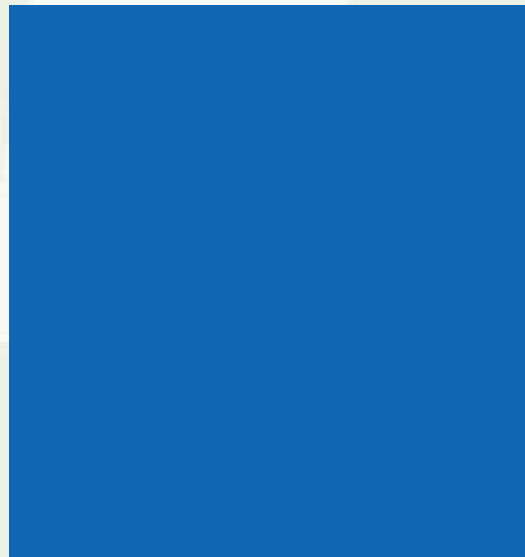# BEITRÄGE ZUR SOZIALEN SICHERHEIT

European cities and local social policy

*Survey on developments and opinions
in six European countries*

Forschungsbericht Nr. 7/04

As part of its "Social Security" ("Beiträge zur Sozialen Sicherheit") series, the Federal Social Insurance Office publishes conceptual papers and research reports on current social security issues, in order to make them accessible to a wide readership and to stimulate debate. The opinions expressed in these contributions are not necessarily those of the Federal Social Insurance Office.

European cities and local social policy

Survey on developments and opinions in six European countries

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Also available in French and German

Foreword by the Federal Social Insurance Office (OFAS)

Although cities magnify many of society's problems, they are also a hotbed of social innovation. These are two reasons why they deserve to be taken into account when designing social policy.

Switzerland is only beginning to pay due attention to the influence exerted by its urban spaces. The integration of social factors in urban planning and likewise the consideration of territorial factors do not feature prominently in Swiss policymaking; and neither does the consideration of cities as stakeholders and partners in defining social policies.

In view of this, should Switzerland not look to other countries that have developed innovative social policies to cope with the problems in their large cities?

The OFAS contacted a foreign research institution in order to take a fresh look at what underpins Swiss social policy and the potential offered by the Swiss federal structure. Of course, the case studies presented here are not directly comparable to the situation in Switzerland. However, they illustrate issues which concern us all and highlight examples of good practice that Switzerland could follow.

This research project gave rise to a discussion involving foreign experts. The recommendations would deserve to be examined further by all interested parties in Switzerland.

Géraldine Luisier Rurangirwa
OFAS, Research and Development

The present study is published in English, French and German.

Premessa dell'Ufficio federale delle assicurazioni sociali

Le città fungono da amplificatori dei problemi della società. Sono anche il luogo dell'innovazione sociale. Hanno dunque doppiamente diritto ad essere tenute presenti nell'ambito della politica sociale.

La Svizzera sta soltanto iniziando a divenire consapevole del suo profilo urbano. L'integrazione della dimensione sociale nella pianificazione del territorio e, viceversa, la presa in considerazione della dimensione territoriale delle politiche sociali, non sono ovvie, come non lo è la posizione delle città quali protagoniste e parti della definizione di queste politiche.

Non è forse questo un motivo per ricorrere all'esperienza di altri Paesi, che, costretti dai problemi delle grandi metropoli, hanno sviluppato delle nuove strategie di politica sociale locale?

Rivolgendosi ad un istituto di ricerca straniero, l'UFAS ha voluto portare uno sguardo nuovo sulla costruzione delle nostre politiche sociali e sulle potenzialità delle nostre strutture federali. I casi presentati nello studio non sono certamente trasferibili in Svizzera. Tuttavia illustrano preoccupazioni che condividiamo e valide prassi suscettibili di ispirarci.

In occasione di questo lavoro di ricerca è stata avviata una discussione con il contributo di esperti stranieri. Le raccomandazioni che ne risultano inducono a proseguire la riflessione a livello nazionale con tutti i soggetti interessati.

Géraldine Luisier Rurangirwa
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Lo studio è pubblicato in inglese, francese e tedesco

Table of contents

European Cities and Local Social Policy

Summary

This report gives the results of an exploratory survey on European cities and local social policy for the Swiss Federal Social Insurance Office. The study is an input to the ongoing debate on urban and agglomeration policy in Switzerland. More in particular, the commissioner of the study is interested in countries where integrated urban policies, including local social policy, have been developed.

Introduction: research questions, choices of topics and research methodology

The central research questions could be summarised as follows:

1. Why city social policies? Goals and reasons.

2. What is happening in city social policies: Facts, figures and strategies, programmes and projects.

3. Which new inspiring developments (in and outside Switzerland) are there to focus on?

The study started with a series of interviews in Switzerland to identify the most central issues in urban (social) policies and gaining information concerning strategies and measures on different policy levels: confederation, cantons, communes.

We deduced the following groups of topics out of the information provided by the interviews.

– *Good Governance:* structural issues of integration of policies within and between government levels, and the (financial) consequences of changing competencies.

– *Social policy issues and solutions:* the choice to give special attention to the fields of work and income; poor families; gender and modern family policies; social cohesion: integration of minorities, loneliness; housing.

– *The Social Practice Process:* the search for both institutional changes and changes in professional culture to launch more integrated and demand driven local social policy practices.

As a fruitful way to gather information from different European countries on these topics we choose to search for cases rather than deliver overall country analysis. Each case study (see 2 - 6 below) gives a short overview of the country context and important (policy) developments. It then describes the main characteristics of the policy (state of the art), followed by the changes in vertical and horizontal relationships in the particular policy (process). It ends with the policy results and outcomes and giving some useful themes for the Swiss debate.

At the end of this exploratory study, the commissioner organised an expert meeting, with the aim to study the outcomes of the cases and the possible consequences this might have for Switzerland. The draft conclusions of the research team were discussed among representatives of the six countries involved in the study (Switzerland, Norway, England, Spain, the Netherlands and France).

1.   The Swiss concerns – a synthesis of some major outcomes

The current patterns of horizontal and vertical policy integration that emerged in response to urban issues did not alter the traditionally strong position of cantons in the Swiss architecture of intergovernmental relations. The metropolisation tendencies and a development towards more heterogeneous intergovernmental relations, and acceptance of mutual dependence affected the previously homogeneous and hierarchical intergovernmental relations but have not led until now to the affirmation of a strong urban government against higher territorial levels.

Nevertheless, a national agglomeration policy has gone through a slow but steady development, as is expressed in a recent article in the Swiss constitutional law. In this agglomeration policy, however, social policy is a relatively underdeveloped field. In addition, the discussion on the integration and co-ordination of the supply of social security on the level of Confederation, canton and communes, a debate centred around financial redistribution between levels, seems to make little progress.

Modern times ask, beyond ways of adjusting relationships and structures between and within government levels, for new ways of co-operation and co-ordination. But the willingness to invest and participate in new partnerships is not always as vivid as it could be. Co-operation with NGOs and businesses in public-private partnerships and a clear readiness among cantons to look at and learn from each other can grow to a higher level.

A big deficit in the policy fields that affect the cities is that each law is considered to stand on its own. Nation-wide and integrated solutions are needed. In the meantime the cities know that the only successful way forward towards more integration and co-operation leads along the path of slow progress and by showing that things can work in practice and /or by creating facts. On a local level several cities are working on integration of services (one stop shops) and changes in the attitudes of organisations in the social field. Local policy makers as well as practitioners design social programmes where the different aspects of city policy are interlocked.

The integration of these social programmes in broader urban policies and the integration of spatial and economic aspects into social programmes seems to be a step that is hard to take. Compared internationally, Swiss cities are not in the lead. The agglomeration policy can turn out to work in an integrative manner, but at this moment the work on the several domains is proceeding fairly separately.

2.   The Minimum Income Scheme (Revenu Minimum d'Insertion) in Rennes (France)

The fight against poverty and social exclusion is one of the very basic elements in each country's social policies. The RMI is an excellent example of how the complex relationships between and within different government levels and between government and non governmental interventions can both foster and hinder good local practices. In addition, the RMI is an example of social policy where the cities (have to) play an important role, without having the formal competencies according to the legislation.

The relevant outcomes of this case for Switzerland can be situated in three domains:

- The structural issues about roles and responsibilities of different governance levels.

- The cultural issues about co-operation and partnerships both between and within governance levels, and between public and private institutions.

- The collaboration and mutual learning of professionals in the field.

Asking what could be improved in a structural sense, the opinions converge in the direction of a well organised subsidiarity among the different governance levels. Three major variables should define the rules of this subsidiarity: the importance of distance vs proximity, the reality of different contexts, the importance of equality vs specificity. One should look carefully to define the best level for tackling each specific matter. There is great need for tailor made solutions for income provision as well as for integration. And still the sense of justice and solidarity asks for equal treatment of citizens if it goes to income, basic provisions and needs. This means that it seems less appropriate to follow general options like decentralisation, deregulation and privatisation.

Furthermore, the regulation of the French RMI has a number of characteristics that are similar to the European open method of co-ordination. Missions and targets are centrally defined (or commonly agreed), but local authorities can decide on the methods and means for realisation of these. Strong point of the RMI is the large but strict frameworks in which local governments have to function.

The success of the case of Rennes seems very much linked to the existing co-operative culture. Two basic factors are:

– The traditional importance of civil society organisations within strong (christian democrat) social movements and political networks.

– The continuity and voluntarism of local (social democrat) politics.

The financial solidarity within Rennes Métropole is both expression and guarantee for the continuity of this co-operative culture. The creation of "physical proximity" between officials and workers at different levels helps also to foster this co-operative culture. At the same time this co-operative tradition has created strong private institutions with their own institutional interests and fights, sometimes having a negative impact on policy efficacy.

For a better service to the public, different institutions and professions are combined in the district centres of the city of Rennes. This helps of course to simplify life for the users. It also can help professionals to organise a chain of services to specific categories. But this in itself does not help users to find an integrated answer to their problems in daily life. Integrated approaches of different types of professionals are essential.

It is important to note that often these forms of service delivery are introduced for efficiency reasons, while the effect seems to be more on the efficacy side.

3.   One-stop-shops for social service delivery in the city of Madrid

This chapter highlights the case of social service delivery in the city of Madrid through "centres for social services". These 25 social services' one-stop-shops are located at district-level throughout the city of Madrid. They are open to all citizens and form their first point of entry concerning matters of social services.

Due to the outreaching practice of the Centres for Social Services Delivery in Madrid the infrastructure had to be adapted. The amount of questions is rising because of the increased visibility of the centres. It is the 'problem of success'. As a positive outcome of this process a lot of new young workers entered the centres.

The introduction of the one-stop-shops in Madrid had the following advantages:

– There is exchange of information and communication between the three levels of government, this is remarkable since in most cases formal co-operation is limited to one level of government.

- Procedures have been simplified and general criteria have been developed on how to proceed in the different areas of service.

- The opportunity to systematically collect data as input for management processes.

- The proximity to citizens created the possibility to work with case-managers, it gave an improved insight into the needs of (local) citizens and due to this success more clients came to the centres.

The process of setting up centres for social services is not easy. Financial means are necessary to build up the infrastructure. And it is important to invest in personnel in order to establish a change in professional culture. Moreover, a very important factor of success is flexibility: creating a strong and workable structure without building a rigid and/or permanent institution.

4.   At the crossroads of family policy and social security in Norway

The Scandinavian countries have a long-standing tradition of good services in the field of family policy. In Norwegian social policy, and in family policy in particular, questions of poverty of families and children, and of equal opportunities for men and women, are widely discussed and the subject of legislation. There are striking similarities between Norwegian and Swiss social assistance systems. Assistance in both countries consists of localised discretionary relief, linked to social work and wider kin obligations. Benefit levels are relatively generous, but few people claim social assistance, not only due to the relatively high levels of employment, but also to the stigma attached to welfare and the powers accorded to social workers.

Norway is considered to be a modern welfare state, but traditional elements can be found in its social security and family policy. The Norwegian income system includes measures supporting, deliberately or unintended, the male breadwinner family, such as special tax benefits for families and the child benefit. In the area of equal rights between men and women some challenges are there for the future: to promote the rights of fathers, get fathers to take a larger share in taking care of children, improve the situation concerning violence against women and promote economic equality between men and women.

Having said that, Norway has been one of the first countries to bring innovative issues into social family politics. It was successful in having the first minister of children and family issues, and, with all the complaints on shortcomings that can be heard, a well build system of child care facilities. The advocates of measures (including quota) promoting and securing equal opportunities between men and women, are backed by economic evidence, showing that gender equality, if not enforcing, goes quite well with high productivity rates and high fertility rates.

For bringing closer equal pay and promoting equality of men and women an important tool in Norway is the labour market. Several interesting initiatives aim at improving situations for women and men searching for possibilities to combine career and care for relatives or voluntary work in society.

The debate on the local versus national level positioning of social security arrangements seems to be centred around on first sight totally opposite opinions. There are voices pleading for a central co-ordination of benefits while social services still will be at local level (advantage: creating time for guidance, no more loss on time-consuming financial assessments by transferring this to the national level). Others would like to decentralise even more social benefit arrangements (making local co-ordination across several areas of intervention possible.) In principle, both do want to achieve the same, that is co-ordinated and integrated, tailor-made interventions as close to the people concerned as possible.

5.   Major cities' policy in the Netherlands

The relevant outcomes of the Major Cities Policy (MCP) of the Netherlands – starting with the four biggest cities and developing over time to both a national programme and a network of 25 cities – can be situated in the following domains:

–   A common (national) urban policy can contribute to the quality of (social) urban policy. Instruments for evaluation, monitoring and mutual learning like visits by external experts and elected politicians from other cities, self-evaluation by cities, a knowledge centre on urban policy and the possibility to get assistance by a group of experts can contribute to that.

–   A nation-wide urban policy can bring a sense of urgency to all levels. Through the MCP, cities have brought a previously missing sense of urgency to the national administration. Another effect is that cities themselves did discover social problems as a priority. Some provinces did discover the social and economic condition of cities as a field in which to take up new responsibilities.

–   Insight in (blockades on) the way towards policy integration. At least the awareness of the undesirability of the lack of policy integration has grown fast.

–   The risk of slipping into technocratic-bureaucratic policies. The strong stamp that civil servants in departments and at town halls put on the policy has clear advantages: maximum agreement on the direction of the policy and continuation of the policy, regardless the political colour of national or local governments. But national politicians keep aside too much, not steering nor backing up the local professionals and local politicians.

–   To what extent should a central, federal or even confederal government try to formulate goals? As seen in the Dutch case setting nation-wide goals was not the most successful part of the urban policy and might add to the a-political, technocratic impression of urban policy. The harmonising tendencies prevent cities from carefully examining their own problems and strengths, the specific possibilities in their own society. An answer might be to formulating less goals and investing more in common efforts to set a local, or preferably regional agenda.

–   The need for a constant shifting between scales. Almost ten years of national urban policy clearly showed the need for working on all different scales and a constant shifting between these scales. Depending on the nature of a problem governments on all levels should be able to adjust their policies.

–   Reinforcing the regional dimension in (social) urban policy. Voluntary or law-based structures for co-ordination should develop on this level. The Dutch region is a source of anxiety, with no level willing nor able to force or seduce others to invest really in co-operation. Of course, in seven areas formalised regional authorities have been established, but they are very much tied to the municipalities and seen as only organising a minimum of common issues (police, medical aid, a general level of care). But things seem to change. Cities and provinces search for co-operation on the basis of complementarity (make use of the difference between main cities and surrounding smaller / rural municipalities) to avoid the side-effects of competition (every municipality competing to have al the good and keep out all the bad).

6.   The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in England

The British Government launched the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS) in 2001. This national Strategy has had many interesting predecessors and currently functions as an umbrella over various in itself big and long-lasting nation wide programmes.

It is hard to compare the challenges that Swiss and English cities are facing. But with all the differences in context, and with all the criticisms (the vertical relationships being a major point of concern) that can be addressed to the Strategy, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy contains interesting and appealing elements for the development of (social) urban policies in Switzerland. The report is highlighting the following elements:

– Appealing ways of horizontal co-operation and co-ordination: joint working in the Government, in Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and in neighbourhood management.

– The way urban problems are addressed in the heart of central government.

– The way the Strategy was developed: policy action teams, the input of practitioners and others on the ground is clearly visible.

– Innovative elements: Long-term vision, sharp targets, key commitments, neighbourhood statistics.

– Although it brings along certain pitfalls (you can manipulate figures, it can lead to copying), setting floor targets is a courageous and ambitious attempt: No satisfaction with raising average levels.

– The focus on mainstreaming and sustainable changes in stead of running short-lived projects only.

– The necessity of working on Community involvement that is brought to the heart of government.

– The fact that local authorities are accountable but an LSP is deciding. It urges the authority to take other partners on board right from the start. So, the development of a local strategy, and not only its implementation, becomes a matter of joined action.

– The attention given to learning, information-sharing and dissemination.

– Innovations in policy areas such as youth policy, crime-prevention, involving local communities and inter-cultural actions.

7.   Conclusions and recommendations

The first part of the conclusions concerns developments, opinions and strategies related to vertical co-ordination and co-operation. It is about the understanding of new interdependencies and the need for mutual assistance. But there is also the structural complexity and the need for better implementation by simplifying and clarifying the repartition of competencies. Subsidiarity and selective decentralisation are key concepts here.

Secondly, we focus on horizontal relationships, such as the co-operation between government departments, between cities, between cantons or regional bodies, and the policy integration and new networks on the level of cities and agglomerations. The policy integration at a higher policy level can be essential for successful integration at a lower level. Co-operation does not necessarily move

into statutory structures, it can very well keep its voluntary form as shown in the French agglomerations and in the English Local Strategic Partnerships.

In a third paragraph, we present some policy innovations in specific domains. Six "good practices" are drawn from the case studies in this report:

- − Area-based policies. As is shown in the English example, and to a lesser extend in the Dutch case, there is a need to focus policies on the most vulnerable areas, in order to get results;

- − Mainstreaming and improving existing services, as in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy aims at a culture change within organisations and in structural shifts in the way resources are used;

- − Integration of services on work and income, as in the French minimum income scheme;

- − Creation of (demand driven) integrated services such as the one stop shop social service delivery in Madrid;

- − Labour market and modernising social security arrangements in Norway;

- − Modern family policy in Norway.

The fourth paragraph discusses questions of (financial) solidarity in the relationships between and at different policy levels. The following topics are of importance:

- − The repartition of organisational and financial responsibilities on social assistance between different government levels: between equality (social rights) and quality (tailor made solutions);

- − The enlargement of financial autonomy of cities in relation to their local social policies;

- − The solidarity between cities and the surrounding municipalities: voluntary chosen solidarity;

- − The solidarity between richer and poorer neighbourhoods within and among cities: enforced solidarity.

The final paragraph gives several recommendations. It summarises also some of the discussions at the expert meeting in order to better situate and understand these recommendations. We brought the different recommendations under four headings:

- − How to come to an urban social policy agenda? The following rules could be drawn:

  1. Organise public debate (and find neutral ground for it) among all partners involved;

  2. Collect and disseminate facts and figures on the issue;

  3. Use pressure from interest groups and organisations;

  4. Look for the appropriate way to frame the issue;

  5. Start experimenting with new approaches and flexible / voluntary structures.

- − As to the appropriate governance structures for urban social policy, four basic recommendations were given:

  1. The principle of subsidiarity is very useful, if used in a consequent, but flexible way.

  2. An open method of co-ordination as it is defined in the EU context could be an interesting working model to use in the Swiss context too. But one should learn

some lessons from the countries represented in this study. The consequence of this recommendation – in combination with the subsidiarity principle – is that each level of government would be responsible for setting its own goals (in its own competence fields). The level that is delegating competencies prescribes the mechanisms and defines (part of) the agenda.

3. It is recommended to focus more on voluntary multi level / multi territory partnerships, rather than on trying to sort out all competencies to one level, or to create new levels of government or new formal territorial boarders. If ever, these new formal configurations should rather be the outcome of collaboration processes than being the starting point of these.

4. At project level it is recommended to simplify complexity by having one project leader for each project.

–   The key word of some social practice recommendations is visibility:

1. Being visible for the clients (outreaching) is an important factor in the realisation of equal rights.

2. Visibility of services and clients of social service as well as visibility of actions and results of integrated projects and programmes creates legitimacy towards the political scene. And in return, it creates legitimacy for the policy makers who committed themselves to these actions and programmes.

3. Organising visibility in terms of mapping the issue, problems and social (intervention) infrastructure is an instrument for institutions and professionals to improve their concerted actions. At the same time it can be a means to show the importance of these issues and problems and the need for support from the authorities.

–   The need for good evaluation of integrated local social policies, is widely recognised, but there are very few good evaluation studies carried out. There is a lot of monitoring going on and there are interesting case descriptions. But there is very little study on satisfaction of users, clients, residents, and citizens. Most studies are about direct targets (output) and made from a government's perspective. There are almost no solid studies on outcome, let alone longitudinal studies or comparative studies.

Città europee e politica sociale locale

Riassunto

Il presente rapporto presenta i risultati di un'indagine esplorativa sulle città europee e sulla politica sociale locale condotta per conto dell'Ufficio federale svizzero delle assicurazioni sociali. Lo studio intende contribuire al dibattito in corso sulla politica urbana e degli agglomerati in Svizzera. Più in particolare, il committente dello studio è interessato ai Paesi in cui sono state sviluppate politiche urbane integrate, compresa la politica sociale locale.

Introduzione: i quesiti dell'indagine, la scelta degli argomenti e il metodo di ricerca

I quesiti principali su cui è incentrata la ricerca possono essere così riassunti:

1. Politiche sociali urbane - perché? Obiettivi e motivazioni.

2. Che cosa sta succedendo a livello di politiche sociali urbane? Fatti, cifre, strategie, programmi e progetti.

3. Quali sono i nuovi sviluppi ispiratori su cui concentrarsi (in Svizzera e all'estero)?

Lo studio è iniziato con una serie di interviste condotte in Svizzera per individuare le questioni centrali delle politiche (sociali) urbane e per raccogliere informazioni sulle strategie e sulle misure a diversi livelli politici: federale, cantonale e comunale.

Analizzando le informazioni raccolte con le interviste abbiamo suddiviso gli argomenti nelle categorie seguenti:

– *buon governo:* questioni strutturali d'integrazione delle politiche entro e fra diversi livelli governativi; conseguenze (finanziarie) dei cambiamenti sul piano delle competenze;

– *questioni e soluzioni di politica sociale:* scelta di prestare un'attenzione particolare ai settori del lavoro e del reddito; famiglie bisognose; politica d'uguaglianza e politiche familiari moderne; coesione sociale: integrazione delle minoranze, isolamento; alloggi;

– *processo della prassi sociale:* ricerca sia di cambiamenti istituzionali che di cambiamenti nella cultura professionale per lanciare prassi di politica sociale locale più integrate e basate sulla domanda.

Per raccogliere proficuamente informazioni su questi argomenti in vari Paesi europei, abbiamo preferito analizzare alcuni casi specifici piuttosto che fornire un'analisi sulla situazione generale di ciascun Paese. Per ogni caso preso in esame (cfr. punti 2 - 6 seguenti) lo studio fornisce una breve panoramica del contesto nazionale e degli sviluppi (politici) rilevanti. Prosegue con una descrizione delle principali caratteristiche della politica (stato attuale) e dei cambiamenti intervenuti nelle relazioni verticali e orizzontali ad essa specifiche (processo) e termina con la presentazione dei risultati ed indicando alcuni temi utili al dibattito in corso in Svizzera.

Al termine di questo studio esplorativo, il committente ha organizzato un incontro tra esperti allo scopo di studiare i risultati ottenuti nei casi presi in esame e le possibili implicazioni che essi potrebbero avere per la Svizzera. Le conclusioni del gruppo di ricerca sono state discusse dai rappresentanti dei sei Paesi interessati dallo studio: Svizzera, Norvegia, Inghilterra, Spagna, Paesi Bassi e Francia.

1.   Temi interessanti per la Svizzera – sintesi dei risultati principali

Gli attuali modelli d'integrazione orizzontale e verticale della politica emersi in risposta alle questioni urbane non hanno modificato la posizione tradizionalmente forte dei Cantoni nell'architettura svizzera delle relazioni intergovernative. Le tendenze alla "metropolizzazione" e lo sviluppo verso relazioni intergovernative più eterogenee, come pure l'accettazione della reciproca dipendenza, hanno interessato le relazioni intergovernative precedentemente omogenee e gerarchiche, ma non hanno finora portato all'affermazione di un governo urbano forte rispetto a livelli territoriali più elevati.

Ciononostante è andata lentamente ma costantemente sviluppandosi una politica nazionale degli agglomerati, prova ne sia che il concetto di "agglomerato" è espressamente citato in un articolo della nuova Costituzione recentemente entrata in vigore. In questa politica degli agglomerati, tuttavia, la politica sociale è un campo relativamente poco sviluppato. Inoltre, il dibattito sull'integrazione e sul coordinamento dell'erogazione dei servizi di sicurezza sociale a livello federale, cantonale e comunale - dibattito incentrato sulla ridistribuzione finanziaria tra i vari livelli – sembra progredire soltanto a piccoli passi.

Oltre ad un adeguamento delle relazioni e delle strutture tra i vari livelli governativi ed all'interno di essi, oggi occorrono nuove forme di cooperazione e coordinamento. Ma non sempre la volontà di investire in nuove forme di collaborazione è forte come potrebbe. La cooperazione con ONG e aziende nell'ambito di partenariati tra enti pubblici e privati e la disponibilità dei Cantoni a scambiarsi esperienze sono suscettibili di miglioramento.

Un grave difetto dei settori della politica concernenti le città è che ogni legge è considerata a sé stante, mentre servono soluzioni integrate a livello nazionale. Nel frattempo, le città hanno capito che l'unico modo per procedere con successo verso una maggiore integrazione e cooperazione è seguire la strategia dei piccoli passi, dimostrando con i fatti che le cose possono funzionare. A livello locale, parecchie città si stanno dando da fare per integrare servizi (nei cosiddetti *one stop shop* o sportelli unici) e cambiare l'atteggiamento delle organizzazioni in campo sociale. Responsabili politici locali e professionisti elaborano programmi sociali in cui i diversi aspetti della politica urbana sono inseriti in un unico contesto.

L'integrazione di questi programmi sociali in politiche urbane più vaste e l'integrazione di aspetti territoriali ed economici nei programmi sociali sembrano essere passi difficili da compiere. Da un confronto internazionale, le città svizzere non risultano essere all'avanguardia. La politica degli agglomerati può anche funzionare in modo integrativo, ma per il momento il lavoro sui diversi settori sta procedendo in tutt'altro modo e cioè all'insegna della separazione.

2.   Il sistema del reddito minimo (Revenu Minimum d'Insertion, RMI) a Rennes (Francia)

La lotta contro la povertà e l'emarginazione sociale è uno degli elementi fondamentali delle politiche sociali di ogni Paese. L'RMI è un esempio eccellente di come le complesse relazioni tra i diversi livelli governativi, all'interno di essi e tra interventi governativi e non governativi possono tanto favorire quanto intralciare le buone prassi locali. Inoltre, l'RMI è un esempio di politica sociale in cui le città giocano (o meglio devono giocare) un ruolo importante senza disporre di competenze formali attribuite loro dalla legislazione.

I risultati rilevanti per la Svizzera si situano in tre ambiti:

–   le questioni strutturali circa i ruoli e le responsabilità di diversi livelli governativi;

– le questioni culturali circa la cooperazione e il partenariato tra i diversi livelli governativi, all'interno di essi e tra istituzioni pubbliche e private;

– la collaborazione e il reciproco apprendimento dei professionisti del settore.

Alla domanda "che cosa si potrebbe migliorare a livello strutturale?", si riscontra una convergenza di opinioni in direzione di una sussidiarietà ben organizzata tra i diversi livelli governativi. Tre le variabili principali che dovrebbero definire le regole di questa sussidiarietà: l'importanza della distanza rispetto alla vicinanza, la realtà di contesti diversi, l'importanza dell'uguaglianza rispetto alla specificità. Si dovrebbe riflettere attentamente prima di stabilire quale sia il livello più appropriato per affrontare ogni argomento specifico. C'è un gran bisogno di soluzioni su misura sia a livello di reddito garantito che di integrazione. Nondimeno, il senso di giustizia e di solidarietà chiede uguale trattamento per i cittadini quando si tratta di reddito, garanzie di base e bisogni primari. Questo significa che sembra meno opportuno seguire opzioni generali come la decentralizzazione, la *deregulation* e la privatizzazione.

Inoltre, la regolamentazione dell'RMI francese ha tutta una serie di caratteristiche simili al metodo aperto europeo del coordinamento. Compiti e obiettivi vengono stabiliti a livello centrale (o di comune accordo), ma le autorità locali possono decidere circa i metodi e gli strumenti per realizzarli. Un punto forte dell'RMI è il quadro ampio ma vincolante all'interno del quale i governi locali devono agire.

Il successo del caso di Rennes sembra essere in gran parte legato all'esistenza di una cultura cooperativa. Due fattori fondamentali sono:

– la tradizionale importanza delle organizzazioni della società civile all'interno di movimenti sociali (cristiano-democratici) e reti politiche forti;

– la continuità e il volontarismo della politica locale (socialdemocratica).

– La solidarietà finanziaria nell'ambito di *Rennes Métropole* è sia espressione che garanzia della continuità di questa cultura cooperativa. La creazione di "vicinanza fisica" tra le autorità e i lavoratori a diversi livelli aiuta inoltre a promuovere questa cultura cooperativa, che ha anche creato istituzioni private forti, i cui interessi e le cui lotte istituzionali sono però talvolta controproducenti per l'efficacia della politica.

Per offrire un miglior servizio al pubblico, nei centri distrettuali della città di Rennes si è provveduto a unire istituzioni e professioni diverse. Naturalmente, ciò semplifica la vita agli utenti e inoltre può aiutare i professionisti a organizzare una catena di servizi destinati a specifiche categorie di persone. Questo, però, in sé non aiuta gli utenti a trovare una risposta integrata ai loro problemi quotidiani. È essenziale che diverse categorie di professionisti offrano questo tipo di approcci integrati.

È importante osservare che spesso queste forme di erogazione dei servizi vengono introdotte per ragioni di efficienza, ma sembrano avere più effetti sul fronte dell'efficacia.

3.   Sportelli unici (one stop shop) per i servizi sociali a Madrid

Questo capitolo è dedicato al caso dei servizi sociali forniti nella città di Madrid attraverso i "centri di servizi sociali". Questi 25 sportelli unici dei servizi sociali sono dislocati nei diversi distretti della città di Madrid. Sono aperti a tutti i cittadini e rappresentano il loro primo punto di contatto per le questioni inerenti ai servizi sociali.

