How much does it currently cost to eat healthily, as recommended by

the food pyramid and does this vary by type of retail outlet? (b) What baskets of foods could be developed which represent the purchasing patterns of different social groups but which will provide a nutritionally adequate diet at low cost? (c) What do different types of households need financially to facilitate the purchase of such food baskets? The methodology employed in this research includes the collation of data relating to the cost of each foodstuff in the food pyramid, analysis of the Household Budget Survey in order to determine the purchasing patterns of different household types and also an analysis of the financial resources available to different household types. There has been substantial progress in this research with all data collated and compiled.

**Final report submitted; to be published as research working paper**

**4.4 Analysing anti-poverty and social exclusion in the public policy regime (RA, 2003); Dr Eileen Connolly, School of Law and Governance, Dublin City University; eileen.connolly@duc.ie**

This research analyses the place of poverty and social exclusion in the social partnership process. Primarily, the research will try to position poverty and social exclusion in the policy hierarchy of the negotiations on a new social partnership agreement. It will explore the policy parameters that are set by the discourse on poverty and social exclusion during the negotiations of the agreement and in the text of the agreement reached. It will also examine the public debate surrounding the budget processes of 2002. The main methodology employed in this research is documentary analysis. Documents under analysis for this research include Dáil and Seanad debates, media commentary, official publications and Current NESC Report. The discourse contained in these documents will be linked to the outcomes of the partnership process.

**In progress**

**4.5 Affordable housing (RA, 2003); Declan Redmond, Department of Regional and Urban Planning, University College Dublin; declan.redmond@ucd.ie**

This research evaluates the effectiveness of the Affordable Housing Scheme. This is done from a national perspective in terms of evaluating the aggregate impact of the scheme and, locally, by investigating the targeting of the scheme in a

number of local authority areas. The methodology undertaken in this research will involve assessing and evaluating the scheme. This will be achieved by the collection of house price data and income data and also by a review of the progress of the Affordable Housing Scheme.

**In progress**

**4.6 Calibration of Adequacy – a case study of the political economy of adequacy (FA, 2002–2005); Mary Murphy, Faculty of Humanities, School of Communications, Dublin City University; mary.murphy44@mail.dcu.ie**

This research focuses on the relationship between equity and efficiency. The debate about adequacy and the indexation of welfare payments occurs in a context of managing Ireland's position as a small open market in the global economy. The aim of the study is to examine, through a domestic case study of social welfare policy, how Irish welfare policy has changed and how the political process determining decisions about income maintenance development has influenced the trajectory of change. A particular concern, given Ireland's international vulnerability, is to develop a more coherent understanding of how domestic policy is constrained and influenced by international economic and political processes and how Irish policymakers respond to these processes. The key research question is how Irish policy has changed, how the mediation of welfare reform is managed in Irish institutions and politics and whether this can account for the specific Irish reform trajectory outlined in the research. The study will provide a comprehensive outline of how the policy agenda concerning social welfare has been politically managed in Ireland over the past decade. It will detail how international economic developments interact with domestic policymaking and highlight ways in which European and international policy processes (including NAPs/incl, OECD, UN, IMF and ILO) have impacted on Irish models of policy.

**In progress**

**4.7 An examination of social exclusion policies, procedures and practice in the context of the NAPS (RA, 2004); Dr Maura Adshead, University of Limerick, and Dr Michelle Millar, NUI Galway; michelle.millar@nuigalway.ie; maura.adshead@ul.ie**

This study examines how and why the EU came to adopt 'social exclusion', and the implications of its arrival in the Irish public policy context. The study's aims are:

- establish the genesis, evolution and likely progress of EU approaches to tackling social exclusion
- discern how the institutional configuration of the EU and the development of the new 'open method' of policy co-ordination has influenced (and influences) the way that the 'social exclusion' concept has been adopted and spread, both within EU institutions and between EU member states
- establish the nature of the impact of the EU Social Exclusion Policy Framework on Irish policies for social inclusion
- explore how the concept of social exclusion has developed in Irish public policy and how well established and integrated it has become in the processes and procedures associated with Irish policy formation and implementation
- evaluate the processes and procedures that exist to ensure that the principles of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) are incorporated into policy formulation and implementation in our study of key government departments.

#### **In progress**

#### **4.8 Pension reform and poverty (RA, 2004); Dr Cathal O'Donoghue, Dept. of Economics, National University of Ireland, Galway; [cathal.odonoghue@nuigalway.ie](mailto:cathal.odonoghue@nuigalway.ie)**

The objective of this research is to assess the impact on future poverty levels (pensioner poverty levels in particular) of alternative pension-related policies. Alternative policy reforms that will be considered include:

- alternative public pension indexation rules
- reform of enhanced social insurance contribution records for the non-employed participants in the Irish economy (students, carers, etc.)
- extended working life, through flexible retirement policies
- greater proportion of private pension scheme membership
- increased advance funding of public pensions.

In order to carry out this analysis, a dynamic micro-simulation model of the Irish population, LIAM, will be used. The model will project the current

population forward until 2050, simulating labour market and demographic characteristics and incomes under a variety of demographic, economic and policy scenarios. The level of public expenditure and tax revenue will be reported for each scenario as will the level of income inequality, income poverty and combined income/deprivation poverty measures.

#### **In progress**

#### **4.9 Evolving local governance and social partnership – enhancing social partnership? (FA, 2004–2007); Chris McInerney, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick; [chris.g.mcinerney@ul.ie](mailto:chris.g.mcinerney@ul.ie)**

The aim of this research is to explore the degree to which local governance structures have prioritised social inclusion and the participation of those who are marginalised. This will be conducted within an analytical framework drawing on theories of democracy and democratic development, social inclusion and public administration and will be informed by international comparative experiences. The research will focus on four variables central to addressing non-income aspects of social exclusion, namely:

- the development and operation of progressive participatory mechanisms and the nature of, and interaction with, citizens organisations of the poor
- inclusion and equality oriented institutional development within local governance structures
- the role of governance institutions in resolving tensions and conflicts between the perceived interests of the poor and the non-poor
- the involvement of those who are excluded in democratic and political processes, in particular interaction between organisations of the excluded and the party political system.

Using detailed research on these four variables and drawing from a theoretical framework, it is intended to construct a methodology for the assessment of democracy from a social-inclusion perspective at local level.

#### **In progress**



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