A causa dell'azione di vasta portata dei centri di servizi sociali l'infrastruttura ha dovuto essere adattata. La maggiore visibilità crea nuovi problemi: è 'l'altra faccia del successo'. Uno dei risultati positivi ottenuti è che numerosi giovani hanno trovato lavoro nei centri.

L'introduzione degli sportelli unici a Madrid ha prodotto i vantaggi seguenti:

– si è creato uno scambio di informazioni e comunicazioni tra i tre livelli governativi: un risultato apprezzabile dal momento che quasi sempre la cooperazione formale si limita a un solo livello governativo;

– le procedure sono state semplificate e sono stati sviluppati criteri generali su come procedere nei diversi ambiti di servizio;

– la possibilità di raccogliere sistematicamente dati dà impulso ai processi gestionali;

– la vicinanza ai cittadini ha dato la possibilità di lavorare con i responsabili di progetto, ha permesso di capire meglio i bisogni dei cittadini (locali) e, a causa di questo successo, è aumentato il numero dei clienti che si rivolgono ai centri.

Impiantare centri di servizi sociali non è semplice. Occorrono mezzi finanziari per creare le infrastrutture ed è importante investire nel personale al fine di operare un cambiamento nella cultura professionale. Per di più, un fattore di successo importantissimo è la flessibilità, ovvero la necessità di creare una struttura realizzabile e forte senza però dar vita a un'istituzione rigida e/o permanente.

4.   Norvegia: all'incrocio tra politica familiare e sicurezza sociale

I Paesi scandinavi hanno una lunga tradizione in fatto di buoni servizi nel campo della politica familiare. In Norvegia, nell'ambito della politica sociale e in particolare della politica familiare, la povertà delle famiglie e dei bambini e le pari opportunità per uomini e donne sono questioni ampiamente discusse e sono oggetto di legislazione. Vi sono notevoli analogie tra il sistema di assistenza sociale norvegese e quello svizzero. In entrambi i Paesi, l'assistenza consiste in una combinazione di sovvenzioni discrezionali locali, lavoro sociale e obblighi familiari in senso lato. Il livello delle indennità è relativamente alto, ma in pochi chiedono l'assistenza sociale, non solo a causa dei tassi di occupazione relativamente alti, ma anche per via della stigmatizzazione del ricorso all'aiuto sociale e dei poteri concessi agli assistenti sociali.

La Norvegia è considerata uno Stato sociale moderno, ma nella sua politica familiare e di sicurezza sociale si ravvisano elementi tradizionali. Il sistema dei redditi norvegese prevede misure che sostengono, deliberatamente o meno, la famiglia che ruota attorno al capofamiglia maschio, p. es. speciali sgravi fiscali in favore delle famiglie e assegni per i figli. Nel campo della parità dei diritti fra uomini e donne i compiti per il futuro sono i seguenti: promuovere i diritti dei padri, fare in modo che questi ultimi partecipino maggiormente alla cura dei figli, migliorare la situazione per quanto riguarda la violenza contro le donne e favorire l'uguaglianza economica tra uomini e donne.

Detto questo, la Norvegia è stata uno dei primi Paesi a introdurre soluzioni innovative nella politica sociale della famiglia. È stata il primo Paese ad avere un ministro per le questioni dell'infanzia e della famiglia e – a dispetto di tutti i difetti che gli si possono attribuire – anche un sistema ben congegnato di infrastrutture per la custodia dei figli. I sostenitori di misure (comprese le quote) atte a promuovere e garantire pari opportunità a uomini e donne sono confortati dai risultati economici, che dimostrano che l'uguaglianza tra i sessi non solo è compatibile con tassi di produttività e di natalità elevati, ma può addirittura favorirli .

In Norvegia, un importante strumento per avvicinarsi alla parità di trattamento economico e per promuovere l'uguaglianza tra uomini e donne è il mercato del lavoro. Svariate iniziative interessanti

mirano a migliorare la situazione di quelle donne e di quegli uomini che vorrebbero conciliare la carriera con la cura dei familiari o con il volontariato sociale.

Il dibattito tra chi vorrebbe che il sistema della sicurezza sociale rientrasse nelle competenze delle autorità locali e chi vorrebbe invece che fosse una responsabilità del governo centrale sembra essere fondato su opinioni a prima vista totalmente opposte. C'è chi chiede che le indennità vengano coordinate a livello centrale e che i servizi sociali continuino ad essere forniti a livello locale (col vantaggio di avere più tempo per la consulenza e di non perdere più tempo in dispendiosi accertamenti finanziari, che verrebbero trasferiti a livello nazionale). C'è chi invece chiede di decentralizzare ancora di più i sistemi di indennità sociale (rendendo possibile il coordinamento locale attraverso diversi ambiti d'intervento). Fondamentalmente, tuttavia, entrambi gli schieramenti vogliono la stessa cosa, vale a dire interventi su misura, coordinati e integrati, il più vicino possibile agli interessati.

5.   Major Cities' Policy (politica delle maggiori città) nei Paesi Bassi

I principali risultati della *Major Cities Policy* (MCP) dei Paesi Bassi – che parte dalle quattro maggiori città per passare poi a un programma nazionale e a una rete di 25 città – si situano negli ambiti seguenti:

– una politica urbana (nazionale) comune può contribuire a migliorare la qualità della politica urbana (sociale). A questo scopo, possono rivelarsi utili alcuni strumenti di valutazione, monitoraggio e reciproco apprendimento come visite da parte di esperti esterni e di politici eletti in altre città, autovalutazione da parte delle città, un centro di conoscenza sulla politica urbana e la possibilità di avvalersi dell'assistenza di un gruppo di esperti;

– una politica urbana nazionale può trasmettere un senso d'urgenza a tutti i livelli. Con la MCP, le città hanno trasmesso all'amministrazione nazionale un senso d'urgenza che prima mancava. Un altro degli effetti riscontrati è che le città stesse hanno scoperto che i problemi sociali sono una priorità. Alcune province hanno capito che le condizioni economiche e sociali delle città sono un settore in cui devono essere assunte nuove responsabilità;

– comprensione del cammino da percorrere verso l'integrazione politica e degli ostacoli di cui è disseminato. Perlomeno, la consapevolezza che la mancanza d'integrazione politica non è auspicabile è cresciuta in fretta;

– rischio di impantanarsi in politiche tecnocratiche e burocratiche. La forte influenza che i funzionari regionali e municipali esercitano sulla politica ha chiari vantaggi: massimo accordo sulla direzione della politica e continuità politica, a prescindere dal colore dei governi nazionali o locali. Ma i politici nazionali si tengono troppo in disparte, evitando di indirizzare e di sostenere i professionisti e i politici locali;

– in che misura un governo centrale, federale o anche confederale dovrebbe tentare di formulare degli obiettivi? Come abbiamo visto nel caso olandese, la fissazione di obiettivi a livello nazionale non è stata uno degli aspetti di maggior successo della politica urbana e potrebbe rafforzare l'impressione che la politica urbana sia apolitica e tecnocratica. La tendenze all'armonizzazione impedisce alle città di esaminare attentamente i propri problemi, i propri punti di forza e le possibilità specifiche insite nella loro società. Una risposta potrebbe consistere nel formulare meno obiettivi e nell'investire di più in sforzi comuni volti a stabilire un ordine del giorno locale o preferibilmente regionale;

–   c'è bisogno di spostarsi continuamente da un livello all'altro. Quasi un decennio di politica urbana nazionale ha chiaramente dimostrato la necessità di lavorare a tutti i livelli e di spostarsi continuamente da un livello all'altro. I governi di ogni livello dovrebbero essere in grado di adeguare le loro politiche in base alla natura dei problemi;

–   occorre consolidare la dimensione regionale della politica urbana (sociale). Strutture di coordinamento volontarie o prescritte dalla legge dovrebbero svilupparsi a questo livello. La situazione delle regioni olandesi è preoccupante, dato che nessun livello è disposto né capace a costringere o invogliare gli altri a investire veramente nella cooperazione. Certo, in sette aree sono state istituite autorità regionali formali, ma queste sono molto legate ai Comuni e sono viste solo come organismi che si occupano di un numero minimo di questioni comuni (polizia, soccorso medico, assistenza generale). Pare tuttavia che le cose stiano cambiando. Le città e le province cercano la cooperazione sulla base della complementarità (sfruttano la differenza tra le maggiori città e i Comuni più piccoli/rurali circostanti) per evitare gli effetti collaterali della competizione (tutti i Comuni fanno a gara per collezionare aspetti positivi ed evitare quelli negativi).

6.   La strategia di sviluppo dei quartieri (The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy) in Inghilterra

Nel 2001 il governo britannico ha lanciato la *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy* (NRS). Questa strategia nazionale ha avuto molti precedenti interessanti e attualmente è come un ombrello aperto su vari programmi nazionali vasti e a lungo termine.

È difficile fare un paragone tra le sfide che le città svizzere e quelle inglesi stanno affrontando. Ma a dispetto di tutte le differenze contestuali e di tutte le critiche che si possono rivolgere a questa strategia (essendo le relazioni verticali uno dei maggiori punti d'interesse), la *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy* contiene elementi interessanti per lo sviluppo delle politiche urbane (sociali) in Svizzera. Il rapporto mette in risalto gli elementi seguenti:

–   modalità interessanti di cooperazione e coordinamento orizzontali: lavoro congiunto nell'ambito del governo, dei cosiddetti *Local Strategic Partnerships* (partenariati strategici locali, LSP) e nella gestione dei quartieri;

–   il modo in cui i problemi urbani vengono affrontati nel cuore del governo centrale;

–   il modo in cui la strategia è stata sviluppata: gruppi d'azione politica; il contributo fornito dai professionisti e da altri soggetti sul campo è chiaramente visibile;

–   elementi innovativi: visione a lungo termine, obiettivi chiari, impegni chiave, statistiche relative ai quartieri;

–   sebbene comporti certe insidie (le cifre possono essere manipolate, si può copiare), stabilire obiettivi di base è un tentativo coraggioso e ambizioso: non ci si accontenta di aumentare i livelli medi;

–   meglio concentrarsi su cambiamenti tradizionali e sostenibili anziché gestire solo progetti di breve durata;

–   necessità di lavorare sul coinvolgimento della collettività portata al cuore del governo;

–   il fatto che le autorità locali sono responsabili, ma a decidere è una LSP. L'autorità è così obbligata a trovarsi altri partner fin dall'inizio. In questo modo, lo sviluppo di una strategia locale, e non solo la sua realizzazione, diventa oggetto di un'azione congiunta;

– l'attenzione prestata all'apprendimento, alla condivisione delle informazioni e alla diffusione;

– innovazioni in ambiti della politica quali la politica giovanile, la prevenzione del crimine, il coinvolgimento di comunità locali e le iniziative interculturali.

7. Conclusioni e raccomandazioni

La prima parte delle conclusioni riguarda gli sviluppi, le opinioni e le strategie relative al coordinamento e alla cooperazione verticali. Si tratta di individuare nuove interdipendenze e di riconoscere l'esigenza di un'assistenza reciproca. Ma ci sono anche la complessità strutturale e il bisogno di migliorare la realizzazione semplificando e chiarendo la ripartizione delle competenze. I concetti chiave di questa parte sono la sussidiarietà e il decentramento selettivo.

Nella seconda parte, ci siamo concentrati sulle relazioni orizzontali, quali la cooperazione tra dipartimenti governativi, tra città, tra Cantoni o enti regionali, come pure sull'integrazione della politica e sulle nuove reti di cooperazione a livello di città e agglomerati. L'integrazione della politica a livello elevato può essere essenziale per il successo dell'integrazione a livello più basso. La cooperazione non implica necessariamente la creazione di strutture regolamentate, ma può benissimo mantenere la sua natura volontaria, come nel caso degli agglomerati francesi e delle *Local Strategic Partnership* inglesi.

Nel terzo paragrafo presentiamo alcune innovazioni della politica in settori specifici. Dai casi studiati in questo rapporto abbiamo ricavato sei "buone prassi":

– politiche basate su determinate aree. Come mostra il caso inglese, e in misura minore anche il caso olandese, se si vogliono ottenere risultati, bisogna concentrare le politiche nelle aree più vulnerabili;

– convogliando e migliorando i servizi esistenti, come nella *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy*, si mira a un cambiamento culturale all'interno delle organizzazioni e a svolte strutturali nel modo di impiegare le risorse;

– integrazione di servizi sul lavoro e sul reddito, come nello schema francese del reddito minimo;

– creazione di servizi integrati (basati sulla domanda), quali l'erogazione di servizi sociali negli sportelli unici di Madrid;

– mercato del lavoro e modernizzazione del sistema di sicurezza sociale in Norvegia;

– politica familiare moderna in Norvegia.

Il quarto paragrafo tratta di questioni di solidarietà (finanziaria) nelle relazioni tra e a diversi livelli della politica. Ecco gli argomenti più importanti:

– ripartizione delle responsabilità organizzative e finanziarie in materia di assistenza sociale tra diversi livelli governativi: tra uguaglianza (diritti sociali) e qualità (soluzioni su misura);

– aumento dell'autonomia finanziaria delle città in relazione alle loro politiche sociali locali;

– solidarietà tra città e Comuni limitrofi: solidarietà scelta volontariamente;

–   solidarietà tra quartieri ricchi e poveri all'interno delle città e fra le città: solidarietà imposta.

L'ultimo paragrafo contiene diverse raccomandazioni e riassume alcuni dei dibattiti svoltisi all'incontro degli esperti per meglio posizionare e comprendere le raccomandazioni stesse, che abbiamo suddiviso in quattro gruppi:

–   Come creare un ordine del giorno di politica sociale urbana? Ecco le regole che abbiamo stilato:

1.   organizzare dibattiti pubblici (in campo neutro) fra tutte le parti interessate;

2.   raccogliere e diffondere fatti e cifre sulla questione da trattare;

3.   esercitare pressione attraverso organizzazioni e gruppi d'interesse;

4.   trovare il modo giusto per formulare il problema;

5.   cominciare a sperimentare nuovi approcci e strutture flessibili/volontarie.

–   Per quanto concerne le strutture di governo adatte alla politica sociale urbana, sono state formulate quattro raccomandazioni:

1.   Il principio di sussidiarietà è molto utile, se usato in modo coerente ma flessibile.

2.   Un metodo di coordinamento aperto, come viene definito nell'UE, potrebbe essere un modello di lavoro interessante da applicare anche nel contesto svizzero. Ma si dovrebbero trarre insegnamenti dai Paesi presi in considerazione in questo studio. La conseguenza di questa raccomandazione – unitamente al principio di sussidiarietà – è che ogni livello governativo sarebbe responsabile di fissare i propri obiettivi (nelle proprie sfere di competenza). Il livello che delega le competenze stabilisce i meccanismi e definisce (in parte) l'ordine del giorno.

3.   Si raccomanda di concentrarsi più sui partenariati volontari multilivello/multiterritoriali che non sul tentativo di raggruppare tutte le competenze a un unico livello o di creare nuovi livelli di governo o nuovi confini territoriali formali. Semmai, queste nuove configurazioni formali dovrebbero essere il risultato di processi di collaborazione e non il loro punto di partenza.

4.   A livello di progetto, si raccomanda di semplificare le cose nominando un capoprogetto per ogni progetto.

–   La parola d'ordine di alcune raccomandazioni di prassi sociale è visibilità:

1.   Essere visibili per i clienti (con azioni di vasta portata) è un fattore importante per la realizzazione della parità dei diritti.

2.   La visibilità dei servizi e dei clienti dei servizi sociali e la visibilità delle iniziative e dei risultati di progetti e programmi integrati crea legittimità rispetto alla scena politica, che, a sua volta, dà legittimità ai politici che si sono impegnati a realizzare queste iniziative e questi programmi.

3.   Organizzare la visibilità abbozzando la questione, i problemi e l'infrastruttura (d'intervento) sociale è un modo con cui le istituzioni e i professionisti possono migliorare le loro iniziative congiunte. Al contempo, può essere anche un modo per mettere in evidenza sia l'importanza di questi problemi e questioni che il bisogno di sostegno da parte delle autorità.

- Il bisogno di analisi attendibili delle politiche sociali locali integrate è ampiamente riconosciuto, ma sono stati eseguiti pochissimi studi di valutazione di buona qualità. Si stanno svolgendo numerosi monitoraggi ed esistono interessanti descrizioni di casi. Sono molto scarsi invece gli studi sulla soddisfazione di utenti, clienti, residenti e cittadini. La maggior parte degli studi riguarda gli obiettivi diretti (rendimento) e riflettono il punto di vista del governo. Se si escludono gli studi longitudinali o comparativi, praticamente non esistono studi attendibili sui risultati.

Introduction

The Verwey-Jonker Institute in the Netherlands (a national institute for applied research on social issues) conducted this exploratory survey on European cities and local social policy for the Swiss Federal Social Insurance Office. The study is an input to the ongoing debate on urban and agglomeration policy in Switzerland. In particular a working party on linking urban and social policy is interested in experiences abroad. The commissioner of the study wishes to learn from countries where integrated urban policies, including local social policy, have been developed.

Swiss problems and Swiss context

The study started with identifying the most central issues in urban (social) policies and gaining information concerning strategies and measures on different policy levels (confederation, cantons, communes) in Switzerland.

The purpose of this first part of our study was twofold:

− To help us understand the Swiss problems and the Swiss context.

− With that information look for possible inspiring experiences from elsewhere in Europe.

In October 2002 researchers of the Verwey-Jonker Institute conducted eight interviews with scientists, politicians and civil servants at various levels in Switzerland. We chose to use open half-structured interviews, centred on the following questions:

1. Why city social policies? Goals and reasons.

2. What is happening in city social policies: Facts, figures and strategies, programmes and projects.

3. Which new inspiring developments (in and outside Switzerland) are there to focus on?

Chapter 1 presents a summary of those interviews. It pretends by no means to give a complete view of the Swiss situation on local social policy and its position within federal, cantonal and city policies. Neither does it provide a direct translation of each single interview. Nevertheless, we do hope that this chapter provides the most interesting views on themes, urgent problems, possibilities, and noteworthy lines of thought that our Swiss interlocutors shared with us. In addition we hope, despite our lack of in-depth information, that we did bring together some developments and opinions in Switzerland that are inspiring and valuable. We think they represent important building blocks for the future of a vital urban social policy.

A selection of topics

We deduced the following groups of topics out of the rich information provided by the interviews. Some of the elements mentioned here have been directly brought up as topics on which the key persons would like to get access to more in-depth information. Others where determined by combining the information of the different interviews, allowing us to identify central tendencies and shared opinions or questions.

1. Good Governance

   a.   integrated and integrative policies within urban regions / agglomerations: horizontal co-operation between local governments, between policy domains (e.g. social, economic and spatial) and in public-private partnerships;

   b.   relations between levels of government and vertical co-operation; the facilitating role of the confederation (launching experiments, provoking coherence, etceteras);

   c.   new forms of dividing / sharing financial burdens and dividing / sharing competencies;

   d.   new perspectives on the question of subsidiarity: more policy space for cities and for civil society.

2. Social policy issues and solutions

   a.   work and / or income;

   b.   poor families;

   c.   gender / modern family policies;

   d.   social cohesion: integration of minorities, loneliness;

   e.   housing.

3. Social practice process

   a.   institutional restructuring via experiments with e.g. single office / guichet unique;

   b.   need for change in professional culture (multidisciplinarity, networking, and teamwork).

Case study approach

As a fruitful way to gather information from abroad we chose to search for cases rather than deliver overall country analysis. We made a selection of illustrative cases that address one or several of the crucial issues at stake in Switzerland and give insight in strategic and methodological questions. We consider the selected cases to be stimulating and transferable to the Swiss context and think that they may contribute to the debate in Switzerland.

The selected cases to be presented in this report are:

   –   The "Revenu Minimum d'Insertion" in Rennes (France);

   –   One-stop-shops for social service delivery in the city of Madrid;

   –   At the crossroads of family policy and social security in Norway;

   –   Major cities' policy in the Netherlands – the roles of national, regional and local government, and

   –   The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in England.

In presenting these cases, we did not wish to stick to good practices alone. Lessons from relative failures – not bringing up the expected solutions – can be as interesting as stories of success. Knowledge of good and bad practices can both stimulate innovation.

Some elements return in each case study:

1. A short overview of the country context and important (policy) developments,

2. A description of the main characteristics of the policy (state of the art)

3. Changes in vertical and horizontal relationships in the particular policy (process)

4. Policy results and outcomes

5. Conclusions: useful themes for the Swiss debate.

Expert meeting

At the end of this exploratory study, the commissioner organised an expert meeting, with the aim to study the outcomes of the cases and the possible consequences this might have for Switzerland. The research team had therefore formulated a number of draft conclusions that were discussed in order to come to policy recommendations for the Swiss partners. In this meeting representatives from the six countries involved in the study (Switzerland, Norway, England, Spain, the Netherlands and France) were present.

The participants were asked to read the report with the following basic questions in mind:

1. What elements (proposals, policy programmes, and methods of co-ordination) drew your attention most? What did you find most remarkable?

2. For the Swiss participants: what elements would you like to see implemented in your own field of work or at your level of governance? What elements would you suggest to be implemented by others in your country?

3. What elements of your country's social policy would you think be worth considering by the Swiss partners?

4. Which questions remain that you would like to be answered by one of the other participants?

The outcome of the expert meeting was used to precise and amend the *conclusions* of this report.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to all respondents in the six countries for giving their time and sharing their opinions with us. The way in which their thoughts and remarks are presented here belongs entirely to the responsibility of the researchers of the Verwey-Jonker Institute.

Three of the case studies were carried out in close co-operation with the following people and organisations: Ms. Monique Payen (case study Revenu Minimum d'Insertion. Rennes), Mr. Sergio Aguado and Ms. Belen Llorente, Enred Consultores (case study one-stop- shops for social service delivery in the city of Madrid), and Mr. Stephen Boyo, Community Development Foundation (Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in England). We want to thank them for all their efforts and the pleasant co-operation.

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Last but not least, we will not easily forget the outstanding support of the administrative staff of both the Federal Social Insurance Office in Bern and the Verwey-Jonker Institute.

1. Urban social policy in Switzerland

1.1   Reasons for the renewal of urban (social) policy: social problems and issues

1.1.1   General context

Cities have always been *Fremdkörper* in the constellation of states, in Switzerland longer and to a greater extent than in most other European countries (Kübler), although the population of Switzerland is now predominantly living in an urban environment (70%). But not only Swiss cities have been outsiders. One could say that the Swiss State does not exist. The Swiss cantons are the constituent entities. And they are many (26) and different in size and population (ranging from under 20.000 to more than 1 million inhabitants), in political colour and with their own constitution, laws and tax systems. There are also 2880 communes with their relative autonomy, such as local taxation. The fundamental idea is that the state is constituted bottom up. Switzerland is a nation by will. The cantons decided to federate, but to a limited extent. This is reflected in law: the principle of responsibility of the "lieu d'origine" was for a long-time essential in social assistance law, although the Swiss like others started to move and mobility is quite high nowadays.

Social problems, or problems with strong social dimensions, put from the Eighties on the Swiss cities under growing pressure. To name some of the most critical: the financial burden of being a regional centre, growing numbers of drug addicts, an overrepresentation of people depending on social assistance, pressure on environmental qualities and accessibility of cities by growing mobility. These were the most important factors pressing towards a stronger position for the cities in the policymaking process. Furthermore, the cities felt a need for compensation. To put it bluntly: more problems and people with problems should mean more money. But, crucial is that cities were claiming a voice in the development of new legislation, just like the cantons.

For more than ten years the Swiss cities organisation (SSV) has been asking for more attention for the growing agglomerations and their problems. The SSV asked for solutions by demanding changes in sectoral policies affecting the cities and a more coherent policy to meet the needs of the cities and the agglomerations.

The example of institutionalised co-operation on drug policies

Of course consultation and co-operation related to social questions have always been there. But the drug policy is widely seen as the first real breakthrough in integrated policy formulation and implementation in the social field, giving cities a formal voice. In the broad field of social policy the drug related problems did indeed create the greatest pressure (*Handlungsdruck)* to come to changes in the relations between the different policy levels. Cities played a starting role in that process. As a consequence the drug policy is the only field where real institutionalised forms of co-operation have developed so far (Kübler). It took the form of a national *Drogenausschuss (NDA),* in which civil servants prepare new policies on care, cure and security. Despite the fact that the cantons were divided on this issue, after 15 years (!) of discussions a platform with competencies, although with limited finances, was created. One might say that the inability of the cantons to reach in an earlier stage agreement gave way for the Confederation taking up a role. It is the only institutionalised tripartite conference yet. Its relative success of combating the drug related problems has consequences for other fields (Kübler, Stocker, Wohlwend). That is to say, the same way of handling will be tried out and followed first.

Article 50 and agglomeration policy

The need for more co-ordination between Confederation, cantons and communes and the need for tripartite consultation and exchange of views has taken solid ground, as is expressed in a recent article in Swiss constitutional law. Tripartite consultation and co-operation is strengthened by Article 50, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the constitution. This so-called communes' article (article 50, al 2 and 3 Constitution) makes it compulsory for the Confederation in its actions to pay attention to the special position and conditions of cities, agglomerations (and mountain areas).

At 16 October 2002 the Federal Council translated the article into policy guidelines in which attention is given to the ways along which vertical co-operation has to be build up. Crucial lines are dedicated to the most disputed question, that of direct contact between Confederation and communes. A national agglomeration policy is seen as the most important vehicle and framework for activities aimed at cities and agglomerations.

ARE, the Federal Office for Spatial Development and Seco, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, have sketched the contours of a federal agglomeration policy. (December 2001, report on the agglomeration policy). Promotion of the policy takes place on different fields (among others: traffic & development of new settlements, social policy and economic development).

The agglomeration policy tries to formulate answers on "institutional problems" such as the facts that:

- the problems of agglomerations were insufficiently taken care of by the Confederation;

- no one was feeling responsible for the co-ordinated and integrated development of agglomerations;

- in a federalist state structure no partner can take on the opportunities fully by itself.

The main strategies are:

- fostering of vertical co-operation;

- promoting of horizontal co-operation;

- aiming the efforts of the Confederation towards agglomerations' problems;

- developing integration in the European city-network.

In all these strategies sensibilisation of all partners and the exchanges of experiences are the leading elements.

As pilots some first projects have been selected containing at least: co-operation in agglomerations; co-operation between cities (city networks); promotion of the internal development of new settlements and inner-city renewal;

The selected cases obtain extra support from the federal offices. Some of them do cover a broad range of policy fields, others start with a single project. One such a pilot was launched (by Confederation + canton + city + region) in Lausanne by experimenting with moving competencies from cantons and communes to the level of the agglomeration).

The basis for the Swiss national agglomeration policy is given by the subsidiary position of the Confederation towards cantons and communes. On this basis the processes are aimed at making better use of existing competencies of the Confederation, create new ones and produce incentives for cantons and communes by providing support. Further on, the development of agglomeration must be a main issue in sectored policies.

Importance of private organisations within the Swiss welfare state

Important provisions in welfare and care are traditionally governed by private organisations. Examples are the care for disabled persons and the care and housing for elderly people (although there is a certain variety between communes). The whole health insurance system is privately managed, but still very much state controlled.

Questions of concentration and de-concentration

Not specifically Swiss, but widespread over almost all (sub) urban areas in Europe (in this sense despite all its particular characteristics, the Swiss urban context resembles in a remarkable way the rest of Europe), the same problems of concentration and de-concentration occur. To name some of the most prominent:

City and its surroundings: sub-urbanisation and mobility

The relationship between cities and their surroundings (suburbs, villages in the countryside) is most stressed as problematic from the perspective of the cities. The cities are experiencing pressure by commuters and by all others who go into the city and make use of the services it offers in the economic, social and cultural field. On every working day, approximately 150.000 commuters flow into Zurich. Most of these commuters do live in good, relatively less expensive housing in the surrounding areas where they pay less taxes and where inhabitants and local authorities are facing far less problems in the social field.

City and its surroundings: concentration of deprived people and illegal activities

Not only are cities confronted with a slow but steady move of more well to do citizens, the city is a shelter for less privileged others (lower incomes, lower education, more health-problems). In addition, bigger cities act as a magnet for those who seek the anonymity of the urban environment for illegal or semi-legal activities as in the sex industry, drug scene and petty crime.

Apart from the costs of maintaining security and keep up the quality of life in certain neighbourhoods and the city centres, this means more direct and indirect costs in delivering welfare services and care for the cities' inhabitants. The gross social expenditure of the city of Zurich, per inhabitant, for example, more than doubles that of the canton Zurich.

Researchers state that the trend of widening differences in income and a sharpening difference in the composition of the population is and will be ongoing between cities and the surrounding communes. Cities want to stop or at least slow down this trend and in the meantime find methods to redistribute the burden among communes at all levels: this means the canton or the agglomeration, but also the recognition of their disproportional needs and burden by the federal state.

1.1.2 *Policy domains and issues from cities' perspective*

As stated before, all interlocutors where asked first for the most urgent and manifest reasons for renewal of city social and welfare policies from their specific point of view. We did find the following issues. Not in order of importance:

Integration of asylum seekers and labour-migrants

The cantons decide over the scope and limits of support for asylum seekers and other immigrants. They have limited their compulsory role to providing shelter and livelihood. Some cantons stick to that minimum. Asylum seekers with very little pocket money and no permit and possibility to work have little reason to stay in these cantons and are attracted to the cities or from smaller communes in

a given canton to its bigger cities. Immigrants who are in the possession of legal permits were already in majority living in the bigger municipalities, working in low paid jobs and above average depending on public services.

Confronted with (the need of) these people, cities want to start 'money for work' and language-programmes, but are not allowed to and fail the money to do so. The result: more people hanging around, attracted to petty theft and drug trafficking, making prejudices come true. Stocker: "An asylum seeker should work from day 1. Partly for society and partly for his own development." She would like to see compulsory programmes for youngsters.

Reducing poverty: integrated measures to secure a sufficient basic level of existence (for families)

Cities feel they have to solve, on top of their own problems, structural problems that should be taken care of by the Confederation. One of the central claims of the cities' initiative for social security is that problems such as unemployment and the existence of poor families are all over Switzerland more or less the same, although more concentrated in the cities. However, each city has to struggle its own way out and is forced to solve problems the Confederation is creating by failing to fill in the holes in the system. There should be a decent, sufficient basic system that should be completed accordingly with geographically specific characteristics. A recent reduction of the unemployment insurance form 520 to 400 days for those under 55 years of age is, according to the cities, illustrating that cities are confronted with consequences of partial solutions for structural problems, because the social assistance programmes they finance will have to make up the cost of long-term unemployment.

Drug policies

We already signalled the role of example that this much-debated domain fulfilled in the vertical integration of policies. Almost all key-persons refer in two ways to the problem of addiction to hard-drugs and the negative societal consequences of it, which was fairly dramatic at the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties. Firstly, with a certain relief that the situation is more or less under control and tackled by a range of measures on which all policy levels co-operate. Secondly by stating that the path followed in the case of drug policies is seen as an example worth imitating. Important elements mentioned are the opening of shelters for drug-users and the provision of heroine by the city of Zürich while the debate on possible and legal measures was still going on. This was followed by the development of a broad range of projects and programmes in which all levels were involved in a structural way.

Housing

There is a shortage of housing in the cities. Researchers emphasise that cities, as well as cantons and the Confederation, do not have much steering capacity when it comes to housing. The sector is highly privatised with both commercial developers and social housing societies. Cities do host most of the social housing contingent, but are concentrating nowadays on building for higher income levels. As to the fostering of decent housing conditions for the poor (families): all kinds of intentions have been written down, but in reality little is carried out.

Problems experienced by cities related to the attributes and qualities of the policy process

There are problems at another level, transcending that of the above-mentioned topics. They are more related to the state structures and traditions in the policy process in general, as well as to the ways in which social policy in a broad sense is organised. In reaction to the pressure from the societal prob-

lems mentioned before, cities ask for changes in policies and interactions between state levels, as far as they are considered to be obstacles for effective strategies and measures:

1. Lack of recognition: cities are looking for recognition that their problems are of a different nature than those of smaller communes.

2. Cities experience a lack of political space. Cities want more freedom to manoeuvre. More space for own decisions and more competencies.

3. Cities could use more support, in financial terms or in terms of federal and cantonal policies that will support (not frustrate) the efforts of cities.

4. Cities are confronted with partial solutions for specific areas or parts of the social security system. Each law is considered to stand on its own. They do plea for nation-wide and integrated solutions.

5. Cities feel like having to deal with too many offices at the federal (different departments in different Ministries) and cantonal level.

We give more attention to some of these issues:

Ad 4

Already in 1995 a federal interdepartmental commission on the financing of social insurances was installed. In its first report not the benefits but the financial matters were leading. It was concluded however that an overall view (Gesamtschau) was failing. While launching the second report of the commission an advisory committee stressed the need to fill up the holes in the relationship Confederation-Cantons-communes. Since then little has happened and about the project nothing is heard anymore. No noticeable work on a social-political overview occurred. Therefore, cities feel still pressed to raise their voice at every single law and at every single financial shortage. And the system is moving form partial reform to partial reform: each change has its consequences on other laws and measures (Winterthur).

Ad 5

Things are complicated by the fact that no sector or level is the undisputed owner of the most pressing social problems. The responsibilities are transferred between three sectors (unemployment insurance, invalidity insurance, social assistance) all involved in the social security system. Those vicious circles could be avoided by starting from an overall view. Things are worsened by the fact that there is no clear address for social matters on the federal level.

Problems of a primarily financial nature

The search for new forms of sharing or dividing financial burdens is led by those cities that have stressed the different bottlenecks over the years:

1. Differences in taxes and in other policy regimes between cantons and between communes have the side effect of facilitating the export of problems between cantons and communes. The complex and delicate system of solidarity (Finanzausgleich) on the canton level, for all its positive effects, sometimes blocks shifting resources for renewal of urban policies to cities because of its conservative nature.

2. The differences in financial expenditures between municipalities inside cantons are sometimes huge. The gross social expenditures of the canton Zurich, excluding the city of Zurich, are 99 Swiss Francs per inhabitant; for the canton including the city, it is 434 and for the city itself 1063, more than double of those of the canton. On the income-side of cities,

considerable dissimilarities are present, too. Cities do generate income, for instance in the cultural and leisure sector, that other municipalities do not. Cities enjoy sometimes extraordinary subsidies to fulfil their central role in an agglomeration. Of course the debate is focussing on whether the extra income outweighs the expenditures. Past efforts to create a covering and dynamic (cities tend to be more vulnerable to changes in economic conditions, more open to unexpected and / or temporary influxes of new inhabitants) system of financial solidarity in the cantons have failed in the eyes of the cities.

3. In a strictly formal way, the Confederation, cantons and cities only have to take care of delivering sufficient financial support for poor people. In practice that means that it is hard to find finances for preventing poverty, for preventing people becoming dependent on financial aid, although prevention may turn out to be cheaper in the long run. So cities claim to invest a lot of their own budget on assistance for drug addicts, on youth work, on social housing, et cetera.

4. But even the legal obligation of income support is hard to fulfil. Indeed, in the eyes of the cities the expenditures for handicapped and elder people, of whom the Confederation takes care, are not sufficient to cover the costs of living. And still Swiss constitutional law does guarantee a sufficient level of existence. Therefore, cantons and often communes are paying part of it (Zusatzleistungen, supplementary benefits). Cities claim that recent proposals on limiting the duration of access to unemployment insurance by the Confederation transfer the financial problems of the latter to the cities and its individual inhabitants who depend on income support.

As a solution the Swiss Cities Organisation (SSV) strives for an internal financial redistribution per canton, in which not only the number of inhabitants but also the repartition of employment among the communes counts in the financial rearrangement (soziodemografischer Lastenausgleich). The cities are also asking for equality in the different financial redistribution mechanisms. Cities ask for the Confederation to intervene if cantons do not meet the obligation of inter-cantonal co-operation with Lastenausgleich.

Those who advocate a limited and strict financial space for city social policy point at the risks of creating inequality among Swiss inhabitants living in different cantons, or between those living in bigger cities versus those living in smaller municipalities. Furthermore, special and generous local social policies are bearing the risk of attracting more people on income assistance to the cities. Another argument is that cities should be prevented from the temptation of using federal and cantonal money for their own political goals.

Repartition of responsibilities and tasks: new perspectives on the question of subsidiarity

Related to the question of a just and efficient division of financial means in social policy, is the issue of repartition of responsibilities and tasks.

Not surprisingly, the Conference of cantonal directors of social affairs, CDAS (Zürcher), did not bring up the question of the need for financial redistribution in the benefit of the cities. But he was willing to make a clear difference between the cities and the countryside. When one city's population is dominating the canton, it would be better to give such a city real autonomy (or delegate) to develop its social policy. For more rural areas, the canton is best in place to assure a co-ordinated and qualitative social policy. The principle should be subsidiarity – one has to look for the smallest entity that has the possibility to develop an adequate social policy. But this subsidiarity should not be uniform. And it has also its limits. For basic needs there should be a national standard. An example can be the minimum income level: in several constitutions it is stipulated that citizens have the

right to receive a vital minimum income, in other cantons it is a non-written right. But the levels are locally defined. That should change.

1.1.3   Policy domains and issues from other perspectives

How are the problems of cities described and analysed by spokespersons on other levels and by other experts?

A view from the cantonal level

Mr. Zürcher from the Conférence des directeurs cantonaux des affaires sociales (CDAS) describes the Swiss cities, although not really big in international terms, as the engine of economic development and as the place where social problems concentrate. It is not only a problem of quantity, but also a qualitative difference with social issues outside cities. The subculture of drug users e.g. is a specific urban problem. People looking for anonymity and looking for financial and other support come to the city. Furthermore there is a great mobility, as well in terms of traffic as in terms of inhabitants. Crucial social developments and problems are ageing, immigration (refugees), drug abuse and delinquency.

Another issue concerning the cities is family policy. The possibilities for mobilising resources are less present in cities than in the countryside. The policies concerning families are very fragmented. As to the participation on the labour market, legislation should facilitate the free choice of partners with small children to have a paid job or not. Without good regulations and provisions, more in particular women will interrupt their career and it will be very difficult to get them back "on track" later on. This can also be described in economic terms as a loss of qualified work force.

The mere existence of quantitative and qualitative differences with social issues outside cities makes a specific social policy of cities necessary. In the opinion of Zürcher this urban social policy must be larger than the traditional one, including adjacent domains such as public safety, a vital climate for commerce and a physical infrastructure. But what is foremost needed, is the articulation of social policies and practices between cities, communes and cantons. Because very often people in need come from other localities because the assistance they got there was not (perceived as) sufficient. It is the role of the CDAS to serve as a platform for exchange and co-ordination in these matters.

The raison d'être of city social policy is twofold: first it can help to de-fragmentize social policies, secondly it can help to organise national solidarity for the fact that cities have to carry the burden of national problems. This was the reason for the creation of the "city initiative".

A view from the region

From the Région Lausanne, Mr. Muheim believes that the problems of the central cities are essentially financial. They are linked to the attractiveness of cities (as compared to smaller communes) for:

- specific groups "in need", such as young and old people who need to have education and services in proximity, and

- groups "at risk", who seek the anonymity (drug addicts, psychiatric patients, illegal immigrants).

People with more means leave the city. They come to the city by car and they ask for more services (transport). This means a loss on the level of income taxes for the cities. For the communes where they live, they represent few costs. Here, their income taxes are profits. To encourage the opposite movement of people with higher incomes coming back to the city, the city of Lausanne allows the

construction of "high standing" housing. Entrepreneurs, on the other hand, pay their income tax at the place of employment. This balances in a way the negative income of the city.

A problem for the social sector is that its image is very much influenced by the people who are mis-using it. There is too much "ideologism". More money or more freedom for the cities is translated as more generosity, not as more commitment to get people re-integrated again.

Remarks from scientists on urban problems

Scientists Cunha and Stofer put the matter in a historical perspective and emphasise that:

1. Communes have always had an important role in social assistance.

2. Poor people are not attracted to the city because of more generous social assistance or ser-vices, but to find a network of services and for the anonymity.

3. The economic crisis of the 90's (Switzerland did not have an employment crisis in the 70's) affected an important part of the population.

4. The transformation of families, first affected by the crisis, has made social bonds fragile.

5. Questioning the welfare state in general has led to / or was provoked by a de-responsibilisation of Confederation and cantons – and thus territorialisation of social policy. As a consequence social policy became the exclusive problem of certain geo-graphical areas. New local resources have to be explored.

The poverty problem is clearly an urban problem (in rural areas poor people are relatively well pro-tected by the support of networks). Movement of richer people out – poor people stay in or come to the cities. Cunha and Stofer see almost no sign of an opposite movement. Quite the reverse: even some reforms in old age pensions, giving the possibility to use a part of the money to buy a house, will reinforce the movement out of the city of middle class people.

The reasoning in Switzerland is about the so-called "assistés lourds", people who risk to be in social assistance for the rest of their lifes. In fact nobody is really responsible for them. They are sent from one service to the other, there are waiting lists, etc. The idea is indeed to install one-stop shops (guichet unique). The objective is furthermore that people are helped and accompanied until their social and professional re-integration. New structures can help, but the professional culture should follow changes.

The integration of immigrants is one of the major problems in which the state is hardly investing any money.

Cunha and Stofer point out that Switzerland is not performing not bad in terms of old age pension schemes and of professional integration programmes for the unemployed. The weakness is in the fight against poverty and social exclusion (social assistance). Even the quality of what is offered in terms of professional integration within the social assistance scheme is lower than within the unem-ployment scheme (because of the principle of non-competitiveness). Thus there are few qualifying job-offers and training-offers, although those dependent on social assistance need more accompani-ment and supervision.

A view from the federal level

The commissioners of this study, from the Federal Social Insurance Office, underline that the transfer of the financial burden and the concentration of social problems in the cities (increasing the financial pressure on cities and some cantons) are the questions around which the debate is centred. In their opinion, however, it is not sufficient to limit the debate to these points. They would like to

bring into the discussion two arguments: the main problem is not a financial one and the social problems of cities cannot be solved within the limit of social policy or the social sector in a strict sense. It is essentially a question of integration and of city development in a broad sense (quality of life, integration, education, segregation, etc.). It is also about segregation within the cities. As to the differences within and between cities, the differences within cities are as big as those between them.

Looking at the social field, cities have a greater burden than their environment. But cities also have advantages that balance their costs, others claim. It is possible that they can not solve their problems because they are unable to raise the tax burden, but still they are complaining that others use all their infrastructures, which means that at least these infrastructures exist.

It is clear that cities attract risk populations and that cities have to tackle a number of specific problems, but in a large context. Cities need perhaps specific social policy, but in a very large sense. The impression is that they do not have such a policy. There are programmes for the long-term unemployed, for the poor, programmes to promote integration, but there is no coherent local policy, which combines social, economic and spatial strategies.

Consensus about the most urgent local social problems does not exist. In the nineties, when the association of cities ("city initiative") came into life, there was clearly the problem of unemployment and of social assistance. But with economic growth, it became less clear, even if you can see that the number of social assistance claimants is not much reduced.

Unemployment is not on the political agenda anymore; it is family policy now. This issue was non-existing until now, but it is taken as an opportunity, because there seems to be a possibility for consensus across political colours and levels on this issue. If you look at poverty rates, at the working poor: families always rank first. This is connected to childcare costs and low child allowances. For cities, raising the financial support for families (at federal level) would lower their costs, their financial burden. And they are right at this point. A number of families would indeed not be poor if there were a more performing family policy.

Perhaps combating segregation should be the central focus point instead of family policy. The recent debate on family policy is primarily a question of adjusting income policies, and not so much a matter of local social policy. And it will not solve the problem of segregation. Should family policy be defined in a broad way, including youth delinquency, drop outs of schools, child abuse, then it could be a topic for local policy, but the actual discussion is about the financial situation of families only. One issue that links federal and local policy is the childcare structure (federal financing for new structures), but at this time it is not linked at all to city policies.

On the other hand consensus and awareness has grown on the idea that integration means more than professional or job integration; that social policy is not only about (more) money.

The need for national standards or monitoring is not expressed clearly or believed to be essential, because of - among other things - differences in political culture and institutional settings.

Social questions are very different between German and French speaking regions. E.g. migrant children in schools are a big problem in Zurich. This is not so in Geneva, because there it is less politicised. There is an integration policy, even for illegal migrants (sans papiers). One could also give the example of the squatters' movement.

Swiss social and urban problems in perspective

Some interlocutors state that the problems in the social field that Switzerland is facing are not so urgent in comparison to the social problems (social exclusion, hostility between groups of different ethnic backgrounds, devastated neighbourhoods, et cetera) in other countries. Also it is mentioned

that the social problems are of less importance compared to other problems in Switzerland. All referents state however that Swiss society cannot afford to stick to its sector oriented, locked up, social policy and has to fight compartmentalisation in urban policy. Integrated, commonly conducted and supported policies are necessary – as foreign examples show - to prevent future accidents to happen.

1.1.4   Summarising: social policy and cities in Switzerland[1]

Cities in Swiss federalism

Being a Confederation in its actual form since 1848, the 26 cantons of Switzerland are to be seen as federate entities. Switzerland has 2,896 communes and has no specific status for cities. A statistical criterium is used to define as cities all communes with more than 10.000 inhabitants.

The competencies of the Confederation are delegated by the cantons. They legislate on the communes. As to taxation: the communes have the right to raise local taxes and to set the tax rate. As a result, 70% of the communal income is generated locally (cf. ca. 55% in France, and 10% in The Netherlands).

Looking at the political system, Switzerland is to be characterised as a "Consensus democracy" as defined by the political scientist A. Lijphart. Indicators for that are: (1) the fact that dissolution of parliaments or revocation of governments is not possible; (2) that coalition governments operate at all levels; (3) the inclusion of interest groups and corporatist actors in the policy making process.

Switzerland uses furthermore extensive direct democracy instruments such as the mandatory and optional referendum and the popular initiative for legislation. Switzerland has the world record of popular voting: on average every Swiss has to vote some 30 times a year.

The formal division of competencies between the levels of government is shown in table 1.

Table 1.1   Formal division of competencies between levels of governments

Competencies	Policy domains
Confederation	Currency and Monetary System; National Defence; Customs; Postal Service and Telecommunications; Aviation; Railways; Foreign Affairs; Television and Radio Broadcasting; Nuclear Energy; Criminal Law; Asylum Seekers; Professional Education; Research; Federal Taxes
Cantons	Police; Religion; Hospitals and Health; Energy; Regional Planning; Higher Education; Prisons; Cantonal Taxes
Communes	Public Transport (in cities); Gas, Electricity and Water Supply; Removal Services; Social Welfare; Culture; Local Planning and Construction; Local Taxes
Confederation + Cantons	Territorial Development; Agriculture; Environmental Policy; Trade, Industry and Labour; Civil Law; Roads; Social Security
Cantons + Communes	Local Roads; Health Supply; Public Schools and Education; Sport

It is important to note here that Social Welfare is a competence of the communes, while Social Security is in the hands of both Confederation and Cantons.

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[1]   During the expert meeting at the end of this exploratory study (20-21 November 2003), Dr. Daniel Kübler from the University of Zurich gave an overview of the position of cities in relation to social policy in Switzerland. This section is a summary of his lecture. The responsibility for the summary lies with the authors of this report.

Cities and Urban Sprawl

There is no formal government level at agglomeration level. Swiss authorities nevertheless recognise the existence of these by defining Functional Metropolitan Statistical Areas. These are calculated at every federal population census. The definition of an agglomeration is as follows. It has to be an area of more than one commune, with at least 20,000 inhabitants; the core zone consists of a central city; communes are included on two types of criteria: there has to be an important number of commuters to the core zone; the continuity of the built environment, the density and growth.

An important characteristic of Swiss biggest agglomerations is that most of them are situated in more than one canton and several do even cross national boarders. In view of the repartition of competencies and in view of the urge for integrated policy development this situation creates an important co-ordination problem.

The situation of the seven biggest agglomerations is shown in table 2.

Table 1.2   Population, number of communes and cantons for seven agglomerations

Agglomeration	Population	Communes	Territorial entities
Zurich	1,084,027	133	3 Swiss + 1 in Germany
Basle	691,606	118	3 Swiss + 1 in Germany + 1 in France
Geneva	636,937	127	2 Swiss + 2 in France
Bern	349,096	43	2 Swiss
Lausanne	309,120	67	1 Swiss
Lucerne	196,550	17	3 Swiss
Lugano	137,389	80	1 Swiss + 2 in Italy

City Problems

In relation to policy making in cities, four interrelated (political) developments have to be mentioned:

− Forms of social segregation in metropolitan areas develop in two directions. First, there is an exodus of more wealthy families out of the core cities to the so-called "Speckgürtel" (the peri-urban 'grease belt'). Second, industries and shopping malls in certain suburban zones attract low qualified labour (immigrants).

− New political cleavages seem to follow this segregation. The core cities do attract inhabitants looking e.g. for good public services and cultural events. They are more sensitive to social issues and vote at the left side. The suburban electorate tends to focus more on the immigration issue and sympathises with the national-conservative right. The peri-urban residents finally are the more economically successful, which brings them nearer to the liberal-economic right of the political spectrum.

− As core city elites are sensitive to problems faced by socially marginalised populations – the unemployed, poor, elderly, sick, immigrants, drug users, prostitutes, etc. – their is more room for integrative approaches in (social) policy. On the contrary, the sensitiveness of suburban elites to problems faced by "ordinary" Swiss residents – such as crime, immigration, incivilities, etc. – paves the way for more exclusive (social) policy approaches.

− The problems for social policy making in the cities could thus be summarised as follows:

    − The fiscal stress in the core cities, because of the erosion of the tax base and the growing social welfare expenditures;

    –   The conflicts between the core city and the suburban areas, because of the different political views on social policy issues and the uncompensated charges of "central-ity";

    –   The conflicts between the core cities and the canton, on the one hand also because of the different political views on social policy issues and on the other hand conflicts about autonomy.

The conflicting views on social policy orientation seem perhaps more important (or at least as important) than structural problems of (levels of) governance.

The role of the Confederation in urban (social) policy.

One important point here is the so-called City article in the federal constitution (1999), which gives the Confederation the possibility to participate in metropolitan problem solving, more in particular in the fields of transport, environment and social problems.

So far the Confederation started to work on three levels: the re-organisation of the Financial Equali-sation (NFA); the promotion of an integrated view on policy problems and solutions between the three government levels (the Tripartite Agglomerations Conference since 2001); some pilot projects in metropolitan areas.

To conclude, three major challenges can be formulated for a federal social policy in cities:

    –   Since the competencies for social policy are essentially based in the cantons and the com-munes, the Confederation can only act by incentives for change. A problem here (drug) is that the incentives are most actively used by those who are already convinced of the need for change;

    –   Since the disparities of resources are important, the Confederation should take up a role of (organising) compensation;

    –   Since the key players have conflicting views on social policy orientations, the Confedera-tion should steer them by formulating clear policy goals.

1.2   Possible strategies and experiences

1.2.1 *Possible strategies and experiences: vertical relationships / vertical co-operation and policy integration*

Continuity and change

All elements of change and continuity weighed, one should probably come to the general conclusion that the current patterns of horizontal and vertical policy integration that emerged in response to urban issues did not alter the traditionally strong position of cantons in the Swiss architecture of intergovernmental relations. The metropolisation tendencies and a development towards more heterogeneous intergovernmental relations, and acceptance of mutual dependency affected the pre-viously homogeneous and hierarchical intergovernmental relations, but have until now not led to the affirmation of a strong urban government against higher territorial levels (Kübler et al. 2003).

The fundaments - the cantons still being in power, local government as a whole still being without a stronger position in the power relations - may have been remarkably untouched, the changes that took place are not meaningless. And may have consequences in the longer term for the fundaments

as well, if not erode them. At least that is how some describe it. As an important signal for a shift in positions and influence, the experts we spoke with point at article 50.

Article 50 and federal / cantonal agglomeration policies

On first sight not much of a shock, but apparently a crucial article in the Swiss context. Opening the formal possibility to talk and deal directly between Confederation and communes, without permission of the canton. The introduction of this article in the constitution can not be seen as an earthquake but certainly as a point of no return in the recognition of the right of communes to co-operate directly with the Confederation and with each other in self chosen forms (in agglomerations, regions et cetera). In that sense this is a fundamental change of the Swiss hierarchy – although almost nobody realised that when voting the new constitution (Muheim).

Not all are confident that recent developments aimed at a stronger vertical co-operation between Confederation, cantons and communes are real breakthroughs. The new working lines by article 50 from the Federal constitution (October 2002) are nothing but a paper tiger yet. The intentions are good, but the new article still has to come to life. It is still to be seen how it will work out in practice. And it is unclear how solid the political will behind these thoughts will prove to be (Wohlwend).

Others (Muheim) limit themselves to the neutral statement that article 50 is a factual recognition of developments that got its origins in the sixties and seventies and received a big boost in the nineties: a recognition of communes, central cities and agglomerations and the co-operation among them. Since the Confederation cannot any longer deny the existence of agglomerations, there can be direct relationships between the Confederation and them (informing the canton).

Several interlocutors are convinced that the federal council was not very enthusiastic about the article 50. Federal services discovered a number of contradictions. They then decided together with the leaders of the canton governments to set-up a tripartite conference on the agglomerations (TAK, official start February 2001). Cities and agglomerations are represented in it and its composition reflects the existence of different language-regions. This tripartite conference, described as a "dynamic platform for discussion", can be seen as a kind of formal obligation, following the new article about cities in the constitution. But out of this obligation could grow something substantial.

One of the tasks of this TAK, still under way, is to work out the definition and responsibilities of the federal agglomeration policy. The above-mentioned guidelines from October 2002 do not answer these questions yet, only repeat them. The only clear statement seems to be: 'the development of an agglomeration policy is in the first place a responsibility of the cantons' (quoted from the official comment by the federal government (Bundesrat). But that does not make things easier: can we still speak of a federal agglomeration policy then?

Fact is that the Confederation itself - operating carefully - has taken up responsibilities and is stimulating co-operation and policy renewal via experiments in and between agglomerations which may fuel the discussion in the TAK.

Agglomeration policy and social policy

Important for this study is that the Swiss agglomeration policy is including important aspects of social policy. The social aspects, the foreigners and integration policies included, are quite well represented. Here, a link between spatial policies, the historic backbone of the agglomeration policy and its predecessors, and social policies is established and can be tightened. However, even in this agglomeration policy, the clearest structure for vertical co-operation gaining a certain momentum, social policy is a relatively underdeveloped field.

The tripartite conference (with a technical working group on social policy) is not very well financed or equipped.

The working group, chaired by the Conference of cantonal directors of social affairs (CDAS), is discussing and struggling on possible forms of city social policy with representatives from the three levels. The working group is suggesting the development of programmes on:

1. Family policies. Research is carried out: how can social security (in relation to taxation and child-childcare?) be changed in a way that it meets the needs of (poor) families. CDAS has commissioned a study on this subject.

2. Research on the real financial problem, by studying some typical cases and to analyse who is paying what in such case. A form of diagnostics as to the financial problem.

3. A study on the possibilities for "one window" (one stop shops) for social problems.

The tripartite conference says it does stimulate the development of this kind of proposals but did so far not accept them, except for the first one, apparently because of a lack of budget, which may reflect a lack of interest. Pressure to move forward comes from the cities, but both cantons (for fear of losing power) and federal government (who does not want to regulate more, to intervene more, to have more competencies) are opting for a much slower pace and are reluctant to co-finance something. As a consequence it is hard to make a step forward.

Limited progress in vertical co-operation in the social field

At this moment the problem of the working poor and the need to reconsider the support for poor families is clearly on the agenda. Although the cities are disappointed and impatient, the pressure they deliver on especially the Confederation seems not to be without results. But the transition into experimental pilot projects - not to mention solid programmes - is facing delays. Also the discussion on the integration and co-ordination of the supply of social security on the level of Confederation, Canton and Communes, a debate centred around financial redistribution between levels, seems to make little progress.

In general, attention for both social security and local social policy within tripartite structures is underdeveloped. Resources are small and the political will is lacking, although the need for reforms (in terms of repartition of tasks, competencies and finances) vis-à-vis the problems in the cities is underlined again and again. This may have something to do with the complexity of the structures created over the years. And with the necessity to leave well-known terrain for new interactions and relationships?

2.2.2   *Possible strategies and experiences: horizontal relationships*

Co-operation between cities

The attempts of cities in Switzerland to organise themselves and to become partners for the Confederation are hindered by the position of the cantons that do not want to give up their hierarchical prerogatives (Cunha). This is not to say that no effective ways of co-operation between certain cantons and cities do exist, nor that cities find themselves helpless. Cities have been organised in an association: SSV. Besides that, since five years the directorates for social affairs of 40 cities are resembled in the cities' initiative for social security (Städteinitiative "ja zur sozialen Sicherung").

In Switzerland, almost by tradition every innovation has to be developed on the decentral level. In itself this is no disaster. In a way it presses local and regional authorities and professionals to creativity and determination. The cities know that the only successful way towards more vertical policy

integration and co-operation leads along the path of slow progress: cantons will remain responsible and competent for almost everything. Who wants to change policies will have to discuss and persuade people at all levels. Any change that is foreseen will begin with cities and others (scientists, journalists) stimulating debate in society, followed by the formulation of programmatic impulses and incentives (either on the local / regional or federal level), then development of innovations co-ordinated by federal offices, via pilots in selected cantons, policy evaluation, persuasion of cantons, negotiating between cantons and between cantons and Confederation and finally adoption by cantons. In other words: the only way is by showing that things work in practice, making actors getting accustomed to new ways of handling societal problems and /or by creating facts.

Apart from the time consuming character of the whole process, cities are frustrated by the fact that once innovations have been secured (that space to do it themselves is created or active support from (some) urban cantons is secured) they are still only half way. It proofs very harsh to invite the Confederation to take care for a good embedding of these innovations, so that the cities can really solve their problems themselves.

This may explain why the Städteinitiative is described as "self-help group" by its president. Its main strategy is developing effective, pragmatic new ways of tackling problems. It is a blockade to have to deal with 26 different cantonal systems and too many federal offices, institutions and laws. The cities' initiative is lobbying for changes there. But given that situation, one has to deal in a super-pragmatic way, without the intention to create nation-wide new policies, but to open the political playground for new policies for cities. One has to work out strategies to solve problems for which the formal structures are at a given moment in time still deaf or blind, or are not yet willing to create solutions for. (Stocker and Wohlwend)

Other proposals from the cities are:

- Direct access to funding from the Confederation.

- Performance contracts, between communes and Confederation and cantons and communes. For example on the integration of migrants. Some cities do need money and space to do something about the fast growing problems with young Africans. The cities want these things direct from the Confederation, so that in an early stage projects and programmes can be offered to them. In many cases, waiting for the canton will take too long. Not to forget the probability that due to political differences in problem perception the necessary agreement and / or support will never be provided. The solution of this and other problems lies in transparent and clear performance contracts between Confederation and cantons and between Confederation and communes (Stocker).

- Do it yourself: invest money out of the own resources of the city, although your are not obliged to do (in some cases not even allowed to do), but in the cities´ view urged to do, because the problems are there. The need of people and tensions in society cannot (no longer) be denied.

Cities see some progress on:

- A project of Seco, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, on new networks between partners in the field of unemployment insurance, disability insurance and social assistance. A very complex situation out of which something new has to be modelled.

- A first sign for approaching some common ground in integration policies. It is acknowledged that integration policies should be broader than a policy aimed at immigrants only. Concepts as integration, empowerment (helping people to take up their own responsibilities) and prevention gain influence. Social policy as a sustainable policy in-

stead of a couple of end-of-pipe measures (Sozialpolitik als Reparaturwerkstatt). At the same time, as we noticed already in chapter 1.1., cities complain about a lack of formal competencies on integration policy and a lack of space to speed up social and professional integration of people.

− Family policy: the claims and policy recommendations on family policy create much movement. For the first time a broad coalition of cities, and big and very influential societal organisations from very diverse backgrounds and political orientation could be brought under one banner.

Co-operation between cantons

On social policy, the Conference of Directors of social affairs of the cantons plays an important role. It represents the level in between the cantons and the confederation. It is created by the common will of the cantons – it is not meant to be an institution, but a platform for exchange and discussion. (It is precisely on these aspects that others interviewed for this study express the need for more readiness among cantons to look at and learn from each other.)

It is also the level where the position of the cantons vis-à-vis the confederation in certain issues is defined.

Priority topics of the Conference are:

− A new financial balance between the cantons.

− The collaboration with cities and communes.

− The tripartite conference on agglomerations.

Specific issues of the conference are:

1. Social insurances.

2. Employment and Social Assistance.

3. Social Policy.

4. Statistics.

5. Immigration.

6. Training in the social field.

7. Assistance for victims.

8. Inter-canton convention about social institutions (private structures/public financing).

9. Problems of drug abuse.

The conference works at a fairer distribution of resources between cantons. It also tries to develop standards (maximum and minimum standards), leaving sufficient margins to respond to differences in incomes and taxation between the cantons.

It is not considered as a public body that comes often to powerful decisions. A certain role in negotiating and convincing its 'members' is assigned to it. But cantons do seldom share the same perception of causes of problems and opportunities to alter developments. Differences between cantons are considerable, in all domains. The cities have a specific position, often not linked to the position of the canton. It is not possible to say that more densely populated cantons are automatically more interested in co-ordination. So the relationship between cantons and their cities varies to a great extent.

Tensions arise for example at the question of transfer of burden in social security: there is a means-tested element in the old age pension scheme. The federal government co-finances this with the cantons (according to the overall financial situation of the cantons). In the rich canton of Zurich, the Confederation co-finances very little, and the canton transfers the burden to the municipalities, which means a heavy burden for the City of Zurich. The city would like the rules to be changed and turns to the Confederation. But the Confederation sees it as a problem between canton and city.

Comments on a limited view on tasks can be heard in the field of integration of immigrants. Cantons are discussing more how many immigrants each should "take", how great the burden can be, and pay not enough attention to the question of how integration should take place.

1.2.3   Policy integration and new networks on the level of cities and agglomerations

Financial and hierarchical structures that sometimes hinder innovations should not act as alibis for not seeking new partnerships and policy renewal. Modern times do ask, beyond ways of adjusting these formal relationships, for new ways of co-operation and co-ordination, according to different key persons. The willingness to invest and participate in new partnerships is not always as vivid as it could be. Co-operation between NGOs playing a traditionally important role in services and between those NGOs and local, regional and cantonal governments could grow to a higher level. The same could be said for cross-sectored coalitions with the spatial and economic field (co-operation with businesses in public-private job-programmes and other partnerships).

While the co-ordination of social insurance programmes with local social (assistance) programmes remains difficult, on a local level several cities are working on integration of services (one stop shops) and changes in the attitudes of organisations in the social field. Local policy makers as well as practitioners design social programmes where the different aspects of *social* city policy (social security, social welfare, and re-integration into the labour market) are interlocked. Promising developments in these social practice processes were mentioned in the interviews.

Focus on (social and professional) integration

Scientists Cunha and Stofer put emphasis on the mobilisation of local actors co-operating for the purpose of professional and social integration of their clients. This co-ordination process can never be taken care of by the central state. It is foremost a question of will.

The repartition of competencies (linked with the question of scale) is also crucial. When the actors are physically closer to each other (in smaller cities e.g.), in general one could say that the chance for collaboration is greater. However, in Geneva and other bigger cities the opposite is the case. Networking among social agents is supposed, but competition and power games (protection of clients) are sometimes dominating. In Geneva e.g. services are very fragmented (cloisonnés). The minimum income provider does not work together with the employment office and not with other service providers. But do not make the mistake that with only a good repartition of tasks and competencies, everything will function. Each actor has already a very high workload. Just to say "we have to network" is not sufficient. This will cost something. Networking is often mistakenly seen as a means to diminish costs. (Only) in this way integration of local social policies is also a financial question: there should be enough means to deliver integrated services.

There are big differences of repartition of competencies between cantons, but within each canton they are relatively clear. It is a question of will and capacity to co-operate. There are good and bad practices. The important keys are: animation of networks (animation des réseaux) and a good training of social agents in networking (integrating "languages" of different professionals). The discussion on this level is not very present in Switzerland.

The objective should be that people are helped and accompanied until their social and professional re-integration. New structures can help, but the professional culture should follow (Muheim).

One of the best examples seems to be Zurich. The Model Zurich, which did over the years attract attention from social policies' practitioners and researchers elsewhere in Europe, is in itself described as a cultural change, from financing the deficits towards a result-oriented financing on the basis of clear agreements. At the same time this did make it possible for the city government to steer in white spots and cut down doubles in the range of services. The model is build on three principles:

- from income security to active integration policy;
- from social relief to work or activity;
- from administrating income assistance of individual clients to releasing the potential of clients in their communities.

Important cornerstones for the functioning of the social service department are:

- area-based, comprehensive social service centres;
- proximity to clients;
- making use of resources of neighbourhoods and communities for the purpose of integration;
- enhancing self help;
- building networks with other (voluntary) organisations and city offices.

The city of Winterthur tries to keep its younger citizens out of social assistance by offering them a job proposal at their first visit to the social assistance office. The project aims at lowering the demand for assistance by fast and non-bureaucratic co-operation between the social assistance office and the communal job centre. The project is open for young people, who are capable to accept work in the short term.

Winterthur is also running ambulant programmes for male and female youngsters (aged 13 till 18) who are undergoing difficulties at school, drop out, engage in petty crime or are in mental distress. In addition, Winterthur points out to the 'trend of cantons and con-federation increasingly shifting responsibilities towards the cities'.

One-stop-shops

Even if the cantons have a great autonomy in social policy practice, the confederation is pretty dominant, because of its responsibility for the most important insurances. But these insurances are very much fragmented. Thus for the citizen it is too complex a system. The canton or the city can help with e.g. one-stop shops, inter-institutional co-operation, neighbourhood centres, general social work (Zürcher).

The reasoning in Switzerland is about the so-called "assistés lourds", people who risk to be in social assistance for the rest of their lifes. In fact nobody is really responsible for them. They are sent from one service to the other, there are waiting lists, etc. One-stop-shops (guichet unique) should enable professionals to increase their grip on these people. (Cunha and Stofer).

Integration of social, economic and spatial programmes in urban policy

Besides the integration of social policy and social services on the local or - depending the scale - regional / agglomeration level, still another question is the integration of these social programmes in

broader urban policies and - the other way round - the integration of spatial (housing, urban renewal) and economic aspects into social programmes. These movements seem to be a step that is hard to take.

While this may be the case almost everywhere in Europe, some interlocutors believe on this aspect Switzerland is only in the second league. Their arguments vary:

It is said that as a consequence of the lack of integration of the different laws, measures and programmes in the social policy field, integration with other domains of city policies is not yet possible or on the agenda.

But others do hold cities partly responsible: "Integration on a local level is underdeveloped in Switzerland. Cities do cry for more money first. They try to get it from the federal government, cantons and surrounding communes. That did hinder the formulation of integrated policies with spatial planing and city and neighbourhood development. (Kübler).

Another explanation is searched in the re-active, and not pro-active, nature of the social policy practice in Switzerland. For example: nation-wide there seems to be no real co-operation between the social and economic field (linking of education and labour market) and even within the social field. People are just re-oriented towards other services when their situation changes. And public-private partnerships are legally possible beyond the central obligations of the services, but in practice there are no such partnerships (Muheim). On local level, however, we found attractive examples of job training of unemployed young people in co-operation with local business.

Another specific factor that we did already notice is the limited influence of the state on housing, considered as a key element in integrated urban policy in every European city or agglomeration. Cities, cantons and Confederation alike, do not have much steering capacity in this field. The sector is highly privatised with both commercial developers and social housing societies. It is problematic to deliver any statements as to which degree serious efforts are made to engage those private parties in regional housing plans or other (lighter) forms of collaboration. The neighbourhood renewal programme in Basel gives an example of a broader urban city policy under construction.

As a provisional conclusion one might say that the agglomeration policy could turn out to work in an integrative manner. At this moment however, the several domains are, although under the umbrella of this policy, still separated.

1.2.4   Role of the Confederation in fostering vertical and horizontal policy integration

In the light of the precarious and cautious attitude of the working groups under the wings of federal offices in the tripartite structures, the recommendations of scientists as Cunha and Stofer to strive for a more active and facilitating role for the Confederation seem hard to adopt. But they stress the prime importance (subsidiarity) of integration of policies and networks on the local or regional level itself, and describe the role of the Confederation as assistance to this primary process by:

−   Reinforcing the idea of a right to have a minimum income / give a national standard (along the norms that are suggested now within the bodies that co-ordinate the cantons).

−   Facilitating the link between professional and social integration by enlarging the competencies of job exchange agents, by financial incentives, by provoking coherence between systems (there is now a certain "recycling" of assisted people towards the unemployment benefit).

−   Taking up a role of innovation (pilot projects in the co-operation between communes – agglomerations, etc.): giving "de l'huile financière".

Views from federal officials themselves (Gärtner and Tobler):

The Federal government could have responsibilities for:

- information – promotion of good practices;

- financing of experiments;

- signalising and articulating that the different services within the social security system, through the fragmentation, cause problems at the local level.

A mediating role (between cantons / between cantons and municipalities) for the federal government is not foreseen? Central government can not mediate, and perhaps it even should not. There are two reasons: for years we try to unify assistance schemes – there is no consensus, our mediation did fail in a way. And even if it did succeed: it is not sure that common standards would solve any problem.

On the other hand, case studies can show differences, and stimulate (political) discussion about these, which can have a mediating role in itself.

Cantons do not expect the federal level to monitor what happens. The federal office for statistics is building statistics about social assistance – they have to work with incentives for the cantons to participate.

1.3   Synthesis

- The current patterns of horizontal and vertical policy integration that emerged in response to urban issues did not alter the traditionally strong position of cantons in the Swiss architecture of intergovernmental relations. The metropolisation tendencies and a development towards more heterogeneous intergovernmental relations, and acceptance of mutual dependence affected the previously homogeneous and hierarchical intergovernmental relations but have not led until now to the affirmation of a strong urban government against higher territorial levels.

- Nevertheless, a national agglomeration policy has gone through a slow but steady development. The need for more co-ordination between Confederation, cantons and communes and the need for tripartite consultation and exchanging of views has taken solid ground, as is expressed in a recent article in the Swiss constitutional law.

- In this agglomeration policy, however, social policy is a relatively underdeveloped field. At this moment the problem of the working poor and the need to reconsider the support for poor families is clearly on the agenda but the transition into experimental pilot projects not to mention solid programmes is facing delays.

- In addition, the discussion on the integration and co-ordination of the supply of social security on the level of Confederation, canton and communes, a debate centred around financial redistribution between levels, seems to make little progress. This debate is complicated by differences in systems of solidarity (Finanzausgleich) on canton level, and by dissimilarities in taxes and other policy regimes between cantons and between communes.

- Except for the debate on financial relationships and *formal* hierarchical structures that sometimes do hinder innovations, modern times do ask, beyond ways of adjusting these relationships and structures, for new ways of co-operation and co-ordination. The problems mentioned before should, according to different key persons, not act as alibis. The willingness to invest and participate in new partnerships is not always as vivid as it could

be. Co-operation with NGOs and businesses in public-private partnerships and a clear readiness among cantons to look at and learn from each other can grow to a higher level.

− A big deficit in the policy-fields that affect the cities is that each law is considered to stand on its own. The cities united in the cities' initiative for social security stress the importance of a broader view on the consequences of laws and measures for other domains and other levels of government. Nation-wide and integrated solutions are needed. At this moment it is either do-it-yourself as city or rely on general unspecific 'good-enough-for-all laws'.

− In the meantime the cities know that the only successful way forward towards more vertical integration in policies and vertical co-operation leads along the path of slow progress: cantons will remain responsible and competent for almost everything. Who wants to change policies will have to discuss and persuade people. Any change that is foreseen will follow the following path: start discussion → formulate programmatic impulses and incentives → development of innovations via pilots in selected cantons → evaluation → persuade cantons → adoption by cantons. In other words: the only way is by showing things working in practice and /or by creating facts.

− While the co-ordination of social insurance programmes with local social (assistance) programmes remains difficult, on a local level several cities are working on integration of services (one stop shops) and changes in the attitudes of organisations in the social field. Local policy makers as well as practitioners design social programmes where the different aspects of city policy (social security, social welfare, and re-integration into the labour market) are interlocked.

− The integration of these social programmes in broader urban policies and - the other way round - the integration of spatial (housing, urban renewal) and economic aspects into social programmes seems to be a step that is, as almost everywhere in Europe, hard to take. Compared internationally, Swiss cities are not in the lead. The agglomeration policy can turn out to work in an integrative manner, but at this moment the work on the several domains is, although under the umbrella of this policy, proceeding fairly separately.

Addendum

1.   Respondents (October 2002)

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Walter Amelia, Mitarbeiter im Departementssekretariat, Stab-und Rechtsdienst, Stadt Zürich

Gustave Muheim, Président de Lausanne Région et du groupe de pilotage du projet d'agglomération lausannoise, syndic (maire) de Belmont

Ernst Wohlwend, Präsident Städteinitiative 'Ja zur Sozialen Sicherung', Stadtpräsident, Leiter des Departements Kulturelles und Dienste, Winterthur

Frauke Sassnick Spohn, Departement Soziales Winterthur

Ernst Zürcher, Secrétaire central, Conférence des directeurs cantonaux des affaires sociales (CDAS)

Georg Tobler, Strategiegruppe Agglomerationspolititik, Bundesamt für Raumentwicklung (are)

Ludwig Gärtner, Recherche et développement/Forschung und Entwicklung, Office fédéral des assurances sociales (Federal Social Insurance Office)

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2. The "Revenu Minimum d'Insertion" in Rennes (France)

Introduction

The interest of the French minimum income scheme (RMI) and its implementation for Switzerland is threefold. In the first place, the fight against poverty and social exclusion is one of the very basic elements in each country's social policies. In the second place the RMI is an excellent example of how the complex relationships between and within different government levels and between government and non governmental interventions can both foster and hinder good local practices. Thirdly, the RMI is an example of social policy where the cities (have to) play an important role, without having the formal competencies according to the legislation.

2.1   Country context

The French general minimum income scheme Revenu Minimum d'Insertion (RMI) has been introduced in 1989 after a parliamentary discussion of almost 10 years. It was meant to complete the existing income guarantees for specific groups, such as single parents and disabled people. The idea of a strong link between the provision of a minimum income and integration activities was inspired by some experiments in local settings. One of these experiment locations was the city of Rennes in Brittany.

At the same time, there was a huge political and administrative decentralisation process running in France. This process started in the beginning of the eighties and consisted essentially of the political reinforcement of the departments, which obtained their own elected council (Conseil Général) and president. Until then, France was a highly centralised country, with an administrative system of deconcentration in the departments (préfectures), headed by a "Préfet" as representative of the central state at local level. The competencies of municipalities, certainly in the fields of social policy and social welfare were rather limited.

The administrative decentralisation consisted of giving the elected council of the department a number of competencies, i.a. in the fields of social policy and social welfare.

After the decentralisation, both the models of deconcentration and decentralisation co-exist, which means that the "Conseil Général" is responsible for decentralised matters and that the "Préfecture" takes care of deconcentrated matters. Each of these have their own administrative staff.

A third element of general development to mention is the ongoing discussion of the appropriate levels of governance. This discussion led to the introduction of the regions, between the central and the departmental level. The regions also have now their own elected council (Conseil Régional) and president. At the level of cities, agglomerations and urban regions there is a movement towards more co-operation without – at this stage – a perspective for the creation of a new formal governance level. In the meantime, a lot of bigger cities are creating and formalising co-operation with the surrounding municipalities in so-called "communautés urbaines". This is also the case of Rennes with the creation of Rennes Métropole.

A next element to mention is that of the delegation of competencies. Departmental governments often delegate specific competencies to the bigger cities, if this is a local demand and if it is in the interest of more effective and efficient policy making. More in particular, the execution of the departmental competencies in social policy and welfare policy in bigger cities are often delegated to the city council. Such is the case with the RMI in Rennes.

To have a more precise idea about the financial possibilities of local governments it is important to understand the importance of local taxation and thus the financial independence of municipalities and cities. The importance of local income within the total budget can vary from locality to locality, according to:

- the level of taxation imposed on the tax payers;

- the richness of the municipality;

- the importance of its debts;

- the level of its public services (volume and type of governance);

- the level of self-financing chosen for financing the investments;

- the division of competencies between the city and one or the other structure of "intercom-munality";

- the importance of the municipality / city.

On average the importance of local taxes in the overall income of municipalities turns around 55%.

As an indicator: in 2000, the local taxes represented 57.4% of total income of municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants. For the municipalities being member of a "communauté d'agglomération" the ratio was of 57.5%.

These local taxes are composed of the following elements (the actual figures for the city of Rennes between brackets):

- Three taxes for inhabitants, i.e. tax on housing, tax on land property with or without building (80.793 MEUR).

- The common (agglomeration level) "professional" taxation, partially re-imbursed by the agglomeration to the city (33.260 MEUR).

- Fiscal compensations (essentially by the state) (14.879 MEUR).

- Other taxes (on electricity for example) (11.941 MEUR).

In the year 2000 these taxes represented 54.9% of the income of the city of Rennes.

An interesting element for financing the agglomeration and organising solidarity between munici-palities within the agglomeration are the *taxes professionnelles communes* (TPC). These are the taxes on industries and businesses within the municipalities. In fact, the municipalities of the ag-glomeration agreed to put these taxes into one basket and to redistribute them as follows:

- A part for the financing of the functioning and activities of Rennes Métropole.

- *Attribution de compensation (AC)*: A part of specific compensation for each municipality (according to what the municipality received before the introduction of the TPC).

- *Dotation de solidarité communautaire (DSC)*: A part for redistribution among the munici-palities according to their needs (decided on commonly agreed objective criteria).

In the year 2002, Rennes Métropole received 98.407 MEUR of TPC. This amount was redistributed as follows:

- budget for Rennes Métropole: 34.526 MEUR;

- AC: 38.727 MEUR;

– DSC: 25.154 MEUR.

In France, there is an important tradition of the state organising social welfare. Well into the twentieth century the civil society was essentially active in filling the gaps left by the government or organising alternative assistance and services for specific groups. The law of 1901 on associations became the legal form for organising this solidarity.

Since many years, more and more of these associations are executing tasks considered as being of public responsibility and are therefore mandated and largely subsidised by (local = departmental) government. But still, the basic social services are organised by the (local) state. And the relationship between government and the subsidised associations can hardly be described as a public-private-partnership, except for the execution of tasks defined and controlled by the public authorities.

More recently an evolution towards real partnership between the public and associative sectors in France exists. More in particular in the field of local employment initiatives, re-integration businesses and associations, etceteras.

As to the content of social policy and its supporting structures, the domain of family policy takes up a central place in France. As a consequence, the strongest administrative and social service structures are the family allowances funds (Caisses d'Allocations Familiales). They are present all over the country, and they play a role in a financial sense as well as in social support for families.

When the RMI was introduced, the competencies for execution were divided among different actors at national and local (= departmental) levels.

A clear difference was made between the responsibility for the income aspects of the scheme on the one hand, and for the (social and economic) integration aspects on the other.

The responsibility for the income aspects (eligibility, definition of the income amount, control) was given to the central government and its representative in the department (Préfecture). The distribution of the money itself is done by the Caisses d'Allocations Familiales.

The responsibility for the integration aspect was given to the departmental government (Conseil Général). Within this aspect there is a difference between the labour market integration for which the labour exchange (organised in local offices by the central government) has the main responsibility and the social integration (housing, education, health, social relations) for which the departmental government is accountable.

Each year, the departmental government has to present a local integration plan (PDI – Plan Départemental d'Insertion) in which it specifies the results of the integration efforts of the last year, as well as the means and methods for the next year. There is an obligation to invest at least 17% of the total amount of distributed minimum income benefits into the integration programme.

To implement the integration programme in practice, there are two main instruments:

– The Commissions Locales d'Insertion (local integration commissions) who have to insure a personal follow-up of each claimant (ayant droit in French!). These commissions are composed of the major public and private actors in the field and mostly organised at sub-departmental level (for the bigger cities at sub-city level).

– The Contrat d'Insertion (integration contract) with each claimant, in which are specified the personal integration efforts of both the claimant and the local supporting institutions.

At this moment (October 2003) a new stage in the decentralisation process is announced. The RMI competency will be completely decentralised towards the departmental government (Conseil Général), except for the attribution of the minimum benefit itself. This will be essentially delegated to

the family allowances funds (CAF). From that point on the departmental partners will be able to concentrate on the integration aspect of the minimum income scheme.

2.2   The RMI in Rennes

2.2.1 *Process*

The complex situation of competencies according to the RMI is also very present in Rennes. Although all respondents insist on the productive relationship between Préfecture and Conseil Général – having also their offices in the same building – several of them are not very happy with the complexity in the division of competencies. It is their belief that the RMI in Rennes is still considered as good practice (ville phare) throughout the country thanks to a longstanding co-operative culture.

For a city like Rennes there is the extra factor of delegation of the social and professional integration aspect towards the (lower) municipal social service, and in fact the re-delegation of the professional integration aspect to the (higher) agglomeration level of Rennes Métropole.

The agglomeration and the co-operative culture

Rennes Métropole is a form of public association of municipalities. It exists by the will of its members. The board is formed by all the mayors or their representatives. The competencies of the agglomeration are delegated by the municipalities. The essential pillars of the work of the agglomeration are the infrastructure (roads – public transport) and social housing. Other domains are the economic development, cultural policy, waste treatment, education and research and the structuring of social development. Besides the formalised competencies, Rennes Métropole gives itself a role in common reflection about topics that are still under discussion within the municipalities. Such is the case with city policy and with policies in the fields of integration and housing. It is important to bring about a broader view on the evolution of the population, on changing living conditions in order to foresee the needs.

In that sense, there are mutual interests between the city and its surrounding communes. It is clear that the city of Rennes has a heavy social burden to bare, but there are some aspects in which the surrounding communes have their own problems. One example is that of housing. Since houses are less expensive at the outskirts of the city, poor families move to the outside. As to youth delinquency, there is a stabilisation in the inner city and a growth with 10% to 20% in the surrounding communes. For the agglomeration of Rennes, the richer people are moving further away, i.e. out of the agglomeration territory. The solidarity between all the communes of the agglomeration is reached by a polycentric policy and by a fiscal arrangement "la taxe professionnelle unique" (TPU). This arrangement covers one of the most important pillars of local taxation, namely the local tax for businesses (two other important pillars are the housing/household tax and the ground tax). The TPU has two sides. At the income side, it has been decided that all communes of Rennes Métropole use the same taxation level for the professional tax. This helps to avoid competition between communes as to the establishment of businesses in one or the other commune of the agglomeration. At the expense side, the TPU is used in three different ways. One part is used to finance the functioning of the Rennes Métropole. A second part is redistributed among the communes, according to certain commonly agreed rules (number of inhabitants, structural needs). The third part of the incomes from the TPU are attributed to certain communes according to political choices of the Rennes Métropole Council (in which all communes have equal voice). If e.g. it is considered to be important to have a new swimming pool in one commune, meant to serve the whole agglomeration, this could be a good reason to finance this with the TPU income.

Number of respondents underline the co-operative culture in Rennes. They see two main reasons for it:

- − Political continuity and vision, even in a situation where the political color of central government, department and city are different.

- − The traditional strength of Brittany's civil society (the associations in the social field).

Partners insist on the fact that a shared analysis of individual and collective problem situations helps to focus the policy on a coherent set of integration mechanisms, from purely social integration by way of subsidised training and jobs, towards labour market integration if possible. There is a strong focus in Rennes – an economically expanding region - on local employment policies, while in other cities the focus is more on city policies.

A respondent from the Préfecture says that it is not so much a question of the central state steering the local government, but of common reflection, goal setting and realisation between central and local government: real partnership.

On this point, the agglomeration sees itself as a possible "development agent". It can help to develop common observation and diagnostic tools, lead common reflection in order to make a commonly agreed diagnosis. That can be the starting point for common projects in which each partner can participate with his or her specific competencies.

Common reflection and diagnosis

One good example of such common tool is the so-called "tableau de bord social" for the city of Rennes It is an information tool (published on CD-rom), in which all partners can find the crucial information on social developments and structures in the city of Rennes. It is constructed by an association (APRAS – Association pour la Promotion de l'Action et de l'Animation Sociale) that is created to serve as a platform for the promotion of social welfare and social development. The quality of the material is for a great deal due to the commitment of all partners to deliver information about their domain of action. This tool includes information about demography, housing and housing environment, childhood and education, social welfare, health, employment and integration, socio-cultural work and youth work, elderly people and prevention and justice. Such a tool could be enlarged for the whole agglomeration.

The respondent from the city social service confirms the development role of the agglomeration. For a prospective vision on employment issues the level of the agglomeration is more appropriate. The important businesses e.g. are situated outside the city. It is important that the agglomeration has a focal point on reflection and initiative, but not an operational team. The latter is the role of the municipalities. According to this respondent the agglomeration promotes collaboration between the social services of the different municipalities, which before never happened. Another important role of Rennes Métropole lies in the management of the national city policy (contrat de ville). The city itself participates in that policy through proximity actions. In each district (= two neighbourhoods) there is an agent of the "contrat de ville".

Co-operation structures

As to the structures accompanying the collaboration between state and department, the only structural thing is the yearly departmental integration plan. This is a common product and a number of meetings are necessary to realise that. For the rest the collaboration is a question of informal networking between the different partners.

Also in the relationship with the city of Rennes, the Préfecture is very active, since the Conseil Général delegated an important part of its competencies to the city.

At this moment, the Préfecture plays a role as distant partner with an external view on the local actions. According to the representative of the Préfecture, the elected members of the Conseil Général are too close to their constituency to play such a role. The city in turn is directly involved in the field work for and with the minimum income benefit claimants, through the presence of Local Integration Agents in the district centres. The city of Rennes invests also an important budget of its own in the RMI: about 50% of the integration activities are financed by the city! More in particular the Agents Locaux d'Insertion (ALI – local integration agents) are financed by the city. They are working from the district offices, and thus representing in principle the unique entrance for the minimum income benefit claimants. One of the results of the efforts to improve collaboration, i.a. by the APRAS platform, is the creation of these district offices. As much institutions and organisations as possible are brought together (or have office hours) in these multifunctional centres (one for every two neighbourhoods – 6 for the city of Rennes). In this way, also the territories covered by the different social institutions are – at least in practice for the clients – harmonised. These district centres are called "common social space". The objective of the municipal social service (SIAP – Service Insertion et aides à la population) is to be present at the life environment of its citizens. In relation to the RMI, in practice the departmental social workers take care of the social and health problems of the minimum income benefit claimants. The social workers of the city, i.e. the ALIs take care of the labour integration questions. The partners (to be) present in the common social space are thus in the first place the departmental social work agencies. Second partner is the family allowance fund (CAF). This is the partner that initially carried the neighbourhood social centres. Since the CAF is retiring from that engagement, the city will finance a governing association for the district centres. Third partner is the specialised youth agency. Then there is the labour market exchange agency (ANPE – Agence Nationale Pour l'Emploi) as the fourth one. This partner is not present in the common social space. They have 5 agencies in the city, covering more or less the same territories as the 6 district centres. The division of tasks between the ANPE agencies and the ALIs is that the latter take care essentially of the clients with great difficulties to get access to the labour market. A practical consultation meeting is held regularly between the city and the ANPE in order to avoid overlap of clients). But still each client has to sign two documents: an integration plan with the ANPE and another one with the city social service. Fifth partner of the city is the Préfecture. This is essentially of great importance in the field of legislation and reglementation. Sixth partner is the voluntary sector. Within that sector there are several associations and institutions such as integration workshops and businesses, training centres, centres for homeless people, and an association specialised in support to the travellers community. The seventh and last partner is the employment directorate of the department. This is the directorate that decides on the local action plan for employment (PAL) and on the local labour integration plan (PLIE). As already stated, the local labour integration plan is executed by Rennes Métropole.

In relation to the "Espaces Sociaux Communs" the APRAS specifies that there is no financial gain in bringing the different actors in one place. If there is a real will to improve the collaborative culture of professionals, then the network has to be animated, which also costs money. The profit of this initiative for the client is that he or she can find a diversity of services in one place, where it is also easier to have one principal referee. It is also easier to organise the clients and thus to realise the political will of making the service user into a real actor, even if the realisation of that objective will take a long time.

The collaboration between these ALI and the field workers in the neighbourhoods is very good. One problem is the fact that their position within the district centres gives them more the profile of a so-

cial worker than that of an employment agent, which makes the collaboration with the employment agency not always as productive as one would wish. Another problem is the co-operation of local associations and institutions. If the field workers are very co-operative, their institutions do not necessarily put the interest of the client above the institutional interests. Since they look to the ALIs as a kind of new group of professionals, which are neither specialists in the social field, nor in that of employment, certain institutions have difficulties in accepting them. The RMI claimants suffer sometimes from the fact that the specialists accompanying them have no direct entry to the relevant institutions.

A representative of an association within the voluntary sector comments on the standard approach, that does not fit well the situation of homeless people. Between e.g. an individual integration contract with the municipal social service and a housing contract with the centre for the homeless there are often contradictions because the two follow different logics and there no structural co-operation. A centre for the homeless provides for all aspects of social and health integration of its clients, because specialised professionals are at hand. The integration actors of the city and the department, e.g. the ALIs are however often not present at the same time as the professionals of the homeless centre. This specific group of the homeless are in a multiproblem situation that can not be tackled by the seperate institutions. That makes structural consultation of all partners necessary. At this moment the voluntary sector respondent has the impression that the RMI system does not start from the problematic situation, but from the service organisation. The client has to fit into the structure of the system and not the other way round.

As to the Commissions Locales d'Insertion (CLI – local integration commissions), their tasks are threefold:

− to study the integration offers and their implementation;

− (co)finance integration actions;

− study the individual situations of clients and the supplementary financial support (often linked to integration).

Each commission consists of the core partners needed to conceive and implement these tasks. On average there are some 15 members, of which half are very active.

At city level their target group is often too big to enable a personal approach of the clients. The CLI of Rennes' city centre e.g. has had up to 6200 clients. This is about 50% of the target group for the whole department (with 9 CLIs). The representatives of the Préfecture consider a number of 600 to 900 clients as a more reasonable group size to give a CLI really the possibility to study and resolve the difficult individual situations. It is clear that there is a deficit in the social and health accompaniment of clients. Nevertheless the city achieves a figure of about 80% of signed integration contracts with its minimum income benefit claimants. The CLIs in Rennes only study individually the problematic cases. The others are treated by the professionals.

There is a problem with the offers for financial support of integration actions towards individuals. There are at least five or six often used sources. This is very complex for the clients. The city is planning to regroup these financial sources into one system.

Further decentralisation and future role definitions

With the complete decentralisation of competencies towards the Conseil Général, it is unclear what the role of the central state's representative will be. It is clear however that the labour exchange agency (ANPE) will keep its role for the labour market integration. In this field, number of actors consider that the appropriate level of intervention is that of a so-called "bassin d'emploi", that is a

local labour market, the size of which comes closer to that of Rennes Métropole than to that of the city. The delegation of the planning of the labour market integration aspect to the level of Rennes Métropole was a logical consequence of this vision. At the same time it makes the position of the ALIs – as agents in the districts, co-ordinated by the city – more difficult in the field of employment. In fact, they should be as present in the employment field as in the social and health fields.

It seems that Rennes Métropole sees for itself a role that will cover the actual role of the Préfecture, that is a role of distant evaluator and mediator between and within other governance levels. It sees itself also as the appropriate partner to promote public – private partnerships, because it functions at the level of a local labour market, the level where issues concerning housing, transport, safety, local economy come together. Furthermore, in the field of labour market integration, the agglomeration already has the task to be the interface between ALIs and social workers at the one hand, and the employers at the other. This is a role of service delivery in terms of exploration of opportunities, mediation, training and monitoring. It can also facilitate partnerships. A third role for the agglomeration could be the animation of local networks around the local employment agencies (PAE - Points accueil emploi). In the framework of the evaluation of the local employment integration plan (PLIE) a discussion should take place about the definition and content of the integration concept(s).

The representatives of the Conseil Général (department) consider the further reform of the RMI as a good initiative. The actual situation is too complex in terms of competencies. They would prefer as much delegation as possible to the agglomeration level, because they consider this level sufficiently close to the field. The role of monitoring and evaluation should stay at the level of the department (Conseil Général).

In accordance with the view of being a development agent, the respondent from Rennes Métropole looks for pragmatic opportunities to start new initiatives. Such an opportunity is the problem of crime prevention, which is a typical agglomeration problem and can be used to test and associate the voluntary sector and possible financing bodies.

According to the representatives of the Préfecture a number of problems have to be solved, some roles and positions have to be clarified:

– The difference between the more global and the specialised accompaniment has to be clarified.

– The treatment of every client is in principle the same, but this is not the most effective way to achieve results. There is need for a more differentiated individual approach.

– If a change in attitudes is needed, it is more at the level of institutions, than at the level of professionals in the field. The institutions are too compartmentalised.

– There is a problem of relative importance between city, agglomeration and department. If the integration aspect of the RMI is co-ordinated by Rennes Métropole, they cover about 60% of the department. The rest is the rural area, and one could ask who is then taking care of the RMI clients there? Should this issue be tackled at the level of the region (which covers the whole of Brittany, i.e. four departments)?

– How to articulate the relative importance of social vs. employment integration? This is not a technical, but an ideological and political issue, which is not tackled by the pragmatism of the departmental integration plan (PDI – Plan Départemental d'Insertion).

The representative of the agglomeration sees also a number of obstacles for productive vertical and horizontal collaboration. First of all, in more general terms, the vision of the agglomeration as a kind of development agency is very new. At this stage it is the basic idea of the staff at Rennes Métropole

and of its president. The decision making body and the core group of elected officials (the G7 as they are called) have to be convinced of this model. This could be done via the so-called "commission for prospective". The other political commissions at agglomeration level are specialised and have direct links with the technical services. Within the commission for prospective it is possible to create ad hoc working parties on more thematic issues and to involve municipal elected officials in these. This is the place where real open and transversal debates can take place.

Then there are two more concrete obstacles mentioned by the respondent from the agglomeration:

–   The culture of each partner defending his or her own territory and the fear of smaller partners to be overruled by the bigger ones, even if the principle is that all partners have equal access to and weight in the decision making process;

–   The difficulty to enlarge the existing network of active participants in consultation structures. It is important to give a voice also to more vulnerable groups.

The respondents from the Conseil Général see a different attitude between voluntary sector institutions. They see the most productive relationship with the smaller local associations, while the bigger actors have a more institutional and defensive attitude. This is one element that leads to a multitude of provisions with a lot of overlap. One should review the necessary functions for the client and institutions will have to be prepared to bring together their capacities in order to create complementary services. The same goes for the different financial support systems. A greater harmonisation is definitely needed. This demands action in the field of social development, and thus a development agent with a clear mandate.

Someone makes the remark that there is a development towards technocracy. The experts from different institutions (associations in the voluntary sector) offer there expertise to the local government. Once they are associated in a partnership model, they tend to take over the power on a specific topic. There is a need for political steering, e.g. by better organising "proximity democracy".

But therefore, says another respondent, politicians have to be really involved in social development matters. Because three crucial issues have to be tackled:

–   The integration of social and economic integration (e.g. within the RMI objectives).

–   The necessity to develop long term social development procedures, while politicians have mostly short term ambitions.

–   The re-invention of public – private relationships (other than the public sector asking the private sector to bid into a defined framework).

The city representative underlines the positive co-operation culture of the field workers, but also the institutional barriers for collaboration. This makes collaboration vulnerable, because dependent on the goodwill of the responsible professionals. When such a person leaves, the collaboration with the institution has often to start from scratch. The voluntary sector respondent seeks reinforcement of the networking between professionals of different institutions through the signing of partnership contracts (conventions) for service delivery. Such contract is made e.g. with the city social service. This is a good way to ensure continuity, but in the case of an organisation or institution not very willing to collaborate, this system does not work.

According to different interlocutors it would be a political as well as institutional unrealistic idea to have one actor for the whole RMI. One should clarify the role of each partner and partners should be able to be visible. Somebody has now the impression that the city of Rennes "runs away with the whole positive image" concerning the RMI, and still number of other partners have a very positive

contribution. This political competition does not facilitate a co-operative attitude of these other institutions.

What is considered to be important is that the integration activity is organised as close as possible to the client. "It is the local initiative that makes things really move". This means also that several people suggest to have one personal referee for each client. This referee should not necessary belong to one institution. It could be the professional who has most activity with or impact on a specific person. This professional should have the power to bring the different actors to the co-ordination table.

The lack of presence of the (representatives of the) RMI claimants in the decision making process, in the implementation and in the evaluation is something that different respondents regret. A number of them see great difficulties in finding appropriate and accepted spokespersons / representatives.

2.2.2   Output and outcome

The overall evaluation of the RMI in France demonstrates that the integration aspect of the minimum income scheme is not a big success, and that it has to be improved. One of the elements for that is the further decentralisation to the departments (Conseil Général).

Our respondents in Rennes agree on the general evaluation. Some of them are not sure that the solution of decentralisation in itself will resolve much of the problem. As someone said: "the ones who are promoting decentralisation seem to forget the power games that will continue between the different levels and partners involved."

As to the monitoring concerning the RMI in Rennes, we dispose of the report on 2001 with facts and figures about the RMI activities in the department Ile-et-Vilaine.

First of all, the re-integration budget of the year 2001 for the department of Ile-et-Vilaine is as follows:

-   17,258,040 € from the central government;

-   5,615,837 € from the department;

-   1, 214,017 € from the municipalities.

Which means about 2,567 € for each RMI claimant. With the amount of 3,294 € for the benefit, the annual cost per RMI claimant is of 5,861 €.

In terms of results, there is a considerable decrease in the number of social minimum claimants in 2000 and 2001: About 17% less claimants in Rennes Métropole between the end of 2000 and the end of 2001.

In the year 2000 the decrease was mostly due to the increase of people leaving the RMI, while in 2001 this was more the result of decrease of new RMI claimants.

The number of people leaving the RMI because they got employed also increased considerably in a great part of the agglomeration: it almost doubled. It reached about 25% of the claimants in 2001. From those who left the RMI, almost 50% got employed.

One of the specificities of the French RMI is the principle of an integration contract between the authorities and each claimant. The basic idea is that the authorities have to offer an integration programme to each claimant. The claimant then, by signing a contract, commits him- or herself to the terms of that programme. For Rennes Métropole the number of contracts is about 85% of all claimants, which is a considerable success.

The departmental plan for integration 2001 – 2003 defines the main objectives as follows:

- improve the performance of the system;

- reinforce the access to employment;

- consolidate the so-called groups on social autonomy;

- reinforce the integration through social housing;

- reinforce the integration through health.

If we look at the outcomes in relation to these objectives, we can note the following remarks.

General

- The number of contracts has considerably increased thanks to the collaboration between the labour exchange and the municipal social service within the so-called mixed support teams. This system indeed results in the signature of an integration contract within one month. The services become more complementary and the demands of different administrations towards claimants are better tuned.

Employment

- A better status for the integration officers has been realised.

- Funds have been installed to support the individuals in their re-integration on the labour market.

- Better contacts have been established with the employers' community.

- Each claimant has its own integration logbook.

Autonomy groups

- The field workers have been trained for better social group work with the social autonomy groups.

- A specific action about the introduction of the Euro has had a number of positive effects:

    - In the relation between different types of professionals, a common objective helped them to better understand and concretely use their complementarity;

    - In the relation between professionals and users, a number of innovative methods have been developed and tested;

    - In the relation between professionals and their partners, a number of new, unusual partnerships have been developed.

Housing

- A number of claimants have been included in renovation teams for their own social housing.

- The information to the public about social housing has been improved.

Health

- The information and prevention actions (towards individuals) have been intensified.

- Networks of medical, psychological and social workers have been installed and formalised.

− Different types of group work and collective actions have been realised.

− A number of individual health situation reports have been realised.

− Reinforcement of mobile support for alcoholics and homeless people.

2.2.3 Conclusions

As far as we understand both the French and the Swiss situation, the relevant outcomes of this case can be situated in three domains:

− The structural issues about roles and responsibilities of different governance levels.

− The cultural issues about co-operation and partnerships both between and within governance levels, and between public and private institutions.

− The collaboration and mutual learning of professionals in the field.

Roles and responsibilities of different governance levels – structural issues

All our respondents agree on the fact that the French situation according to the responsibilities for implementation of the RMI is very complex. Even if there is a certain logic in the distribution of roles between central, departmental and local government, e.g. as far as responsibilities for income guarantee or re-integration are concerned, all respondents insist on the fact that this logic is not systematic, nor is it clear for everyone. The distribution is (inevitably) partly the result of political and institutional power games.

For some respondents structural changes, in order to improve the logical distribution of responsibilities, isn't even an important issue. The majority however of the people we interviewed think that a better distribution would improve the quality of implementation at all levels. They insist on the fact that the good results of the RMI policy in Rennes (and Rennes Métropole, and Département Ille et Vilaine) are reached in spite of the structural complexity. This costs a lot of energy that could be saved.

Asking what could be improved in a structural sense, the opinions converge in the direction of a well organised subsidiarity among the different governance levels. Three major variables should define the rules of this subsidiarity:

− the importance of distance vs proximity;

− the reality of different contexts;

− the importance of equality vs specificity.

One should look carefully to define the best level for tackling each specific matter. It is clear, e.g. that proximity is of most importance to realise good individual integration plans, both socially and economically: the living environment of people is essentially the neighbourhood and to some respect the city or the commune. It is important for social services to be present and to organise at that level. For monitoring and evaluation on the contrary a certain distance has its advantages. Regional and national levels are more appropriate for these purposes. For organising and planning employment integration, or social housing it seems that the level of the agglomeration is more appropriate than the level of the city, since the local labour and housing markets context is more an agglomerational one.

There is great need for tailor made solutions for income provision as well as for integration. The financial burden can be different from one place to the other (regional differences, city vs rural

areas, etceteras). And still the sense of justice and solidarity asks for equal treatment of citizens if it goes to income, basic provisions and needs.

This all means that it seems less appropriate to follow general options like decentralisation, deregulation and privatisation. Each situation, domain or issue should be studied in order to find the most appropriate governance mix. And to restructure accordingly if necessary. One good example of that is the local tax redistribution between the 36 communes of Rennes Métropole, in order to concretise the solidarity within the agglomeration, and to enable real co-operation.

The actual regulation of the French RMI has a number of characteristics that are similar to the European open method of co-ordination. Missions and targets are centrally defined (or commonly agreed), but local authorities can decide on the methods and means for realisation of these missions and targets. With the further decentralisation of the RMI this principle becomes even stronger. Strong points of the French RMI were the large but strict frameworks in which local governments had to function. The obligation e.g. to deliver yearly a report about evaluation and planning of integration activities at departmental level; or the obligation to spend a minimum budget (as % of the minimum income spendings within the department) for re-integration activities. But there were also the methodological rules (e.g. the Commissions Locales d'Insertion). Furthermore, the central state did great efforts for monitoring and evaluation of the RMI. Several respondents insist on their impression that – with the further decentralisation - the central state tends to weaken its regulating and evaluating role. They foresee that this will have a negative effect on local mobilisation and activity.

Co-operation and partnerships between and within governance levels, and between public and private institutions – cultural issues

According to our respondents, the success of the case of Rennes is very much linked to the existing co-operative culture. Two basic factors are mentioned in this respect:

– The traditional importance of civil society organisations within strong (christian democrat) social movements and political networks.

– The continuity and voluntarism of local (social democrat) politics.

The financial solidarity (through the redistribution of taxation) within Rennes Métropole is both expression and guarantee for the continuity of this co-operative culture.

The creation of "physical proximity" between officials and workers at different levels helps also to foster this co-operative culture. This happens not only at field level, e.g. in the district centres of the city of Rennes, but also at the level of policy development and monitoring, e.g. the RMI agents of the Conseil Général and those of the Préfecture have their offices in the same building, even in the same corridor.

At the same time this co-operative tradition has created strong private institutions with their own institutional interests; it is also a source of institutional fights and coalitions with sometimes a negative impact on social policy efficacy. The fact that politicians (e.g. municipal councillors) take the lead in partnership groups and committees at different levels could be seen both as a consequence of and a solution for the institutional competition.

The collaboration and mutual learning of professionals in the field

For a better service to the public, different institutions and professions are combined in the district centres of the city of Rennes. This helps of course to simplify life for the users, in that they can find different services under one roof. It also can help professionals to organise a chain of services to specific categories. But this in itself does not help users to find an integrated answer to their prob-

lems in daily life. Therefore integrated approaches of different types of professionals are essential. In Rennes, a number of pilot actions have been set up with such integrated approaches for RMI claim-ants. An example of that are the group sessions about health, done by social workers and health workers together.

To discuss professional collaboration it is important to distinguish these different types of integra-tion. We see at least the following three types:

– Services under one roof. A more sophisticated form of this are the so-called one-stop-shops, where a front office redirects users to the appropriate service.

– Chain approaches of professionals. This means that one professional starts accompanying a person and redirect the user to another professional for a next stage. A more elaborated form of this is the situation where a case manager follows the user through the whole chain.

– Integrated approaches where different types of professionals operate as a team in the con-tact with the user.

What is important to note is that often these forms of service delivery are introduced for efficiency reasons, while our respondents insist on the fact that the effect is more on the efficacy side. Indeed, to make such approaches really work, the collaboration between the different services and their pro-fessionals have to be animated and co-ordinated. In that sense, at least in a first stage, such initiatives cost more time, energy and professional input. But with much more result in the end.

It is interesting to recollect the different learning levels that have been mentioned in one of the para-graphs of this case study according to the group work on personal autonomy. In the evaluation document it was mentioned that this work had positive effects:

– In the relation between different types of professionals, a common objective helped them to better understand and concretely use their complementarity.

– In the relation between professionals and users, a number of innovative methods have been developed and tested.

– In the relation between professionals and their partners, a number of new, unusual partner-ships have been developed.

It is a general complaint – not only in Rennes or in France – that networking and professional inno-vation only depend on the voluntarism of some workers. Of course the professional culture of indi-vidual workers is very important, but it should not lead to collapse of new initiatives when one worker or the other disappears. Two elements were mentioned during this case study that can help to overcome this problem.

In the first place, the good working relationship between workers of different institutions should be consolidated through partnership contracts between their institutions.

Secondly, the reporting of these initiatives in the annual departmental report on integration (Plan Départemental d'Insertion) helps to consolidate and to disseminate the content of innovative ap-proaches.

Addendum

1.   Respondents

Ms. Arenou, Responsible of SIAP at the CCAS of the city of Rennes

Mr. Philippe Caffin, Executive Director of APRAS in Rennes

Ms. Jeannette Couval, Co-ordination mission of the Animation Sociale of Rennes Métropole

Ms. Jamet, Representative of the ANPE for the co-ordination of the RMI at the Préfecture d'Ille et Vilaine

Mr. Michel Legros, Director of research at the Ecole Nationale de la Santé Publique in Rennes

Mr. Dominique Marcillat, Executive Director of the Foyer St Benoit Labre in Rennes

Ms. Nedelec, Responsible for the Mission Insertion DAS 35 of the Conseil Général d'Ille et Vilaine

Ms. Ollivaux, Executive Director of the Action Sociale Territoriale of the Conseil Général d'Ille et Vilaine

Mr. Tison, Inspecteur DDASS in charge of the RMI for the Préfecture d'Ille et Vilaine

2.   Facts and figures

Rennes Métropole consists of 36 communes with a total population of 375.569. The city of Rennes has 206.194 inhabitants (1999).

The overall employment rate in the city of Rennes was 51.5% in 1999 (women: 46.2% / men: 57.9%).

The unemployment rate: 13.3%. The number of unemployed people with higher education is relatively high in Rennes: 33.5% have at least 2 years of post secondary school.

Minimum income schemes recipients	2000	2001	Variation 2000/2001
Recipients of the Revenu Minimum d'Insertion	3 929	3 572	-9,1%
Recipients of the single parent income (Allocation Parent Isolé)	634	618	-2,5%
Recipients of the disabled minimum income Allocation Adulte Handicapé)	3 394	3 486	2,7%
Recipients for which the minimum income provision represents 50% or more of the household income	9 681	9 612	-0,7%

Within the city social service, the division on Integration (= essentially working with RMI claimants) has a staff of about 70 people:

− At the city hall there is the management team, secretariat and technical support service of 13 people.

− In each of the 6 districts (covering two neighbourhoods) their is a local staff counting between 7 and 12 members. In total there are:

  − 6 co-ordinators;

  − 17 local integration agents (ALI – Agent local d'insertion);

  − 24 people to do the individual intake and follow-up;

- –   8 front desk officers.

–   Furthermore there is a team of 5 mediators with local enterprises.

–   Finally there is a social restaurant occupying 4 people.

At the level of Rennes Métropole, a staff of 9 people is working in the Integration Team (Pôle Insertion). Their central tasks are to:

- –   develop relations with private business;

- –   co-ordinate actions with the integration structures;

- –   help unemployed people who want to create their own business;

- –   give support to training needs of certain priority categories.

The operational director of the city department of solidarity and health (covering the city social service) is also deputy director for the Integration Team (Pôle Insertion) of the Rennes-Métropole's Directorate for Economic Development and Integration.

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Association des Maires de Grandes Villes de France (French Big Cities Association): http://www.grandesvilles.org

3. One-stop-shops for social service delivery in the city of Madrid

Introduction

This chapter highlights the case of social service delivery in the city of Madrid through "centres for social services". These one-stop-shops are located at district-level throughout the city of Madrid. They are open to all citizens in the neighbourhood and form their first point of entry concerning matters of social services.

This case is of interest to the Swiss local social policy practice because it captures the experience in the city of Madrid in dealing with local level social problems. Both in terms of administration (relating to government institutions) as in terms of communicating with citizens and reaching out to citizens.

The Madrid city council decided to reorganise its municipal social services into 25 social services centres as a so-called "single access circuit for users". The first evaluations of these one-stop-shops are positive. We think that several factors are important for the development of these centres. The country context within which these centres function is of importance, but also the way the implementation of these initiatives is handled can have a large impact on their further development. We will pay attention to these factors and how they influence the social service centres in the coming paragraphs.

Throughout this case study we will pay attention to another important development in Spain: the concept of one-stop-shops and the philosophy behind it. The concept of one-stop-shops was and is attended to by the Spanish Ministry of Public Administration. They took the initiative of the project 'Ventanilla Única', 'one window' in Spanish. While this project directs itself towards the implementation of one-stop-shops on specific issues, such as small entrepreneurship and migration, and up to now does not formally apply to social services, the ideas and philosophy developed in this project are applicable and comparable to the functioning of the social service centres in Madrid. In setting up the centres and in their day to day functioning, principles from the "Ventanilla Única" project are applied in the one-stop-shops for social service delivery in the city of Madrid.

3.1 Country context

3.1.1 Government levels and legal context

Historically, national government played the major part in the Spanish decision making process. However, a decentralisation process started in 1978 with the introduction of a new national constitution. The formerly centralised Spanish government established a system in which basically three levels of government are operative: national government, regional government through the Autonomous Communities, and local government through the municipalities.

An important aspect of Spanish government structure is the division of the country in autonomous regions (the Autonomous Communities), 17 in total, with large responsibilities and their own competencies. Social policy is almost entirely the responsibility of the regions. The Autonomous Communities, within the framework of their competencies, have produced the Autonomous Social Services Laws which regulate the principles, actions and provisions for the development of the Social Services in their respective territories. There is no basic law concerning social services at the national level.

In April 2003 the Community of Madrid published Law 11/2003 on Social Services in the Community of Madrid. (Ley 11/2003 de Servicios sociales de la Comunidad de Madrid.) On the local level, the "Law on the Bases of the Local System" of 1985 regulated the competencies of the municipalities, among which are to be found: "the provision of the social services and social promotion and re-integration". In this case study we will see the effects of these laws as we discuss the proceedings of the social service centres at the local level in Madrid.

3.1.2 Division of competencies concerning social services

In 1985 competencies were officially transferred from national to local level through the 'autonomous treaty' (Pacto Autonómico). This treaty passes competencies from the national level to the Autonomous Communities. This implies that the communities can have competencies on certain issues, but no obligation is attached. So, transferred competencies can differ from one Community to another. Next to that is the 'local treaty' (Pacto Local) which passes competencies from the communities to the municipalities and/or other local entities. One of the respondents comments on the lack of sufficient co-ordination between the three levels of government. There is no central point of co-ordination, although there is quite a lot of co-operation between them and juridically a strong base has been established. But another respondent states that "... even though there are always difficulties, this intergovernmental system of co-operation works."

Spain has a public social services system aimed at covering social needs and made up of provisions and services of the State Administration, the Administration of the Autonomous Communities (at the regional level) and the Local Corporations (at municipal level). The competence concerning social services lies completely with the autonomous communities and the state has residual competencies in this matter. The local level has, and always had, an important role concerning social services in Spain.

Social services are defined as actions that are undertaken concerning the basic social needs of people. Next to that there is the concept of social protection. This entails the social economic support given to people in need and was historically seen as 'charity'. It is important to keep this distinction in mind, since the social services centres to be analysed in this study mainly deal with social services and not with matters of direct financial support as is the case with social protection.

The Spanish constitution of 1978 defines Spain as a "Social and Democratic State in Law", establishing a "public social security system for all citizens and sufficient social protection and services in situations of need". The basic services, guaranteed by the Autonomous Social Services Laws, are: information and orientation, home care, alternative accommodation, prevention and social integration. The Social Service Centres carry out these services in the municipalities and thus they constitute the primary social service level. Specific attention is being paid to: families, childhood and youth, elderly persons, women, the handicapped, drug addicts, ethnic minorities, immigrants and homeless people. The Centres for Social Services at municipal level have the basic equipment to carry out these services, both at the individual and family level as well as for the development of the community programmes. In these programmes, services and provisions are performed at the first level of service or "General Social Services". Each municipality of over 20.000 inhabitants has a centre with these characteristics. Other centres and give service to sectors and groups with specific social problems (homeless people, drug addicts, etc.), generally called "Specialised Social Services", which form the second level of service. (Buñuel, 2000)

Non-governmental institutions like NGOs and the church play an important role within the Spanish system of social services. They have ample experience in this field, which historically was almost completely their responsibility, and they can reach a larger number of clients than the public system

of social services. They have the networks and capabilities to reach also the clients 'escaping' the system. It is important to keep this in mind while looking into the centres at local level.

3.1.3 *Ventanilla Única*

"Ventanilla Única" (to be translated as "One window") is the name of a project promoted by the Spanish Ministry of Public Administration. It promotes the implementation of one-stop-shops. With this project the central government aims at bringing public administration closer to citizens and enhance the collaboration between the different administrative layers: national, regional and local. Also they aim at simplifying the relations between citizens and the administration. The main goal is to bring the administration closer to the citizens. Nearness is an important concept, next to transparency and coherence.

This project plays an important conceptual role in our case study of the social service centres in Madrid. The philosophy behind the 'Ventanilla Única" is directed towards the creation of a common front office at local level, just like the kind of offices established in the social service centres. Although the centres were not initially set up with the same philosophy directly in mind, in practice they do contain relevant elements of this line of thinking. More concrete, the 'Ventanilla Única" project realises the concept of nearness through:

- − Facilitating and smoothening the relations between the different entities of public administration in order to give people entrance to an interconnected system that gives them a single entrance point for different administrations (national, regional and local).
- − The use of ICT (Information and Communication technology) to facilitate the communication between the different levels of government and to facilitate the communication between the administration and the citizens.

In the treaty of the Ministers of April 4 1997, the word 'Ventanilla Única' was mentioned for the first time. This treaty formulates the intentions to create an interconnected system between the administration at national, regional and local level. The concept of "Ventanilla Única" cannot be applied from one day to another to all kinds of sectors. Up to now, it has been applied to the sector of small entrepreneurship, with quite a lot of success, and the Ministry of Public Administration is working to apply it to the issue of migration.

Before, citizens were confused by the three levels of government, but transparency is being established through these kinds of projects. Ultimately the ideal is to have a one-stop-shop (a 'One Window"-entrance) where any citizen with any question concerning any level of government can come and get an answer and be helped. This also would include the social services.

3.2 One-stop-shops for social service delivery in the city of Madrid

First we will explore the nature of the social service centres in a 'state of the art'- description. Then we will see how the centres came into being. Which processes took place and are taking place in setting up the social service centres? In the description of the process, attention will be paid to vertical relationships (between government levels) and horizontal relationships (within government levels) as well as to factors of cultural and structural change. Throughout the case study we will pay attention to the ideas and philosophy underlying the one-stop-shop-initiative and connect these to the social service centres. Next to that it is important to know what the main reasons were for the launching of this process of change. What were the main incentives to opt for the implementation of social service centres in Madrid? Finally we will stress the output of the social service centres as a

good practice from which the different Swiss partners can draw certain elements as illuminating, interesting and inspiring.

3.2.1   State of the art

In the Autonomous Community of Madrid a network of social services has been set up. It consists of 72 Social Service Centres in the region of Madrid: 25 in the city of Madrid and 47 in the rest of the Community. These centres are dependent on their respective municipalities from where services are delivered and programmes are co-ordinated.

Madrid, a city of almost three million inhabitants, is divided administratively into 21 districts, in which the Social Services Centres are located. These Centres provide direct, general service to the citizens of the Municipality requiring social service . The present infrastructure of the Social Ser- vices is composed of 25 Social Service Centres and other specialised social service centres. In the 25 Social Service Centres approximately 300 social workers are employed together with 80 social educators and 100 members of administrative staff. Each Social Service Centre contains the follow- ing units:

- Unit for Social Work.

    - social work primary service unit;

    - social work area unit.

- Programme Unit.

    - prevention and Family programme;

    - elderly programme.

- Administrative Unit.

Clients enter the centre through the administrative unit, which forms their first entry point. Here is decided upon the urgency of the matter and a distinction is made between urgent cases, new cases and known cases. The new and urgent cases will pass through to the Social work primary service unit where people can be received daily. The known cases are directed towards the Social work area unit where a more intense form of guidance is offered.

The primary service unit can answer questions and fill in forms for clients. For example, the appli- cation for certain services can be handled here. The social worker that attends the clients needs to distinguish the questions that can be answered relatively easy, from the questions involving follow- up. If needed, the social worker can decide to put a client in a more intensive guidance programme. Next to that are the programme units with special programmes for families or elderly people. The day care centres and neighbourhood activities for the target groups are dealt with in these units. The programme unit works intensively together with the Social Work Unit. For example: an old lady applying for tele-assistence will also be referred to the programme unit for the elderly so she can participate in activities organised in her neighbourhood. The units keep track of eachother's ques- tions and matters at hand. Next to that the workers of the programme units have a task in keeping track of the social map of the neighbourhood and in this way to feed the social workers that work with individual clients of the latest possibilities they can offer to them.

This service model tries to homogenise the management of social services. Nearness to citizens is very important in the concept of the Centres for Social Services. In every neighbourhood the first person of service is a social worker. The centres started in 1987/1988 with social workers and later on social educators entered. The extension continues according to the necessities that come to the

fore. For example, on immigration issues social-cultural workers have recently been introduced to the centres. The following services are being delivered to clients in the centres:

- personal service;

- management of material help to clients;

- prevention of social marginalisation and risk-situations, promoting the normalisation of groups with special problems of integration, and

- stimulating individuals or groups to integrate in society and/or social surroundings.

The management of the Social Service Centres is the responsibility of the local government, in this case the municipality of Madrid. The Department of Social Services of the municipality maintains the contacts with the Autonomous Community, takes care of the financial side of the centres and supervises the way they function.

3.2.2 Process

Vertical relationships

Social services are vertically embedded with competences spreaded across different government levels. There is neither real centralisation nor decentralisation. Co-ordination among these three levels exist, but does not always function perfectly as is the impression at first sight, so claims one of our respondents. National government has a backstage role in the case of social services. This level of government facilitates, but it does not have the competencies to actually organise social services at local level. Due to the decentralisation process in Spain these came to be entirely in the hands of the regional and local levels.

In the case of Madrid, the Autonomous Community of Madrid has the competencies concerning social services. These exclusive competencies permit the community to build a solid structure for an integrated social service policy whose ultimate goal it is to prevent marginalisation and the collapse of social bonds. Planification of these processes will mainly take place at community level and the day to day running of services is decentralised to the municipalities but under co-ordination of the Autonomous Community. The Community supports the social service centres with money and technical assistance. The municipalities are the organising entities and they also bring in their own financial resources. In practice this means that the local entities play a very important role in organising and co-ordinating the centres and the services attached. The general objectives of the Strategic Plan for Social Services of the Autonomous Community of Madrid (Plan Estratégico de Servicios Sociales 2001-2003) are the following:

1. To supply social services within the Community of Madrid with a legal and management framework.

2. To increase the participation of the different actors involved in social services at the level of planning, management and evaluation.

3. To safeguard the presence, acknowledgement and identification of social services as a system that expresses solidarity and engagement towards citizens.

Next to the Strategic Plan, the Autonomous Community of Madrid recently published a law on social services. (Ley 11/2003, de 27 de Marzo, de Servicios Sociales de la Comunidad de Madrid). This law proposes to install an interadministrative council of social services, which will act as a structure of permanent information and co-ordination between the Autonomous Community of Ma-

drid, the municipalities and the ministry responsible for social services. This structure is meant to enhance the collaboration between the different levels of government.

The one-stop-shop initiative of the Ministry of Public Administration is by definition a vertical operation: it operates across different levels of government in order to facilitate the processing across these levels. The ministry plays a backstage role and uses intermediates, communities and municipalities to communicate with citizens. The one-stop-shop project is a very ambitious project and it has been influencing other sectors of society like the area of social services. The Communities are supposed to be able to play a key role in connecting the concept of the one-stop-shop with social services. These regional institutions have the capability to connect different local entities and co-ordinate their functioning while introducing concepts like the one-stop-shop initiative. Later on we will get to the question whether this connection between the two concepts actually is being made.

Respondents mentioned several problems and/or obstacles, which arise in the vertical landscape in organising social services:

- Focusing too much on decentralisation might mean widening the distance between citizens and institutions at community and/or national level.

- The monitoring of the handling of questions and applications is difficult to organise. It often occurred that procedures were delayed because one of the layers of government did not function correctly or was overloaded. Basically, this is an administrative problem. Nowadays, efforts are being made to create direct lines between the centres and the government institutions in charge to avoid delays.

- There is a big challenge in creating a new intergovernmental management culture. This is difficult since the persons working at local level are the actors who will have to create this culture, it can not be implemented from above.

- The municipal level receives an overload in responsibilities since this level has to deal with citizens and handle the questions and applications. Often it will receive questions concerning matters that do not directly belong to their competencies. It seems to be necessary to create mechanisms to manage these multiple questions and tasks.

Horizontal relationships

The differences between Communities within Spain concerning the level of social services can be big. The level of services and benefits varies substantially as do the needs of the population across the country. The situation concerning social service delivery in Madrid is considered to be one of the best within Spanish territory. This is the result of the complete spectrum of interventions undertaken, taking into account the character and needs of the citizens of Madrid in the field of social services, Madrid being the capital and having to deal with problems that occur in big cities. The number of citizens entering the social service system is still growing and ever-changing. Social services need to be adapted to these circumstances, something that seems to be working well in the community of Madrid.

The municipalities in the Madrid region could be co-operating better than is the case now. The lack of co-operation can create certain problems for the back office. For example: in Madrid it can be a problem to get adequate transport. Madrid is a city which has a lot of commuters. People work in the city, but live in one of the villages surrounding the city of Madrid. Sometimes it is a problem for them to get back to their place of residence after a working day because of lack of transport.

The Autonomous Community of Madrid recently published a law on social services which stresses the importance of co-ordination between social services and other related areas as education, em-

ployment services, housing and others. At this moment in time, co-ordination between these sectors is considered to be scarce.

There is no direct relationship between the organisation of the social service centres in Madrid and the project 'Ventanilla Única', the one-stop-shop initiative of the Ministry of Public Administration. For example: in the municipality of Alcobendas (part of the Autonomous Community of Madrid) a very successful one-stop-shop is operative. Although it deals with social issues in the sense that it processes applications for certain facilities like housing and services for immigrants, the social services are not as such incorporated in its daily work. Social services are organised in a separate municipal organ and there are no direct relations of co-operation between social services and 'Ventanilla Única'.

The project 'Ventanilla Única' directs itself primarily to the administrative sectors of government. In some cases this can involve social services, for example when applying for housing subsidy or social assistance. However, it entails just a small part of what social services actually do. Where the "Ventanilla Única" only gives 'administrative assistance' the Social Service Centres give personal assistance in the sense of guidance on individually assessed needs. Although there is some overlap between the two, still the essential nature of assistance given is completely different. In the future this situation might change. Currently the Linea Madrid is being introduced whose objective it is to give information on proceedings to citizens on all kind of issues and it would like to integrate the Social Service Centres in its own field of work. This means that parallel to the decentralisation tendency of the centres, a process has started to centralise distinctive services into one office. If this tendency will be strong, something that still has to be proven, it will bring the one-stop-shop philosophy a step closer to its ideal situation. Tendencies of integrating different sectors are taking place at other levels as well. The next project that the Ministry of Public Administration will be running is the one-stop-shop on immigration issues. The Social Service Centres are supposed to play an important role in this project. The one-stop-shop initiative is spreading itself, however slowly or gradually, as an oil stain towards different sectors in society, one of them being social services.

Changes in structures

During the period that Franco was in power, Spain did not consider local entities as playing a role in the well-being of citizens, although they did perform a role in the so-called 'charity-systems'. One of our respondents claims that in developing a social welfare state, policies concerning social services play a minor role. The church and the municipalities were the entities with most experience in social services, mainly because they were involved in charity works. But national and regional levels of government did not have this kind of experience and knowledge and for this practical reason it was convenient to give competencies concerning social services to the local entities who were experienced and had broad experience in this field. In the beginning the competencies of the three levels of government were the following: central government could influence intergovernmental mechanisms, the Autonomous Communities, as recently created entities, received the official competencies in social service matters, the municipalities owned all the knowledge accumulated during the Franco era on managing charity systems as local social relieve systems.

National government was confronted with a problem that needed to be controlled: the social situation of the Spanish citizens. It created the "Plan of Basic Services" which contained elements of the philosophy of the one-stop-shop initiative. In this plan, an important role was given to the municipalities. A structure was thus created with primary service at local level and if needed, specialised help is to be obtained through specialised centres.

The municipal level within this system plays an important role and several positive points are worth mentioning concerning the constellation of the three levels:

–   The services reach certain groups more easily. The municipalities have the possibility to have direct contact with citizens and groups of citizens. It is the level of government most near to the people.

–   Regional government, like the Autonomous Communities, misses this local level knowledge and the contact at local level with citizens.

–   Central government possesses technologies for developing policies and for having a national overview. It can implement new initiatives, conduct monitoring and evaluation research and develop the system in that way.

On legislative level things are very clear structured among the three levels of government. The Community of Madrid is the most important legislative actor; national government works behind the scenes and supports the decentralisation although one of the respondents pointed at a possible inferiority complex of the national state towards the communities. Important competencies, formerly part of state-affairs are now in the hands of a regional administrative unit. This implies a change in the role of the state. So, there is no complete decentralisation since the municipalities still are under the law of the regional organ, but neither is there complete centralisation.

On the executive level, in day-to-day practice, things are not always as clearly organised as is put down in laws and reglementations. Some things are more suitable to be carried out on a different level than initially designed. For example: it is difficult to organise suitable elderly care in every neighbourhood. On this issue the Community of Madrid will intervene and create regional centres for elderly people.

In setting up the Social Service Centres, a challenge for the municipality of Madrid was to create a service model in social services departing from the public responsibility to do so. A homogeneous system of service was to arise in the city of Madrid to provide citizens with the same level of services in every district. In order to do this, the city needed to restructure its service system from a system with lots of entry possibilities into a system in which citizens receive assistance in their own neighbourhood through one single office. The development of such a system can be summarised in three steps:

–   Since 1996, the Department of Social Services of the municipality initiated a reorganisation process to improve the level of service given to the citizens of Madrid.

–   In 1997 an assessment of the situation was made from which followed some points of critique to the existing centres: the lack of homogeneous criteria and the long waiting lists. Based on these outcomes a service model with organisational criteria and methodologies for all 21 districts in the city was created.

–   In 1999 the centres working under the new model were fully operative. The years 2000 and 2001 functioned as years of consolidation of the beforementioned criteria and methodologies.

From this process of six years the Madrid Municipality drew several lessons. Three aspects turned out to be very important in improving the quality of services: the organisation of work, the management structure and the infrastructure. The organisation of work needs to be improved through internal channels of communication and through paying special attention to the professionals working in the front office. Education and supervision are essential. The management structure and infrastructure need to be organised in such a way that they enhance the service in the front office. Service to clients is to be the main focus for all actors involved.

The front and back offices are both covered in the Social Service Centres at local level, although some services are organised across borders of local entities. There is a new tendency in political circles to move the front office, including the social service centres, to the "Linea Madrid", a network of information that will function as the general entry office of the district for several sectors and services. This might imply for the centres to be given a bigger role in the back office in delivering services to clients and a lesser role in providing information. There is a discussion as to the sharing of tasks between the social centres and the general information office in the future. This development illustrates the dynamics at work in the sector.

Changes in culture

The implementation of the centres for social services in Madrid brought about several changes which might be classified as changes in the culture of delivering service to citizens. Services are located in neighbourhoods and can have a different content from one neighbourhood to the other. Services can only be obtained locally, where citizens are registered and actually living or staying. In case of moving, this might imply problems: change of services, way of rendering service, etc.

The front office has been simplified in the last years with the introduction of techniques like internet. This process is relatively simple to organise and to implement, very unlike the organisation of the back office. This involves the actual creation of facilities, sometimes locally, sometimes across borders of neighbourhoods. This can be problematic for organisational reasons: people will have to work together across borders of bureaucratic structures that in some cases might be hard to cross. These processes take time and can be classified as a process of change. It is very important, so stress several of our respondents, to get these processes in the heads of the professionals and other workers involved and in the heads of the clients. That proves to be the hardest task. These processes start with convincing people of the necessity of change. It is not possible to identify one way of working in social services. Respondents stress the need of adaptation to circumstances of clients and social surroundings: flexibility and openness are their key words.

Social issues received quite an amount of attention in political agendas in Spain during the last years. It is a relatively new issue in Spanish politics that might explain the eagerness shown by politicians to be involved in social issues. This political attention is a factor that can play an important role in future changes in attending and approaching citizens. It should not be underestimated.

The new law on the social services of the community of Madrid of March 2003, reflects the change in thinking on the issue of social services. The mere fact that this law was initiated, illustrates the need felt by different actors at political and executive levels to lay down principles and come to arrangements concerning social services. We will mention some of the objectives and innovations as specified in the law that reflect this higher - or new - priority given to social services:

- To structure and homogenise the social services which were formally characterised by dispersion and multiple entry forms and structures.

- To apply the principle of universality: the same necessities are to be treated in the same way.

- To change social services into the sixth system of social protection for citizens next to, and in the same way as, health care, social security, education, employment and housing;

- Clients will have the right to a professional of reference, responsible in guiding the client in the process of social intervention. This person will be a social worker at the first service level;

- To enhance the institutional development of the social assistance system within the Community of Madrid, an interadministrative council will be created to co-ordinate, inform and consult throughout the different levels of government. Next to that an institute for education and research in social services will be set up;

- To give citizens a voice and opportunity to share the responsibility for their social well-being. It is noteworthy that the development of this law also used interactive processes.

The introduction of the Social Service Centres brought about a change in professional culture. Well-organised education programmes supported this. Together with a school a course plan was set up. In the beginning everything was new and it was difficult. It took more or less two years to develop these new forms of working and training people and have the centres up and running as planned.

An important obstacle in setting up the one-stop-shops can be the (il)logic behind the division of competencies and responsibilities among government levels. To achieve change in this respect is a very difficult process. In Madrid in the beginning, there existed an enormous resistance from that side. The situation before was that people lined up in the offices of social centres, and having a long line of people waiting in front of your office was a kind of status symbol. It gave the social worker a certain power. It is not hard to imagine that the changes that have to take place in order to turn this situation into a fully operative one-stop-shop are pretty harsh. The protection of former work spheres and existing structures can be very strong.

Although the Social Service Centres were not set up with the one-stop-shop philosophy (of the Ministry of Public Administration) in mind, some striking similarities come to the fore:

- Service is given at local, municipal, level since it is the nearest to the citizens.

- At this local level, the centres can relate closely to local infrastructure as NGOs and other actors in civil society.

- The centres offer a service with a universal character which is open to all citizens and equipped towards their necessities and adapted to their diversity.

- There is a good intergovernmental connection between the levels of government in order to facilitate the exchange of information.

All of these factors have to do with a change in working culture in social services. The one-stop-shop idea was implemented at local level, without much interference from national level. In the next paragraph we will pay attention to how these innovations came into being. We will see that practical problem solving is very important.

Main reasons and incentives behind new strategies and development

The idea of organising a one-stop-shop for social service delivery mainly stems from two sources: from national government came the idea to improve the communication between government and citizens and from the local level it was seen as a solution to social issues to which professionals were confronted. These were problems in neighbourhoods containing marginalised groups as for example the homeless and drug addicts. From national level the main incentive seems to come from the need to facilitate proceedings with administration for certain groups of the population to combat the existing fragmentation. It is impossible to facilitate these proceedings for all issues at once and that is why it started with the sector of small entrepreneurship. Behind all this are the incentives at legislative level such as the decentralisation tendency. Since local levels are the ones being most confronted with social problems it is not surprising that one wants to find a solution to these issues on this level. As mentioned before, social services is a hot item in Spanish politics. It has been booming

in recent years while before it did not get that much attention. One of our respondents even claimed that social services are one of the 'stars of politics' at the moment. It gives politicians the chance to score among their electorate.

On a more practical level some incentives are worth mentioning. Before, social workers were confronted with long waiting lines. In an effort to filter clients and their questions, to reduce the waiting, the principle of the one-stop-shop came into being. Presented in this way it is a practical solution to a practical problem. In the same manner, one of our respondents told us the story of a mountain village in Almeria. The villagers wrote a letter to the government because they had problems in dealing with formalities. People had to travel a long time to present themselves to offices to arrange things with governmental institutions. As a preliminary solution the villagers in Almeria had hired someone to go with the papers and deliver them to the respective offices. Transport is the biggest problem for these villages and deriving from that the amount of time that is needed to get things done. This was a very recognisable problem for other villages. These villages put pressure on the government and so the idea came to the fore. Anew: the one-stop-shop idea emerged from the need to solve a practical problem.

It seems that from several sides incentives came to solve the fragmentation and lack of efficiency in the system. As one respondent claims: "One cannot say that the model of social service or the one-stop-shop initiative stems from one source alone, but these are ideas flowing from top to bottom and from the bottom to the top, they are bound to meet at an intermediate level."

3.2.3   Policy results for the target group(s)

The first evaluation of the Social Service Centres in the Community of Madrid (measured up to December 1999) mentions the following results:

–   Waiting lists for access to the Centres have been eliminated.

–   The Primary Service Unit dealt with 38.210 users in 1999, of which 68% approached the social services for the first time and 41% of the cases were resolved in this Primary Service Unit.

–   The 158 Area Social Workers worked with 38,529 family files in 1999, of which 27% were new and 52% had been in the process of being dealt with for over a year.

–   The problems most frequently attended to were related to services and resources for elderly people, with few economic resources of their own, and with the immigrant population.

Next to that our respondents mention that a formal possibility to complain was introduced, that waiting time for treatment has been reduced and that processes have been faster.

Some critical notes have to be made to these results. Respondents pointed out that in general the centres do not have a lot of staff and that the quality of the assistance is not always as good as it should be. The waiting lists are eliminated because of the introduction of a new reception system. The waiting list system was completely abolished. The new system is based on attending clients the same day they come to the centre with their question(s). The problem is that the centres can be overcrowded, meaning that a client has to wait all morning to be attended, and in some cases has to come back the next day. The system still contains a lot of bureaucracy before people actually can receive assistance.

Generally speaking the one-stop-shop initiative has several advantages for citizens when compared to former ways of dealing with administrative issues in Spain. For example: administration is acces-

sible to all citizens within their neighbourhood (mostly), a better accessibility of information has been established, there is more coherence and transparency on procedures and processes and specialised staff is available.

A lot of progress has been made, first of all in consolidating this new system of service in social services. It is innovative and requires a lot of adaptation for workers as well as citizens. So, it can be called a success. For citizens, looking back over the last ten years, one can certainly say that the situation has substantially improved.

3.3   Conclusions

The Swiss Cantons share some features with the Autonomous Communities in Spain. Both are situated at regional level, with on the one hand a national government to be dealt with and on the other the municipalities to be taken into account. Also, they both have a lot of competences in the field of social services. A big difference is that the Spanish system appears to be of a less fixed nature and less imbedded in the broader social context due to the relative short period of time that the communities actually possess these competences. Next to that, the Spanish system seems to have a relatively higher level of transparency in dealing with issues that cross government levels than does the Swiss system. This short comparison leads us to ask the question: what are interesting features for Swiss local social policy from the Spanish experiences with the one-stop-shops for social service delivery?

One of the obstacles that the workers of the Centres for Social Services Delivery in Madrid are confronted with, is the necessary growth of staff and resources. The infrastructure had to be adapted to the increase in activities due to a rise in the amount of questions coming from citizens. The amount of questions is rising because of the increased visibility of the centres. It is the 'problem of success'. Next to that, another issue is at stake at the moment. More immigrants are coming to the city of Madrid and they need more help on social matters than other groups of citizens. As a consequence, immigrants visit the centres more often. While 25% of the people coming to the centre are immigrants, in the total population of Madrid there are 11% immigrants. This poses a problem of financial means and personnel resources.

Does the offer create the demand for social services or was there a non-recognised demand before? This is something to take into account since it takes a lot of time, efforts and resources to balance demand and supply in social services. As a positive outcome of this process a lot of young people entered the centres as social workers or in other functions. This increased the motivation in general among the workforce. The new workers are very motivated to construct something innovative and to implement changes.

What was felt as essential in the experience in Madrid in setting up the centres was political and economic support. The political parties gave high priority to social services as such while before they were not leading their priority list. Nowadays it is considered a political 'hot issue'. This turned out to be an important stimulating factor for all actors involved in social services.

The introduction of a one-stop-shop, in whatever area, turns out to have a lot of advantages. When keeping in mind the case of the Social Service Centres in Madrid, the following advantages come to the fore:

- − There is exchange of information and communication between the three levels of government, this is remarkable since in most cases co-operation is limited to one level of government.

- Procedures have been simplified and general criteria have been developed on how to proceed in the different areas of service.

- The opportunity to systematically collect data as input for management processes.

- An image of increased and good quality of services is established.

- The nearness to citizens appeared to be a success-factor, it created the possibility to work with case-managers, it gave an improved insight into the needs of (local) citizens and due to this success more clients came to the centres.

The process of setting up centres for social services is not easy, it is a process of change that has to deal with certain positive and negative issues. Financial means are necessary to build up the infrastructure. Changes that are implemented can have influence in other areas and can cause unintended and unforeseen effects. For example, people who move from one district to another will have to find their way to the centre in the new district and will encounter other social workers. This can be a problem for some clients. As a positive aspect respondents mention that the process of homogenisation between the different districts in the city has been set in motion. A weak point, and in some cases a strong point, is the need for change in the mentality of people involved in the process: they have to be willing to co-operate, they need to possess the will to change and they need education. People have to be trained to work in a new setting. So, it is important to invest in personnel in order to establish a change in professional culture. Workers have to be able to co-operate across different levels: with direct colleagues, with colleagues with a different professional background and with clients. On all three levels changes will take place.

Overseeing the process of organisation of the Centres for Social Services in Madrid a very important factor of success is flexibility: creating a strong and workable structure without building a rigid and/or permanent institution. Changes need to be made and the structure has to be able to adapt to new developments and be open to these in order to be successful. This is an ongoing learning process.

In Madrid we saw an example of this mutual learning process between government levels and institutions on the base of transparency. We compared the project "Ventanilla Única" to the Centres for Social Services. Both work with the same points of view regarding how to deal with citizens: locally, transparency in information, a single-access point, nearness a key-concept. But in practice these two initiatives did not co-operate. Is there still some mutual learning to be done in Madrid?

Addendum

1. Respondents

Mr. José María Alonso Seco, Community of Madrid, (Communidad Autónoma de Madrid, Viceconsejería de Asuntos Sociales), Social Services

Mr. Ernesto Carrillo, Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Mr. Gonzalo Cerrillo Cruz (Director de Servicios Sociales) and Ms. Ana Buñuel Hera (Jefa del Departamento), Municipality of Madrid, Department of social services (Area de Servicios Sociales)

Mr. Ernesto Abati García Manso, Ministry of Public Administration (Ministerio de Administraciones Públicas, Dirección General de Inspección, Simplificación y Calidad de los Servicios, Subdirección General de Simplificación Administrativa y Programas de Atención al Ciudadano)

Ms. Carmen Mayoral, Municipality of Alcobendas, Dirección General de Servicios de Atención Ciudadana

Ms. María Jesús Soler Martín and Ms. Rosa Sedano Sedano, College of Social Work and Social Assistents (Consejo General de colegios oficiales de diplomados en trabajo social y asistentes sociales.)

2. Facts and figures

Number of inhabitants in the region/community of Madrid in 2001: 5.423.384.

Number of inhabitants in the city of Madrid was in 2001: 2.982.926. The city of Madrid is divided into 21 districts with between 33.416 and 240.325 inhabitants. (From: Instituto de Estadística, Consejería de economía e innovación tecnológica, Communidad de Madrid, www.comadrid.es and the Statistical Yearbook 2001, Municipality of Madrid, www.munimadrid.es)

In 2001 47.381 clients were attended in the Centres of First service . Next to that people who needed more intensive forms of counselling were taken up the social work units of the districts, the exact number of clients treated there is not known. In 2001 a total number of 460 professionals were working in social services in the city of Madrid. So per 2.982.926 inhabitants, there were 460 professionals working in social services in 2001. (From: Memoria de los Servicios Sociales Municipales 2001, Ayuntamiento de Madrid).

3. Literature

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José María Alonso Seco y Bernardo Gonzalo González (1997), *La asistencia social y los Servicios Sociales en España*. Edita: Boletín Oficial del Estado (Estudios Jurídicos. Serie Derecho Público) Madrid.

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http://www.madrid.org/pres_atencion_ciudadano/atencion_cuidadano/ventanilla.htm

Municipality of Madrid, http://www.munimadrid.es/Principal/ingles/portada.html

Ministry of Public Administration, the Ventanilla Única project presentation,
http://www.igsap.map.es/sgpro/ventanilla/ventunica.htm

4. At the crossroads of family policy and social security in Norway

Introduction

The Scandinavian countries have a long-standing tradition of good services in the field of family policy. In Norwegian social policy, and in family policy in particular, questions of poverty of families and children, and of equal opportunities for men and women, are widely discussed and the subject of legislation. Since several Swiss respondents showed a specific interest in both issues (see chapter 2), we will pay special attention to them in the following case study.

There are more similarities between Norway and Switzerland than one would anticipate. Describing Minimum Income Policies within national welfare systems Chiara Saraceno (2002) in "Social assistance dynamics in Europe" considers Switzerland, together with Norway and Austria as having a "*Decentralised, discretionary relief system, somewhere in between the Scandinavian and southern European models*". According to the authors, "*… assistance consists of localised discretionary relief, linked to social work and wider kin obligations. Benefit levels are relatively generous, but few people claim social assistance, not only due to the relatively high levels of employment, but also to the stigma attached to welfare and the powers accorded to social workers.*" Considering the similarities between the two countries, and the field of family policy being relatively new within the Swiss context, this case might prove to be an illuminating example for Swiss social policy practice.

In the first paragraph relevant matters concerning the country context are presented. Next, we pay attention to the different government levels that exist in Norway and to the Norwegian welfare state. What follows is information on the case of family policy in Norway. Just like in the other case studies, this chapter is structured around vertical and horizontal relationships, cultural and structural changes and main incentives behind changes in policies over the years, in order to come to a better understanding of the outcome of these processes.

4.1   Country context

4.1.1   Government levels and competencies

The four different levels of government in Norway are: the national level, the "Fylker" (regions), the "Fylkeskommune" (an aggregation of communities or municipalities in a certain geographical area), and the municipalities or communities. The distinction between the "Fylker" and the "Fylkeskommune" needs some clarification. There are 19 "Fylker" (regions) whose job it is to control the municipalities on state matters. They represent the national government on a lower level and can be considered to have a top-down focus. The "Fylkeskommune", as said aggregations of municipalities in a certain geographical area, have competencies in, among others, the fields of health care, high schools and services regarding drug abuse. The "Fylkeskommune" is functioning as a bottom-up organisation. However, they are criticised for their high level of bureaucracy and there are voices that want to abolish this level and divide its tasks among the local and the state level.

Communication between the local and national levels takes mainly place through the "Fylkeskommune" and the ministries. These entities have a direct line of communication to one another. The national level gives guidelines to the local level, which are defined by one of our respondents as 'a kind of obligated rules without a sanctioning system attached to it'. The relationships between the different levels of government are summarised in figure 4.1. The arrows indicate the main lines of institutional influence.

Figure 4.1
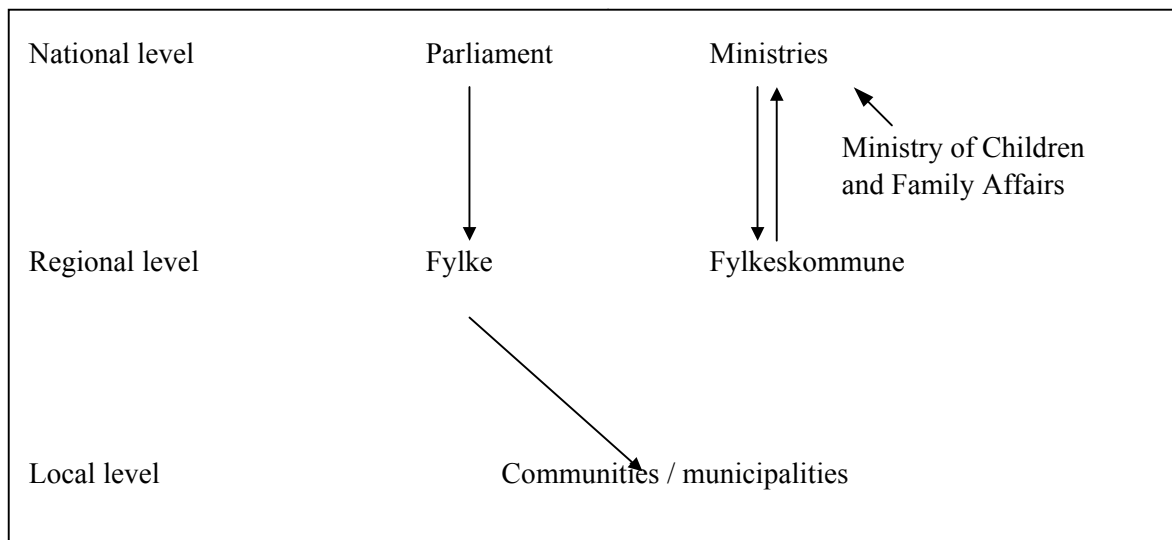
The huge distances between cities and the totally different social and economic conditions in different parts of the country did, among others, influence the development of the current political structure of Norway. Although the Nordic welfare states have often been associated with centralist policies, Norway was never the centralised state some (superficial) observers declared it to be. Nowadays, even more tasks and responsibilities than ever before are decentralised. Most Norwegian experts interviewed for this study regard decentralisation as such not as a negative development. They share the opinion that it varies how decentralisation turns out in practice, depending on the issue at stake. For example, regarding gender equality, it might be difficult implementing specific policy measures. It entails that every local democratic entity has to be informed about, and convinced of, the importance of equality between men and women. While at the national level these convictions find broad support, and are put into legislation, at the local level this can sometimes prove to be difficult. Shelter homes for women who were confronted with domestic violence will in the future be financed by local community budgets. It will be up to local political actors to create the conditions and possibilities for these homes within the local community. Furthermore, there are still too little kindergartens and too little childcare-places for children from 0 to 3 years. These places are expensive and all levels (national, regional and local) pay for these places. But which level has to pay the bigger share? This question is at the centre of current public debate.

From the examples mentioned above, it may be clear that there is a continuous debate going on as to what has to be handled at which level. With only one certainty: neither national law, nor local democracy can rule out one another.

4.1.2 The Norwegian welfare state

Probably being more decentralised than its Swedish and Finnish neighbours, Norway does fit in other well-known typologies. According to Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare states the Scandinavian countries (Norway, Sweden and Denmark) represent the 'social democrat' type. This kind of welfare state is characterised by: a high level of social protection and social security, universal collective provisions, a high level of taxes, a low level of private services, a high minimum wage, a

high level of decommodification[2] and a collective guarantee of employment. (Wildeboer Schut, Vrooman & De Beer, 2000, p. 12-13).

Using data from the early 1990s Wildeboer Schut and colleagues studied several welfare states that played a crucial role in Esping-Andersen's typology. Their results show that, indicative for a 'social democrat' welfare state, a relatively high percentage of the income is paid on taxes and social security contributions (a one-breadwinner average worker in a factory and father of children pays around 26%-28%). Furthermore they found that 85% of the women aged between 25 and 54 are in paid employment, probably a result of the emphasis on activation policy (policy towards full employment), another well-known characteristic of the Nordic social democrat countries (Wildeboer Schut, Vrooman and De Beer, 2000, p. 23-25). It has to be noted that a lot of these women work part-time.

Knut Halvorsen, a Norwegian researcher, mentions the success of the Norwegian welfare state: "The Scandinavian welfare state contributes to a maximisation of job offers (*commodification*) through high public employment and demand-driven policy, an active labour market policy (*recommodification*), and by creating the opportunities for temporary absence from work, by paid sick and parental leave (*decommodification*). The high labour force participation rate among women, combined with one of the highest fertility rates in Western Europe, testifies the success of the Norwegian welfare state." (Halvorsen, 2002, p. 164).

4.2   Family policy in Norway –
Poverty of families and children & equal opportunities between men and women

4.2.1 State of the art

Family policy in Norway

Since the 1960s many changes have taken place in Norway. After the Second World War the one-income earner's policy was prevailing. The cultural perspective on women's role in society was such that women were not stimulated to work on the labour market. Nowadays, only certain christian-democrat politicians will state that the one-income earner policy is most family friendly and, therefore, most desirable. Nowadays gender equality is a hot issue in Norway. People discuss this topic throughout society and it is an integral part of national policies. Respondents spoke about an upraise of the gender debate, already over years and years. The fact that these debates are held, triggers a lot of response, policy-wise and from the side of the citizens. In general all politicians, regardless of their conservative, liberal or left-wing background, stress the model where a lot of effort is put into creating equal opportunities, if necessary by using the instrument of positive discrimination. Measures are taken to get women into leading positions. In the 1980s, Norway delivered a strong message by appointing the first minister, worldwide, on children and family affairs.

On the national level the Ministry of Children & Family Affairs in Norway has an intermediate function towards the other ministries and government institutions in bringing family policy, poverty of families and children and equal opportunities issues to their attention. Besides this co-ordinating task, the Ministry promotes and tries to safeguard the integration of these issues into the policies of regional and local levels of government. Before its creation, issues of gender equality and families were dealt with by other ministries, but in a much more fragmented manner.

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[2]   Decommodification is the extent to which an acceptable standard of living is possible, independent of market participation of a person.

On the web site of the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs its field of work is defined as follows.

> "The work of the Ministry centres on efforts to ensure:
>
> strengthened rights, interests and safety of consumers;
>
> a secure environment for children and young people to grow up in and the opportunity to take part in decision-making in society;
>
> economic and social security for families, and
>
> genuine equal opportunities for men and women.
>
> Our activities concern the daily life of most people, and the decisions we make are often of major importance for individual men, women and children."

Let us now look in more detail into the central issues of Norwegian family policy: poverty of families and children and equal opportunities for men and women.

Poverty of families and children

Obviously, the situation in Norway cannot be considered as being dramatic. The rich (for a great part based on the enormous reservoir of natural resources) country has low poverty rates. Understandingly, the question of poverty has almost been a non-item in Norwegian politics. The social security system and the high level of labour participation were believed to minimise risks. A strong focus was put on work as an effective self-help towards self-sufficiency. However, since about three years the subject of poverty has high priority on the political agenda, as almost all our respondents stated. Single parents, elderly and disabled people were already considered as risk groups, but nowadays also young people and members of ethnic minorities are thought to be in need of extra assistance. Furthermore, the presence of 'the working poor' in Norwegian society was recently discovered. In addition, estimates are that approximately 6000 homeless people are living in Norway, but reliable figures do not exist.

In the city of Oslo (500.000 inhabitants) in 2001 around 19.000 families received financial social support. This involves around 31.000 persons, more or less 6.2% of the inhabitants of Oslo. On average people receive social assistance for 5 to 6 months. Ten years ago there were 30.000 families in social support, a decline of over 10.000 families within the last decade. Immigrants are seen as a focus group because of a greater poverty risk. Between 20.000 and 30.000 Norwegian children are considered to live in poor conditions. These are mainly children of ethnic minorities. Norway defines children as poor when having lived during 3 years on a low subsistence level.

The situation of single parents has improved in the last few years. Single parents are compensated up to the level of the minimum income, for a maximum period of three years. This allows parents with young children to be at home and take care of their children without running out of money. Officially, they are not under the poverty line anymore but, in general, it is difficult to survive on less than a fulltime job in Norway.

The main effort for combating poverty is by getting people (back) to work. As for immigrants introduction programmes are developed to give them work experience within Norway and make contact with the labour market. Next to this kind of initiatives, the Norwegian government takes other measures to combat poverty. Things that are needed to attend school (like books) are supplied free of charge to parents and children, homework projects have been set up and, together with local communities, pre-school and after-school care arrangements for children have been extended. Next to

that, a number of measures are taken to reduce the costs of daily life. For example, health and dental care are for free for children up to 18 years old.

Equal opportunities for men and women

On its web site the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs describes the objectives of the gender equality policy as follows:

- "Equal rights, opportunities and obligations for women and men in all areas of society.

- Freedom from sexual violence.

- Equal distribution of power and influence between women and men.

- Economic independence for both women and men.

- Equal opportunities at the labour market.

- Shared responsibility for work and family life.

- Equal opportunities for girls and boys, women and men to education and to develop and realise their talents and ambitions."

The site gives the following information on the actual state of the art of the policies to stimulate gender equality:

The Ministry manages shelters and hot lines for battered women and incest centres, and also manages funding of women's NGOs. The Ministry is also responsible for child-care policies and parental leave and related policies and measures with a view to reconciliation of work and family life. The Minister for Children and Family Affairs at regular intervals presents for Stortinget, the Norwegian Parliament, facts and policy challenges with a view to gender equality.

According to the Gender Equality Act of 1979 all public authorities are obliged to promote gender equality in all areas of society. On this basis, gender mainstreaming has been applied since 1986. Gender equality in working life, in education and training, in the health care system, with a view to social rights, income etc. are the responsibility of the relevant public authority in question. A committee of State Secretaries on gender equality has been set up in order to reinforce the mainstreaming strategy.

The Centre for Gender Equality is an independent body whose mandate is to raise public awareness and lobby for more active gender equality measures and policies.

In the paragraph "Changes in culture" the measures to promote reconciliation of work and family life are described in more detail.

4.2.2   Process

Vertical relationships

As mentioned before, there is an ongoing debate about the delivery and distribution of welfare state goods. The state takes care of the allowances and arrangements like the child benefit, the cash benefit and parental leave arrangements, but specific social security issues are decentralised to the local level. The Norwegian parliament set national standards for social assistance, but these are delivered by local government and because of its relatively big autonomy the actual amount of money people receive can vary. This results in substantial differences among assistance levels between municipalities, and sometimes even within municipalities. The department of Welfare and Social Affairs of

Oslo did acknowledge this by stating that it could not give us any indication of an average level at all, because it depends on various factors concerning the situation of an individual client. The above-mentioned problems, associated with the centralisation-decentralisation issue, create tensions between the different government levels.

As for pensions and social benefits, also, both the national and local levels are involved. Pensions and social benefits, giving citizens a basic financial benefit, are supplied by the national government. The municipalities complement this with extra benefits according to their own standards. For some people, single parents for example, this might be problematic. They receive a certain income from the state being too low to survive, so they have to apply to the community for extra assistance. It can be complicated and confusing having to submit to two offices. A project, running at the time, trying to integrate these two levels, is complicated by the fact that some actors prefer centralisation and others decentralisation. One of our respondents, the director of the social service office in Skien, would like to see a more clear division of competencies between state and local level. According to her, the state should take full responsibility for income matters and the communities should take care of the follow-up. This would better befit the local level. Having handed over all financial matters to the central government would give them more time and resources to extend the follow-up (job re-integration, social work, family counselling, language courses et cetera), which is essential to many people. On the other hand, the city of Oslo is in favour of more decentralisation and would like to take over tasks from the national government, in order to be able to integrate all financial income transfers and all other services in one hand.

Some would like to introduce a minimum income system where the tax application will give all the information needed to grant a benefit. Across the country identical criteria can be implemented and applied to the tax application. If the state would take over these income matters, the communities can focus on other services (social work, debt management, training and empowerment, job re-integration) and they would have more possibilities e.g. to go into the neighbourhoods and pay home visits. Now, on the local level a lot of time is spent on administrative tasks concerning income matters.

Although rooted in national legislation and policy guidelines, in questions of the rights of women and children and equal treatment the local level has a relatively large amount of freedom. Municipalities play a very important role in putting the Gender Equality Act into practice and they have space to move faster or slower in enforcing this Act. Of course, the enforcement of many laws depends on the co-operation of lower policy levels at implementing these. But more than elsewhere the interference of the local democratic process seems not only taken for granted, but viewed as a necessary step.

Tensions do rise every now and then between the regions (or "Fylker") and the other levels of government. The Norwegian regions do not have a lot of competencies in social policy and they are submitted to a "double leadership": they have to follow national laws and regulations and have to listen to local decision makers who have the main competency over budgets in their area. None of the people we spoke to stressed the role of the "Fylker" (but among our respondents were no representatives of this regional level). We were told that every now and then voices are heard that would like to abolish this regional 'in between' level, if it was not for their important voice in the health and school system.

Different patterns of and opinions on decentralisation

A short comparison between the city of Oslo (around 500.000 inhabitants) and the city of Skien (almost 50.000 inhabitants, making it the 11th largest municipality in Norway) illustrates how decentralisation affects the handling of social policy in municipalities.

Skien is located about 160 kilometres south of Oslo and it is the capital of the Telemark region. In the city of Skien the following target groups are supported: people with drug related problems, families with children, recently arrived young refugees from Africa, Iraq, Iran and Bosnia, and more integrated ethnic minority groups. The Social Service Office, not having enough capacity to reach all the groups in the community that would need assistance, prefers centralisation of all selection procedures relating to the entrance and legitimacy of one's right for social security (that is: organised by local/regional offices and financed directly by the state). They feel it would give them resources and the capacity to work more out reaching and to provide (prevention) projects for other groups.

The city of Oslo is divided into 25 districts and there are 33 district offices where people can apply for social assistance. These "social offices" are the first entrance for the people in Oslo.

The district councils are in charge of decentralised issues as health, kindergartens, and cultural matters and in the near future as well care for elderly people. Districts can organise these matters according to their own needs and wishes. In the past, for example, this led to the creation of free of charge kindergartens in immigrant areas. Unfortunately the money was withdrawn and they do not exist anymore.

The Oslo department of Welfare and Social Affairs works on city level and is, unlike the Social Service Office in Skien, satisfied with the decentralisation of social security issues. The services to attend to target groups are decentralised to the districts and these do not directly draw on its human resources and capacity. Keeping social security at municipal level has the advantage that the city can structure its own policy around social groups and poverty in a more coherent way; they can gear this to services in other areas as public transport and the housing sector.

A major problem for Oslo is the lack of adequate housing for more vulnerable groups in society. There is a shortage of places for shelter and accommodation to help those who need a roof over their heads. Temporary homes exist but what is missing is a quantity of small public flats to rent for people with low income. Most people in Norway buy a house and social housing in Oslo only consists of around 7000 houses. This amount is too small to live up to the needs of the population of Oslo. For example, for young people it is really hard to settle down and find an independent place to live. However, in cities around Oslo the possibility to find affordable housing is even worse. This leads to sending people into Oslo. Drug addicts also tend to come to Oslo, 'attracted' by the one night housing arrangements available and the bigger drug-scene.

Horizontal relationships

As stated before, it is felt that there are differences between municipalities in terms of the financial means they have at their disposal for social policy. Some cities, with a relatively high amount of social service clients, feel they are under-funded by the state compared to others. However, on the national level it is stated that a substantial part of the differences *between* the municipalities is related to the priorities set by them that on their turn define how funds are divided. According to the state the main solution should be to improve the organisation and distribution of the communal resources.

In an attempt to cope with the substantial differences in social benefits as a result of decentralisation, the Norwegian Parliament pleads for the co-ordination of pensions, unemployment benefits and other social security issues. Instead of being under direct responsibility of national and local (governmental) agencies, these issues should be handled by a single (to be founded) office.

On the national level the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs is working with and towards the following ministries:

- Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

- Ministry of Education and Research

- Ministry of Justice and Police

- Ministry of Trade and Industry

- Ministry of Labour and Government Administration

- Ministry of Social Affairs.

4.2.3 Policy results and outcomes for target groups: putting changes into motion

Some elements of Norwegian family policy are identified by our respondents as having an extraordinary impact on the way citizens and professionals think about gender equality and act in their daily life. As to gender equality the following cultural and structural changes, enforced by both policy instruments as by debates in society, should be mentioned:

1.   Gender equality high on the societal agenda

In Norwegian politics gender equality has a high and fairly positive profile, with as an exception negative opinions in the liberal, populistic and nationalistic Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet). But, when compared to other countries there is certainly a broad consensus on the importance of gender equality. For example, Norway is the only country where they established a commission on men and gender equality and on male role issues. This commission was functioning between 1986 and 1992 and played an important role in giving attention to 'male' issues in the media and public discourse. Further, proposals made in the commission lead to the installment of the father's quota and to the treatment of violent men, among other things. So, we can state that on the national level support for the gender equality issue is established. On municipal level the issue is more dependent on some strong fighters, but these are widespread throughout the country. Awareness has increased and a lot has changed already. 20 years ago raising this issue would cause laughter, 10 years ago people were laughing when someone raised the issue of men taking up more responsibilities in care and doing the household. But that is no longer the case.

2.   Quotas found popular and effective

In Norway, quotas are a popular instrument to increase gender equality. The Norwegian political system, for example, works with quota to get women into politics. Each committee has to have 40% women otherwise the party loses the chair to another. The results are positive: female participation has increased. The same principle of quotas is now being introduced to boards of companies in the private sector. Private enterprises are now urged to comply with the increase, up to 40%, in women on their boards by 2005. Up to now the focus is on larger enterprises. Several of our respondents described the quotas as a success. Before these quotas existed, there were few women in high positions.

Women are still left out of certain areas of decision making and they are under-represented in the higher levels of the working force. However, in Norway the total economic productivity has increased by women entering the labour market. This is an important argument and pleads for further actions as to promoting the entry of women in all levels of the labour market.

3. Gender budgeting

Next to quotas, the instrument of Gender Budgeting might prove to be helpful in improving gender equality. The goal of the instrument is to assess who benefits from money invested: men, women or both equally? Government institutions are not obliged to use the instrument, but it can be used to optimise local policy concerning gender equality.

4. Parental leave and introduction of the father quota

In Norway parents with small children are entitled to 42 weeks 100% paid parental leave or 52 weeks 80% paid leave, up to a certain maximum. There is a father quota, meant to stimulate fathers to take up parental leave that gives four weeks of the parental leave to the father exclusively. If the father decides not to take this period of leave, it cannot be transferred to the mother. Before 1993 there were 6 months parental leave available and men took up 1 to 2% of this. After the extension of the whole period of parental leave (up to 42 weeks) and introduction of the father quota in 1993, 75 % of the fathers took these 4 weeks. Now: there is a total percentage of 13% of parental leave taken by men. That is an enormous increase but still women take the major part of the leave and these women spent relatively a lot of time outside of the labour market.

According to a spokesperson of the Gender Equality Centre fathers are happy with the established father quota, it gives them a tool to negotiate with their employers. Labour market still seems to function as an obstacle for fathers to take up parental leave. But there are other cultural factors, such as the educational level, that are expected to play an important role for fathers to decide to take up parental leave. In northern Norway there is a city where a lot of fathers take parental leave. Probably the high amount of academics living there is the explaining factor.

There is a current in Norwegian public opinion and politics in favour of extension of the father quota. At this moment, women are taking the bigger share of parental leave partly due to the difference in wages between men and women. The consequence is that women are absent from the labour market for a longer period of time than men. This influences their labour market position. The Norwegian emancipation agency drew attention to this tendency and criticised the parental leave arrangement." (Carp, January 2003).

A question under debate is why one should not make parental leave more attractive in a part-time arrangement? Most parents take up their parental leave in a full-time construction. But the possibility does exist for parents to come with their employers to an alternative arrangement. For instance, they can decide to work 50 percent and to receive 50 percent parental leave by working half days or working alternate weeks. This might make it easier for women to stay in the labour market while taking care of young children and might broaden the way for fathers to take up parental leave.

5. Length of working day and working week

Men work overtime while women work part-time. That seems to be the dominant pattern, even in Norway. But things are changing. The number of women working part-time has fallen down to 35%. A range of measures and changes in attitudes was responsible for that, such as the introduction of a paid illness leave and other paid leaves (care for relatives and friends). Discussing the time on which meetings are held, not too early or too late on a day is important (opening possibilities to deliver and pick up one's children at childcare facilities or school). And even lunchtime culture seems important. Not having an extended lunch break, eating home-made sandwiches, opens the opportunity to be home earlier in the afternoon.

There is a discussion on the preference for two people to work 6 hours per day rather than one person working 9 per day. It has to do with basic economic structures. How do people behave in daily

life? Next to that, the discussion on the importance of fathers to be present in their children's' life is important. Which role do they want to play towards their children? Traditional arguments stating that the father is necessary for a son's male identification, exist next to arguments focusing on the different roles men can play in the family and in society.

6. Cash benefit: unintended consequences on gender equality

Under the umbrella of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs the so-called 'cash benefit' was realised in 1998, implying "…*that parents with children 1-2 years old that do not attend publicly subsidised childcare are entitled to a monthly amount equivalent to the state subsidy of a full-time place in the childcare services, about NOK 3000, or EUR 400"* (Ellingsaeter, 2003). This child benefit is given per child. The measure is a result of the family policy of the Christian democrat party that stresses the importance of the proximity of parents – mainly mothers – for young children.

The cash benefit was meant to increase the freedom of choice of families. In practice, the cash benefit might induce women to stay at home with their children, again (partly) due to the differences in wages between men and women. Here we notice that welfare policies sometimes appear to have unintended, negative, consequences on gender equality. Especially migrant women seem to make over proportional use of the cash benefit instead of sending children to day care facilities. By staying at home, their integration on the labour market and in society as a whole is endangered, and with it the integration of their children, not learning Norwegian before they enter school, which might cause problems. However, when we look at the Norwegian population in general, a small but not significant decrease in women offering themselves to the labour market was noticed. Since the cash benefit has been introduced there is no big rush of 'women going back to the kitchen'.

How strong the local discretionary powers are, is illustrated by the city of Oslo who is balancing these unintended consequences by regarding the cash benefit as income, to be corrected with the level of social assistance received. Why should families with kids at home have extra income? So: at a local level they are decreasing the unintended effect of the cash benefit by giving women and/or men, who chose or are forced to stay at home to look after their children, less money. A local response to nationally set goals.

To avoid misunderstandings: the cash benefit exists next to the Child benefit, an arrangement which applies to all Norwegian parents, independent of one's financial situation and childcare arrangements. This financial support scheme does not have the before-mentioned side effect on gender equality.

Another point of discussion regarding the 'cash benefit' and also the child benefit is that it is given to all citizens independent of one's income and financial situation. Why should people who are financially 'well off' also receive these benefits? But that is more a matter of socio-economic equality, and Norwegian government considers it to be important to keep it like that to avoid stigmatisation. Next to that, the social-democrats put forward the argument of commitment to the community: if the people paying for the system also receive something in return, it will contribute to a higher level of commitment from their side.

7. Poverty new on political agenda

As to poverty of families and children, our respondents stressed the growing attention in society and politics for the issue of poverty and the poor in society. It has been clearly on the agenda now for only 5 years and problems seem not to have diminished since. Communities are confronted with a lack of resources to fulfil their tasks on this matter, at least that is how they view their situation. Social workers and educators working in municipalities experience a big pressure from within their organisations, to limit the time spent on each client. The fight against poverty of families and chil-

dren appears to be a tough one. However, in 2001 the city of Skien had 1850 clients receiving social benefits and in 2002 this dropped to 1600 clients, a reduction worth mentioning. (The city of Oslo was until last year also able to provide decreases, as we mentioned above.) In addition, the financial situation of single parent families seems to be improved, due to specific measures taken to support this group. Now, the poverty-issue seems to focus more and more on the issue of social exclusion and integration in society of members of ethnic minorities. Especially the economic and cultural dependent and subordinated and hence vulnerable position of women is a matter of growing concern.

4.3   Conclusions

Here we aim to bring together some elements that might be of interest for the Swiss context.

First, we make some remarks on the nature of the Norwegian family policy: is it really that modern? Which elements can be regarded as successful and maybe worthwhile translating into other countries and policy systems? Secondly, we discuss the issue of decentralised versus centralised social policy.

The two faces of Norwegian family policy

Norway is considered to be a modern welfare state, but traditional elements can be found in its social security and family policy. Norway is known, together with the other Scandinavian countries, to opt for a family policy directed towards the dual breadwinner family model. But at the same time the Norwegian income system includes measures supporting, deliberately or unintended, the male breadwinner family, such as special tax benefits for families and the child benefit. The recently introduced cash benefit for families abstaining from child care facilities, is an example of these kind of instruments. Although it can be viewed as a correct answer to a shortage in child care places and at the same time promoting the freedom of choice for families, it strengthens the traditional division of labour between men and women. In this way the overall progressive Norwegian family policy, possesses some contradictory elements, affecting both gender equality and poverty issues.

Furthermore, although the policies promoting equal opportunities for men and women in care and professional life were evidently successful, even in Norway traditional patterns remain strong. Still far more women than men stay at home to take care of little children (some say because of the generous possibilities to leave a job for a long period), there are differences between men and women in income levels and there are certain political currents promoting the system of one breadwinner per family. In the area of equal rights between men and women some challenges are there for the future: to promote the rights of fathers, get fathers to take a larger share in taking care of children, improve the situation concerning violence against women and promote economic equality between men and women.

Gender equality widely embraced

Having said that, Norway has been one of the first countries to bring innovative issues into social family politics. It was successful in having the first minister of children and family issues, and, with all the complaints on shortcomings that can be heard, a well build system of child care facilities. Already in the 1980s the debate on the role and responsibilities of men in care and raising children developed to an important debate, sooner than elsewhere and, so it seems, with much more impact on the general debate than in most European countries.

The attempts of parts of Norwegian society to work on a full-ranged modern family policy did not just bring the gender equality issue into the heart of the political debate. The measures taken had a very significant impact (see the fathers' quota and the quota for women in political representation).

Scientific evidence shows that the behaviour of individual families can to a certain degree be adjusted by modern family policy. Moreover, the advocates of measures promoting and securing equal opportunities between men and women, are backed by economic figures – showing that gender equality, if not enforcing, goes quite well with high productivity rates and high fertility rates.

The creative attempts in the domain of family policy and the growing evidence that it works for the good of the country, are both worthwhile to be studied further in detail by national and local authorities.

Stimulating further cultural changes on the labour market

Norway continues to work on a family policy / social security system aimed at creating equal opportunities for men and women and optimise combinations of care and paid work, for the good of the family (and children) and the economic productivity. Such an innovative policy, however, does not automatically imply a significant cultural change. First the conservative mechanisms at work in society have to be understood and overcome, because they sometimes lead to unintended consequences of policies. Look at the example of the majority of parental leave which still is being taken by women, who are out of the workforce for a long time, due to generous leave conditions.

For bringing closer equal pay and promoting equality of men and women an important tool in Norway is the labour market. That is the place where actual changes of structures and cultures can be achieved. In this chapter we have seen several interesting initiatives aimed at improving situations for women and for men searching for possibilities to combine career and care for relatives or voluntary work for society. Demanding gender equality in boards of private sector companies, adjustment of working conditions (planning of meetings, possibilities for (un)-paid leave for care).

Strengths and limits of a decentralised relief system

As we mentioned at the first page of this chapter there are more similarities than often realised between Norway and Switzerland. Both have a decentralised system in which 'assistance consists of localised discretionary relief, linked to social work and wider kin obligations.' (Saraceno, 2002) As a major consequence there are local differences as to the levels of social benefits and the (demands made on the) availability of social services (such as job re-integration, childcare, services for special groups (elderly, disabled, women, ethnic minorities). This might surprise other Europeans since the central idea of the (Nordic) welfare state usually implies that all citizens receive more or less the same amount of money and equal treatment in services and support they can obtain to ensure equal opportunities for all. It is however in line with the traditional way of thinking and acting in Norway where local democracy and locally organised support for the weaker have always been at least as important for the functioning of the welfare state than state enforced laws and regulations. As a consequence the Norwegian government, to a greater extend than other national or federal governments in this survey, is balancing between on the one hand creating equal circumstances for all citizens regardless the town or area they live in and on the other hand creating space for municipalities to fine-tune their assistance and services according to the specific needs of their inhabitants. The before-mentioned debate on the local versus national level positioning of social security arrangements can be seen as a derivative of these two currents in thinking about social security issues.

This debate concerning the role of national and local arrangements seems to be centred around on first sight totally opposite opinions. There are voices pleading for a central co-ordination of benefits while social services still will be at local level (advantage: creates time for guidance, no more time loss on time-consuming financial assessments; the idea is: improving efficiency by transferring it to the national level) and there are voices that would like to decentralise even more social benefit arrangements (advantage: this makes local co-ordination across several areas of intervention possible.)

In principle, both do want to achieve the same, that is co-ordinated and integrated, tailor-made interventions as close to the people concerned as possible. Even those in Norway who want to centralise part of the social security arrangements to a higher level, seem to do so, because they want to gain space for more individual care. They just want to be able to do more with their limited time and with their local knowledge, and give not just financial assistance but also immaterial quality care, in line with the (modern) paternalist tendency in the Nordic welfare states. They want to reduce the complexity of co-ordination between levels, and reduce the variety in financial regulations, not because they are against tailor-made arrangements for the individual receiver of benefits, but because they want to cut back the (financial) bureaucracy every single town sees itself confronted with. Moreover, they hope to enlarge transparency for clients and (social) workers alike.

To complete the picture, we have to point out that other 'centralists' are in the first place concerned about the lack of control of the national level when it comes to the implementation of national legislation at the local level. They want national government to impose minimum standards for services and financial transfers delivered at the local level.

Participation on labour market central

What certainly will be unchanged in Norwegian social policy, is the imminent position of policies aimed at leading people back to the labour market and other measures keeping supply and demand on the labour market, in qualitative and quantitative terms, balanced. It is also on the labour market where changes in the direction of equal opportunities and of reconciliation of work and family life have to be carried on. It is the labour market that remains the most important tool in Norwegian social policy to combat poverty and social exclusion of families and children. Nevertheless, more and more is recognised that 'modern poverty' asks for keeping systems of relief and social care up to date (appropriate levels of assistance, a good quality of care, and re-thinking of the division of responsibilities and tasks between the different levels of state), regardless the importance given to integration on the labour market.

Addendum

1.   Respondents

Ms. Ingrid Daasnes, Gender Equality Ombud

Ms. Anne Lise Ellingsæter, ISF (Institute for Social Research)

Ms. Tone Fløtten, FAFO (Institute for Applied Social Science)

Ms. Karin Gustavsen-Tvetene, Social Service Office, Community of Skien

Ms. Kjersti Halvorsen, City of Oslo, Department of Welfare and Social Affairs

Ms. Anne Havnor, Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, Department of Family, Daycare services and Gender Equality

Ms. Lene Nilsen, adviser, Centre for Gender Equality

Mr. Knut Oftung, adviser, Centre for Gender Equality

Ms. Oddrun Remvik, FO (Union of Social Workers and Social Educators)

Ms. Anne Reneflot, Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, Department of Family, Daycare services and Gender Equality

Ms. Inger Elisabeth Salvesen, City of Oslo, Department of Welfare and Social Affairs

2.   Facts and figures

Norway has around 4.4 million inhabitants of which around 500.000 live in Oslo. In European terms Oslo can be considered a relatively small capital.

Child-care centres 2000

37 % of children 1-2 years were in child-care
78 % of children 3-5 years were in child-care
52 % of all children 0-5 years were in child-care

"The fathers quota"/number of men taking parental leave 2001

1-10 days	3 007	8,7%
11-20 days	26 116	75,6%
More than 21 days	5 420	15,7%
Total	34 543	100 %

Children 0-17 living with parents by type of family 2000

Married parents	667 441	63,9 %
Cohabitant parents	140 723	13,5 %
Single mother	169 266	16,2 %
Single father	20 990	2,0 %
Mother and stepfather	41 239	3,9 %
Father and stepmother	4 790	0,5 %
Total	1 044 449	100 %

Number of people in employment 2001

Men	1 214 000	53,3 %
Women	1 064 000	46,7 %
Total	2 278 000	100,0 %

Working hours for men and women 2001

	Men	Women		Men	Women
1-19 hours	6 %	19 %	32-36 hours	6 %	8 %
20-29 hours	3 %	14 %	37-44 hours	70 %	46 %
30-36 hours	2 %	10 %	45 hours +	13 %	3 %
Part time total	11 %	43 %	Full time total	89 %	57 %

Average labour hours per week 2001

Women:	30,8 hours	Men:	37,8 hours

Percentage of women at various levels of office work 2001

Managing directors	7,4 %
Senior posts	11,4 %
Lower and middle management	17,2 %
Clerical, qualified, independent work	25,3 %
Clerical, simple routine work	75,4 %

Percentage of women at various levels, Municipalities and County municipalities 2001

Senior managers	19,6 %
Administrative functions, total	65,5 %
Administrative functions, managers	41,7 %
Engineers and technicians, total	19,7 %
Engineers and technicians, managers	25,8 %
Health sector, total	82,4 %
Health sector, senior	42,9 %
Service sector, total	82,7 %
Service sector, managers	47,7 %

Women's average earnings as percentage of men's, full time employees 2001

Social & personal service activities	87,1 %
Transport and communication	87,4 %
Wholesale and retail trade in total	82,8 %
Office employees	97,3 %
Shop employees	87,1 %
Investment and retail banking	75,4 %
Central government employees	88,9 %
State run schools	94,5 %
Municipal and county municipal employees in total	87,6 %
Electricity supply	89,5 %
Financial intermediation	75,4 %
Private health & social work	87,4 %
Manufacturing	88,2 %

Percentage of women holding political and public appointments

Municipal Councils	1999-2003	34,3 %
County Councils	1999-2003	41,4 %
Stortinget (Parliament)	2001-2005	37,0 %
Government Appointed Committees	2001	42,0 %
Cabinet Ministers	2001	42,0 %
Mayors (Municipalities)	1999-2003	14,9 %
Mayors (Counties)	1999-2003	22,0 %

(Source: mini-facts on Gender Equality 2002 from The Norwegian Centre for Gender Equality.)

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Gender Equality Centre: http://www.likestilling.no/engelsk/english.shtml

Gender Equality Ombud: http://www.likestillingsombudet.no/english/

5. Major cities' policy in the Netherlands. The roles of national, regional and local government.

Introduction

As places where societal changes as economic transitions, migration movements and cultural changes first come to the surface and societal problems are more concentrated than elsewhere (over-representation of deprived, poorer people, unemployment, lesser housing conditions; urgent environmental and traffic problems, etceteras), cities feel the need for defence of their common interests and seek assistance from other governments and agencies. Together with the growing awareness that cities should learn from each other, this has led to the creation of mutual learning networks between local governments. These processes exceed even national boundaries. The development of European networks of cities and the issues at stake in the relation of cities with the European Commission (White paper on European Governance) are examples of that. Starting with the four biggest cities and developing over time to both a national programme and a, loose, network of 25 cities, we consider the Major Cities Policy (MCP) of the Netherlands an interesting case to present.

In the next description of the Dutch urban policy special attention is given to the following: We will discuss the way in which the urban policy is shaped along both horizontal and vertical ways. Also in line with the focus of this study, we will pay special attention to attempts to strengthen the social 'pillar' under the MCP programmes and to integrate social policy in a broader urban policy. Thirdly we will highlight that communes and provinces still have to find effective ways to co-operate, given the absence of strong government at the level of agglomerations or regions (regional tasks are carried out on the basis of provisional laws).

5.1   Relevant Country context

5.1.1   Decentralisation and renewal of local government

From 1850 to the present, society has become more complex while the role of the government has changed. Around 1850, the Netherlands was still a conservative country where a small elite possessed political power and municipalities played a marginal role. Municipalities did not evolve into significant actors until the end of the nineteenth century. After 1929, for example, they began receiving funds from the state. Nevertheless, the central state played a leading role in the construction of the welfare state and the reconstruction after World War II. In the 1970s, however, a new vision caused a shift of emphasis towards decentralisation, allowing the municipality to gain influence in various areas, especially in the field of social assistance and, broader, local social policies, including social and youth work, parts of care (direct, first-line care for the elderly, supplies and services for disabled people, care for homeless people, psychiatric patients). At the same time some departments (education, care) stayed in control for at least part of their budgets and tasks, thus schools and care institutions often have to deal with local and national, sometimes provincial regulations and requests.

Of great relevance are the latest developments in the field of social assistance. Through the new Law for Income and Work the municipalities are given more and more responsibilities and tasks: They have to lead as many people as possible (back) into the working force. If they succeed, they are free to keep the money saved on social assistance. If they fail, they have to cut on their social programmes, for instance on extraordinary expenditures for people dependent on social assistance or on

subsidised labour. Although most of the 30 bigger cities welcome the idea of greater local guidance in this field, they fear that the quantity of the currently available budgets will urge them to cut in local-led programmes and projects they consider worth to continue.

5.1.2   Characteristics of the political-administrative system

A central feature of the Dutch political-administrative system is its strong, stabile and fairly autonomous administration on both central and local levels. Elected politicians only have a modest influence on the *composition* of the civil servantry, which does not change after elections. At national level, the higher ranking posts are more or less divided between the main political parties. The politicians also tend to stand on a bigger distance to the *policy* than elsewhere in Europe.

The Major Cities Policy has a low political profile (especially but not exclusive in The Netherlands, see the EU research program on 'Urban Governance, Social Integration and Sustainability (UGIS), in nine European countries to the praxis of urban renewal). That means, although elements of it will attract public attention and are subject of political debate, in general the MCP is mainly the business of ministerial and municipal departments, and of professionals in the cities. Local politicians tend to be more committed to the policy than their colleagues in The Hague.

5.1.3   Urban and Social Renewal

Looking back, two major movements can be seen as direct predecessors of the present Major Cities Policy (launched in 1995). First there were distinct phases of the Urban Renewal (Stadsvernieuwing) in the Netherlands that took place from the 1970s on, and focused on old pre-war, inner-city districts with bad housing. At the end of the Eighties the City of Rotterdam launched its Social Renewal (Sociale Vernieuwing) with programmes aimed at encouraging social and economic participation and integration of groups in society who 'stood aside'. Soon, these kind of programmes were introduced in many cities in the country.

5.2   Major Cities' Policy in the Netherlands – a closer look

The Major Cities Policy (MCP) was initiated in 1995 in response to an urgent call for help by the municipalities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht, which asked for a 'delta plan' to counter the downward spiral of specific districts within these four major cities. In 1995, the state agreed to covenants with the four large (and subsequently an increasing number of medium-sized cities). Today, the MCP applies to the four major cities as well as to twenty-one medium-sized cities. Another five municipalities have more recently been added as an additional group within the MCP.

In its first period, the MCP was organised around five central themes. Those themes were work, education, safety, liveability and care. During this first period 1995 –1999 the cities were able to invest much in these fields, benefiting from the good economic tide. At the same time there are persistent problems on the social issues of liveability, safety and integration of minorities. These problems appear mainly with the most vulnerable groups of people and in the cities. The MCP was rather fragmentary in most cities, mainly due to the fact that the focus was on financing projects, rather than programmes. To alter this the government introduced the three pillars of the Major Cities Policy. Since 1999 the MCP is organised around three pillars: 'work and economy', 'physical-spatial,' and 'social'. Furthermore, in terms of scale, the emphasis of programmes and projects shifted more and more to the districts within the cities as the focal point of persistent social problems. Longer term programming and policy integration are keywords. But though policy makers put the integrated approach of urban problems in front, insiders and outsiders observe still a hard to trim

down compartmentalisation of policy at both national and local levels. The latest proposed modifications in the MCP are discussed in paragraph 4.3.

5.2.1 Goals and starting points

Many major cities struggle with problems, which although different in nature, are impossible to disentangle. Social problems are an example. Cities may, for instance, have to count with a large sub-population of people with poor education, with the problematic integration of parts of ethnic communities, anxiety about safety, a high unemployment rate, a growing crime rate, a dwindling middle class, and declining economic vitality. Often, such problems accumulate and become concentrated in specific districts. Moreover, dilapidated housing and commercial buildings, inadequate infrastructures and the resulting poor accessibility form obstacles to progress. The Netherlands has elected to launch a large-scale, integrated approach to urban problems. This approach focuses not only on overcoming problems, but also - and above all - on tapping into opportunities. These new objectives will enable cities to gain strength and renew and develop themselves. The ministry of the Interior is painting the general picture of the Netherlands' urban policy as follows.

"The Netherlands' urban policy combines expertise with financial and human resources in dealing with the economic, social and physical aspects of cities. The underlying objective is to create "the comprehensive city". These are cities where everyone feels at home, cities with thriving economies, with jobs for job seekers, pleasant living conditions, liveable neighbourhoods, safe streets and a community that includes everyone and leaves no-one out."

Throughout the years nine goals of MCP were identified:

- diminish unemployment and promote new employment;
- reinforce the economic position of the city;
- improve the transition from education to the labour market;
- reinforce the position of 'urban living' environments on the regional housing market;
- improve the physical living environment and the liveability;
- increase the accessibility of economic activities;
- reinforce the social infrastructure;
- improve the safety;
- improve the "self-recovering" capacities of vulnerable neighbourhoods. (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations 2002.)

5.2.2 Integrated approach

Urban policy seeks to create comprehensive cities by adopting an "integrated approach." This term refers to the focus on approaching economic, social and physical policy areas simultaneously and in direct association with each other. (These areas are also referred to as the "three pillars"). The integrated approach is based on certain premises. One of these is that urban problems are becoming more and more complex. In addition, the different problems are believed to be increasingly interlocked. It is also thought that the resources and opportunities for making a city comprehensive again are often interdependent. However, efforts in these three policy areas would not, in themselves, be sufficient to create a comprehensive city. The expertise and skills contributed by the different interested parties (EU, national, provincial and municipal authorities as well as local partners) should be

cohesive in terms of content, be well co-ordinated and tie in together in the planning and implementation processes (Ministry of the Interior).

5.2.3 Decentralised approach & District approach

A common approach on the part of national and municipal authorities was chosen as the structural foundation for urban policy. This approach places responsibility for the way the city functions with local government bodies and their residents, the business community and the relevant institutions. This decentralised approach allows each city to focus on its own problems and vision. It also provides for assistance from central government to local government bodies in developing their own visions and strategies. Thus, cities can choose their own priorities within the framework of goals established in agreement with central government. These priorities should be based on active contributions from residents and efforts are made to encourage these (Ministry of the Interior).

Within the cities the District Approach should make sure that the targets of the MCP would be delivered at the ground. It tries to focus support and integrate resources for the purpose of creating strong and liveable neighbourhoods. Most municipalities attempt to put the following assumptions of the District Approach into practice:

- The District Approach is demand-oriented. It emphasises the analysis of problem areas, strong points, and possible solutions that support and recognise residents rather than services or municipal policy. This approach has produced various instruments to capture the residents' points of view, including district panels, survey methods, improving the signal function of frontline workers, introducing district budgets that residents (and their organisations) can use, etceteras.

- The District Approach is integrated. Many municipalities stress co-operation among a large number of suppliers, service-providers, and the municipality (and its services). This may occur by initiating district agencies that enable maintenance crews, the district officer, the corporation, healthcare services, residential support groups, elderly and youth groups, as well as residential organisations to join hands. This may also occur by consolidating policy and implementation in overlapping problem areas such as safety issues, social activation, or unemployment. In the latter two areas—both aimed at individuals—municipalities use a chain- or 'trajectory' approach to stimulate integration.

- The District Approach is participatory. This means that some form of citizens' participation is always one of the means towards a particular end. Inhabitants should create their own networks within districts and help determine their districts' viability. They are the natural 'owners' of the informal social infrastructure and, consequently, also co-producers of the district approach. Suppliers and the municipality encourage citizens to help formulate policy and enable implementation of the district approach. (Davelaar et al., 2002).

5.2.4 Multi-year development programmes & measurable goals

Dutch cities have established their visions and strategies for becoming comprehensive cities in multi-year development programmes. A number of measurable goals have also been incorporated in these programmes. Central government has drawn municipal agreements with each city regarding targets and results. These agreements are based on the municipalities' multi-year development programmes. Progress is supervised by means of careful monitoring and on-site visits. This strategy makes it possible to intervene where necessary.

5.2.5 *Three pillars*

As already mentioned shortly, the Netherlands' integrated approach to urban problems rests on three pillars:

Pillar 1: the employment and economic pillar

Bolstering a city's economic vitality is absolutely crucial in renewing and revitalising its deprived neighbourhoods. The small and medium-sized business sector plays a major role in urban economies. This sector is also a key player in creating new jobs. To foster this role, municipal authorities are encouraging companies to create jobs for local residents. For the less skilled work-force, much effort has focused on creating employment in the retail trade and the restaurant and hotel industry. Moreover, work-training programmes have been introduced in such fields as information technology. Extra attention is also being invested in encouraging entrepreneurs from ethnic minorities. The success of these efforts depends largely on the active participation and involvement of small and medium-sized businesses and various other organisations in the target neighbourhoods.

Pillar 2: The physical development pillar

Physical development involves making provisions to improve the quality of and access to housing, the workplace and the general living environment. Relevant measures include revitalising and restructuring the supply of housing, renovating and opening industrial areas, fine-tuning open space planning and other physical measures for ensuring and improving safety in traffic, the physical environment and society. Municipal authorities have joined forces with store owners, entrepreneurs, project developers, investment companies and building co-operatives to establish an integrated, specialised approach. Extra efforts are also being done in intensifying the residents' involvement in their living environment, especially the participation of ethnic minorities.

Pillar 3: The social pillar

If the importance of an integrated approach shows through clearly in any area, it is in matters relating to the social pillar. The priorities of urban residents are not limited to adequate housing in a pleasant, safe neighbourhood. They also include employment, proximity to shopping areas, educational facilities and good social cohesion. The social pillar focuses on enhancing and improving the social infrastructure, a task that calls for attention to numerous aspects. These include care, assistance, overall safety, youth policy, quality of life, social involvement and participation on the part of immigrants and the native Dutch population alike. The measures focus primarily on reinforcing the position of vulnerable groups, ethnic minorities and/or disadvantaged individuals. They also seek to increase social participation of city residents in the sports, cultural and political activities of their neighbourhood communities.

Source: Ministry of the Interior, Department of Urban Policy and Inter-administrative Affairs, brochure on urban policy.

5.3 Enhancing the process of urban policy: smoothening relationships and removing structural barriers

Cities do not face problems on their own. Nor can they handle problems on their own. This recognition led to the creation of the MCP. The MCP tries to bring the goals of stronger and sustainable cities nearer along two ways. First, by enhancing and supporting horizontal co-ordination between different policy areas, which is essential to the integrated approach. Secondly by facilitating co-op-

eration between levels of government. We shall take a closer look at the developments, both in terms of changes in structures as in terms of (the lack of) growth towards a more co-operative culture.

5.3.1   Horizontal co-ordination & policy integration

National level

In 1998 within the ministry of the Interior a designated Minister for Urban and Integration Policy has been appointed, whose powers extend to matters of finance and co-ordination. This appointment sought to emphasise the importance of urban policy and to maximise its effectiveness within central government. At central government level a structure is in place that supports the co-ordinating function of the Minister and the necessary co-ordination between and within the three pillars. The official Inter-ministerial Committee on Urban Policy and the Ministerial Council for Urban Policy support co-ordinated pooling of government resources and commitment on the part of specialised Ministers to Urban Policy. In the recently formed government (Spring 2003), urban policies are under the political responsibility of a Minister for ´Renewal of Administration´, also in the ministry of the Interior. At first glance this might be seen as a demotion of the urban policy. However, the urban policy still is an important part of the portfolio of a minister (and not of a lower ranked secretary of state). Another argument brought about is that urban policy should be a genuine cross-departmental policy, the greatest efforts should be made in these departments, only under co-ordination of the home office.

Provinces

Lately, provinces have also started entering the arena of social policy in the Netherlands by endorsing the Major Cities Policy (especially North-Brabant, Overijssel and Gelderland). Provinces also focus on strengthening regional co-operation, partly because of the administrative vacuum in tackling social problems that call for a regional approach. The trend towards network cities, as described in the Fifth Report for Environmental Planning, creates a completely new configuration of major cities and their surroundings, requiring regional and provincial policy to be re-conceptualised.

Regional co-operation

The district approach is popular among all ministries and cities. This trend is problematic in so far as the district approach is applied a priori, to all types of problems. As the MCP programme is now running for several years the pros and contras of the focus on the neighbourhood level are becoming more visible. All agree a new period of Major Cities Policy should pay more and co-ordinated attention to the urban region. Given the absence of a strong government at the level of agglomerations or regions (regional tasks are carried out on the basis of provisional laws), communes and provinces have still to find effective ways to co-operate, although the situation throughout the county differs to a great extent.

The Dutch history of the attempts to create stronger democratic bodies on the level of regions or agglomerations is not encouraging, indeed: attempts to create regional superstructures (around Rotterdam and Amsterdam) turned out into one of the greatest political miscalculations by the national and local authorities and were buried after referenda in which huge majorities said no, both in the big cities and in the surrounding towns and villages.

Provisional or not, since the beginning of the nineties, seven areas do have regional administrative bodies (without direct democratic legitimacy). These structures do have responsibilities, but are seen as relatively weak and totally dependent on the speed with which the individual municipalities want to go forward.

One can not stop the trend towards greater interdependencies. Most problems of big cities exceed municipal boundaries, such as mismatches on the labour market, transport, availability of social housing, availability of free spaces for recreation and the planning of social and cultural services, problems with very mobile youngsters. The regional dimension was until lately absent in city plans and in the MCP as a whole. That was seen as a problem, not so much however by cities, but more by observers, experts and provinces (but they can be easily accused of having their own reasons: they are in need of gaining influence and can obtain that via a role in the regional co-operation between cities and between cities and their surroundings). Cities on their side, could be accused of forgetting the interdependency of their problems with those of the region and vice versa, being so busy dealing with the, sometimes massive, problems within their boundaries. And now that the region is in the cities' mind, they still occasionally tend to forget that ´the others´ also have their problems, and focus instead on making smaller towns and villages "co-owners" of the urban problem, instead of looking for shared problems and mutual benefits. Smart provinces try to balance that and focus on mutual benefits for cities and villages (Davelaar, Duyvendak, Ter Woerds 2002).

The G-21 Cities do not feel the need for new regional government or more responsibilities for provinces and close the door for any change in structure.

'Specific adaptations of policy are needed to give an extra impetus on regional articulation and co-operation in urban issues. More structural adaptations of national policy are not demanded. Building trust and common agreement needs a long term perspective.'

Only if the voluntary co-operation is blocked by one of the partners, central government or the province should have a possibility to force this partner. Municipalities must have an active attitude of co-operation within the city and with and within surrounding municipalities. Provinces and central state must promote such an attitude by good guidance and the creation of policy "space" and financial possibilities. Another illustration of the difficult position of the region is demonstrated by the attitude of the four big cities. They tend to concentrate on co-operation among themselves and are criticised of neglecting the fact that their relationships with the area and towns in their direct surroundings are of much greater importance for their behaviour and wellbeing than the developments in the other three big cities. At the same time it is far more attractive for them to work on a common "big cities' agenda" with financial claims and present that to the government in The Hague, than to deal and wheel with 20 to 30 reluctant local authorities in their own region, who - of the record - are just afraid to import the big city problems.

Nevertheless there is change going on. A good example to present here is the co-operation between the 8 Drecht-cities, giving the MCP a regional dimension. In the MCP-experiment Drecht-cities ´Shipping Valley' there is co-operation going on in three policy fields: economy, housing and social policy, supported by the province. The co-operation remains vulnerable due to some negotiation lassitude of the partners involved and due to the still hesitative support from councils and local civil servants. But it is all parties' opinion that the MCP experiment led to intensifying and speeding up the existing regional co-operation. The result so far is that more attention is given to the fact that regional issues are comprehensive and that common objectives have to be reached (Berenschot 2002).

Local level

According to the national guidelines local authorities should safeguard policy integration by working in close consultation with residents, as well as in co-operation with public and private sector partners to introduce visible structural improvements. In practice local authorities face difficulties in establishing this co-operation, and therewith, the required policy integration.

Take for instance the ambition to facilitate and influence the course of the fragmented social sector. The local government is expected to guide private (subsidised) initiatives (NGOs) in a political sense, but municipalities possess relatively little guiding power in their ties with most actors involved in the social pillar. The answer sometimes chosen is to try to gain more control over the actors, but this may end up in the municipal organisation taking over tasks, and gives way to debates over what are seen as inflicts on the professional autonomy of organisations. Enter into partnerships with private initiatives seems to be a wiser strategy. However, genuine partnerships are only possible if all partners enjoy enough opportunities for joining the guiding process. It requires strong partners. Finally, the role of the citizen is increasingly seen as co-producing services and provisions. Although it might help local authorities gain popular support and producing more effective policies, it can in the short run reduce the steering capacity of local government, due to the fact that both citizens groups and civil servants, councillors, aldermen have to find a new equilibrium in the division of responsibilities and power.

The Districts

Finally, within numerous municipalities, intra-municipal decentralisation has emerged as a significant development, ranging from a few municipal district officers, via well staffed district offices with citizens' advisory boards or councils, to elected district councils and aldermen.

On all levels: overcoming a lack of integration

As mentioned before, the MCP consists of three pillars: 'work and economy,' physical-spatial,' and 'social.' In terms of scale, the emphasis lies on the district as the focal point of persistent social problems. The first two pillars are fairly strong: they led to the bundling of financial sources, creation of jobs, and cleaning up / restructuring of public spaces in districts (although the full-size plans for tearing down or fixing up houses have met with considerable delays.) The social pillar remains weak, but not due to a lack of public attention: the interest in social cohesion, civic participation, and quality of life is stronger than ever. But the projects within this pillar do not require large financial injections, are relatively invisible, and rely on investments in human resources: professionals and residents. Results are difficult to predict and identify, while the (local) government and its partners are often unable to find a balance among the three pillars' goals and instruments: the ideal of an integrated district approach often does not work in practice. The social effects of economic and physical-spatial plans are not always taken into consideration, and vice versa, while due to lack of communication among state ministries, and among municipal sectors, co-ordination remains insufficient (Duyvendak et al. 2001).

The social pillar is suffering more than the other pillars from the lack of integrality, from the absence of a roof above the pillars. The social pillar remains wobbly and receives little support from the physical and economic pillars, whose solidity is assumed.. The idea was to construct an integral roof covering the three pillars. The social pillar (or social infrastructure) was supposed to contribute to solving physical, social and economic 'roof'-problems – just as the physical and economic infrastructure would contribute to solving the social problems that the social sector could not handle on its own. Within the pillar then, certain problems and social issues (quality of life, security and social cohesion) are supposed to be tackled, as if other groups or actors in society – the economic arena, the physical sphere of building and living – are not involved. Of course, this was not the intention. The introduction of the pillar-metaphor was an attempt to strengthen all necessary domains and to foster comprehensiveness. Against the wishes of nearly everyone, social actors and social problems are 1 to 1 within the social pillar (as they are in the economic and physical pillars).

One way to overcome this problem, is to look at local social development as the issue at stake, and to study the necessary infrastructure for the desired local social development, whether the building bricks for it are from a primarily spatial-physical, economic or social nature.

Recently, the offices for Housing (VROM) and Social Welfare Policy (VWS) joined "we are only at the beginning" forces in supporting cities to make "Social Visions for Districts" in 56 Neighbourhoods that are chosen to prevent the physical and social re-structuring to come to a stand still due to bad economic weather and housing shortages. Several cities do experiment in developing those visions in which from the beginning urban planning goes along with social planning, including making use of what potentials are already present in the communities.

Moreover, the department of Housing elaborated a new philosophy in which it deliberately refrains from taking the lead in those areas where social problems have to be solved first.

Other measures taken by national, provincial and local governments to address this problem will be described below.

5.3.2   *Strengthening vertical co-operation*

Initiatives from the national level

Cities do not face problems on their own. Even in the mostly decentralised field of social policy other levels of governments can play a supportive role and have, under influence of the prominence of urban problems, entered or re-entered the scene. In the first place the national government. Particularly with its Major Cities Policy, the Ministry of the Interior, has re-entered the limelight. But also the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and particularly this ministry's Department of Social Policy – responsible for the co-ordination of the social pillar in the MCP, have manifested themselves during the past few years. Due to rising attention to social issues, this trend also applies to other ministries, such as the Ministry of Housing, Planning and Environment, responsible for the physical-spatial pillar, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The ministries of Social Affairs and Employment and that of Education where already present with a strong influence on the local level. Their involvement only slightly changed: from steering processes at the local level via policy guidelines and regulations, towards more involvement in debates about the contribution of social services and schools for the vitality of local communities.

One remarkable aspect of this trend is that the ministries join the municipal administrations in thinking about underprivileged neighbourhoods: whether the issue is social activation, fighting unsafety, promotion of health care or the improvement of communication technology, the district approach is popular among all ministries (Davelaar et al. 2001).

Financial structure

In national – local relationships, finances play a crucial role The structure and amount of the financial streams form national government budgets give an impression of the way these relationships are supported:

Table 1   MCP-themes from 1994 to 1998 (MCP1)

	Millions of euro
Work and economy	1194,1
Quality of the social and physical environment	196,7
Youth and safety	83,6
Education	7,5
Care	16,0
Total	1498,0

Source: Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (2002), p. 64.

Table 2   Structure of finance of the three pillars (1999-2003, MCP2)

	Number of regulations	Millions of euro	Contribution of heaviest department
Economic pillar	4	951,3	96%
Physical pillar	8	506,5	91%
Social pillar	21	549,9	37%

Source: Andersson Elffers Felix (2002), p. 16.

If we look to the amount of money in the first period of the MCP the emphasis was put on the theme 'work and economy'. Also in the second period of the MCP the biggest amount of money goes to the economic pillar. A lack of cohesion between the three pillars is also visible in the financial policy. The financing of the social pillar is, as you can see in the table above, strongly divided among different departments in comparison with the economic and physical pillar. The social pillar consists of a big number of regulations, whereas the amount of money available is relatively low.

Towards further integration of budgets

The state and the cities made up contracts. The cities receive during five years money from the state and the cities themselves have to formulate measurable objectives and realise these objectives. These programmes are called multi-year Development Programmes. Every programme contains a financial paragraph with the expected costs and their coverage. In theory cities can write their own financial policies. In practice they feel bounded and blunted. The financial boundaries between the policy areas, directly related with the traditional boundaries between the ministries, are seen as obstacles for a comprehensive, result-based approach at the local or regional level. Particularly many regulations within the social pillar are not yet integrated. And this is not an easy task because of the huge fragmentation in financing and ruling bodies at ministerial levels (home office, Ministry of Health Welfare and Sport, Social Affairs, Education) with each their own interest. In the spacial-physical and economic pillars great progress has been made in this respect by the creation of the Investment budget for Urban Renewal (ISV) and the Fund for Work and Income. The ISV is seen as a good example of budget integration at national level. This budget exists since 2000 and includes (except for the great infrastructural projects) the totality of the physical-spatial pillar of the MCP. Cities become as prepayment money for a period of 5 years and are accountable for this only after the five years period. At the start of 2003, in reaction on continuous criticism from cities and independent experts, a further attempt to de-compartimentation and simplification of the financial jungle was launched by introducing a so-called Brede Doel Uitkering (Broad Goal Budget). According to the Ministry it should give more financial freedom for cities: Cities need the possibility of deciding themselves how to use budgets in order to solve their problems (Ministry of the Interior 2002b). The recently announced cuts in the government's budgets for € 17 billion, will have severe consequences for the MCP as well. In the social pillar alone, the 26 cities are expecting a decrease up to 70 percent of the budgets. The united local authorities speak of budget cuts 'out of every proportion', whereas

at the same time cites have been given significant new tasks to fulfil. At the moment of writing it is not clear yet which impact these budgets cuts and the troubled relationship between Government and municipalities will have on the future of the MCP.

5.4   Results and outcomes of the Major Cities Policy

5.4.1   View of government

In 2002 government did strike an interim balance of its urban policy over 1994-2002. It concluded that over the last seven years real progress has been made in the major cities. They have caught up with the situation in other cities and villages. The unemployment rate in the major cities was always very high, but now the rate did decrease more than the average. However, at the end of the first period of the MCP, 1999, one could observe that the underprivileged neighbourhoods had not taken enough profit of the new policy. Although after the first period the unemployment rate in those neighbourhoods has decreased quickly, the feelings of unsafety had increased more than the average. The cities and their residents are beginning to improve their situation, but they still have a long way to go. Especially in narrowing the gap between the objective or measurable (unemployment rate) and the subjective or difficult measurable improvements (feelings of unsafety). This has to be an important objective in the next period from 2003 on. The government observes that the commitment of citizens, residents and professionals has increased.

In the eyes of government at both the level of the cities and that of the ministerial departments, a lot has improved. The rather project-based approach of the first MCP period 1995-1999 did not root the comprehensiveness and result-based way of operating, all parties involved strived for. For that reason MCP 1 was not embedded sufficiently into the heart of the municipal organisation. The balance over the first years of MCP 2, 1999-2002 is more positive. The action of cities and the state has changed in a comprehensive, demand oriented and result oriented approach. Another improvement is that the central and local governments co-operate better with other parties (local NGOs, businesses) concerning the development and execution of policy than in the beginning of the MCP. The de-compartmentalisation is underway, albeit slowly. Currently professionals at the administrative and official level are more familiar with the MCP than in the first period. On the other hand the co-ordination within the state and within the several departments needs reinforcement, as government admits (Ministry of the Interior 2002).

5.4.2   Evaluation of the MCP by experts, advisory boards, scientists.

An interesting feature of the Major Cities Policy Programme is that it contains a self-evaluation instrument and an external evaluation by a group of experts. The MCP introduced this formalised system of (self) evaluation as a way of learning from the past and avoiding future pitfalls. Until now two expert committees ('visitatie commissies´) made on-site visits and produced a report on the MCP. The committees were composed of external experts (scientists) and colleagues (aldermen and mayors) of fellow cities. In addition several independent advisory boards of the government commented on governments urban policy.

Positive results

Some shared opinions on the positive results of the MCP include:

- The goals and starting-points of the approach of the MCP are supported on a large scale. (Even smaller cities, not included in the policy, have learned to take a closer and better look at themselves, being confronted to the same type of problems as bigger cities.)

- An important contribution of the MCP is that the major cities are explicitly on the political agenda. National government acknowledged urban problems as its own problem (a matter of national interest).

- National government developed a *strategy* for strengthening cities by releasing extra resources, co-ordination of programmes and projects throughout ministries, stimulating debate and exchange on solutions and new opportunities for cities. The necessity of co-ordination on policy goals is acknowledged widely.

- MCP did cut some clear paths through the financial jungle that cities, NGOs and local businesses are confronted with.

- The MCP gave the area-oriented (territorial) intervention an important stimulus (see for example Visitatiecommissie Grotestedenbeleid 2002).

The cities themselves feel satisfied with the progress made with MCP, although they sometimes feel worried by the weight of the problems in their cities. Their complaints and ideas for improvement of the policy focus on:

- the administrative burden;

- the lack of integration of the different budgets (G21 2002).

Best results are internal results

In general, one should conclude, that the main results of the Dutch Major City Policy (MCP) are situated in better co-operation within the administrative apparatus of Cities and to a lesser extent between national departments. Thus the best results are internal results.

As to the relations between the policy levels, experts tend to be more positive about the way the MCP has helped reshaping the relations between the national government, in casu the different ministries, and the cities, than on what it did mean for the internal vertical relations in the cities, in other words, between the town halls and the professionals - civil servants or officials from semi-public bodies - on the working floor.

Problems and challenges

Not much evidence for better tackling social problems

There is not much evidence yet that cities are making progress in tackling social problems. In that sense there is still a fairly great uncertainty about outcomes of the MCP. On the other hand: the fact that the internal organisation of the cities is demonstrable more up to date than it used to be, may give hope for the future.

Monitoring effects is hard. Causality of policy measures and actual developments is hard to prove. For example: unemployment in the cities did decrease faster than average. The growth in job-creation was higher in the cities than elsewhere. But it is questionable if this can be linked to the specific measures in the framework of the MCP.

The current economic bad weather will seriously function as a test-case for the robustness of the changes set in motion under the Major Cities Policy. The cities involved have succeeded in reducing their backwardness compared to the average. But will they be able to keep the gap as narrow as possible, or will they face serious drawbacks in terms of unemployment?

No analysis of drawbacks and factors that hinder or foster implementation

It will be clear that the implementation of the MCP remains a point of great concern. Outside the town halls there is a general feeling that the programme has not contributed enough to better services and nicer neighbourhoods. The reasons for this remain unclear. The influential Algemene Rekenkamer (Control Chamber) criticised government. It stated that the reports of government on the MCP did picture the societal changes and problems and the way the MCP was run in the national and local administrations. But it missed an overall analysis of the reasons for the unsatisfying results. Furthermore it criticised government for not being able to give insight in the factors that hinder or can boost the implementation of the MCP (Algemene Rekenkamer 2003).

Goals not specific enough

The Major Cities Policy (MCP) can be seen as an open method of co-ordination: steering on goals, facilitating on instruments. In its goals and in its implementation (mainly at neighbourhood level) it intends to integrate social, economic, and spatial / physical policies. There seems to be broad consensus on the desirability of such a way of operating. However, in practice some serious pitfalls have been noticed, among others by the second expert committee:

  – The committee stated (following its visits late 2001) that, although the policy was in place for six, seven years, the goals as formulated at the national and (partly) local level were too vague and broad, not enough focused on reducing the problem itself. Especially the goals formulated on social issues do lack a sharp end.

  – Cities are not able to define clear targets: programmes of the cities show a lack of variation and local specificity.

  – As a consequence city programmes are not enough tailor-made. Cities do not make clear *how* they will prioritise and *how* they will try to meet the goals in their specific context.

  – Furthermore, most goals were formulated as organisational-administrative goals, rather than goals in terms of a problem in society in need of a solution.

  – Mutual learning could be better. Especially between cities and at the level of interventions in neighbourhoods (Visitatiecommissie Grotestedenbeleid 2002).

Questionable quality of indicators

The debate on this matter still goes on. Can a set of goals or indicators be constructed that is limited enough and yet sensible enough to really measure progress in the vitality and liveability of cities and city districts? Monitoring could prove more effective when it will be more closely aimed at effects, outcome, rather than at output (=programmes and projects set into pace.). This asks for a better quality of the indicators as used by national government. In those cases where indicators on individual neighbourhoods are formulated, they do measure or strive for things like mixed neighbourhoods, lower feelings of unsafety, higher income levels, higher house prices, or a higher amount of private property but leave out of the picture things not less essential such as the upward mobility of less advantaged people or social cohesion. That is, elements that can say something about the dynamics and the function of a neighbourhood in modern network society, on mobility and 'feeling at home', on openness and closure of communities. But after all: comparable indicators / parameters are essential. At least that enables us to say something about the relative effectiveness of the cities.

A sophistication of this open method of co-ordination lies in the intention of the Minister to enlarge the freedom of cities to achieve the agreed goals, while at the same time demanding cities to deliver stronger, harder evidence on outcomes of measures and investments and to reach goals within time boundaries.

Given the difficulties in tracing back the factors behind improvements, one can still differ between policy fields on which things have changed for the better, and fields continued to suffer a stand still. One of these areas is the physical restructuring of mainly post-war social housing neighbourhoods. It is running behind schedule. Beside this, almost all observers stress the need to strengthen the social and regional dimensions of the MCP.

Latest efforts to stimulate policy integration and boost the implementation.

In answer to the criticisms and evaluations, government formulated recently what still needs to be done, starting with the 2005-2009 period of agreements with each of the 30 cities (MCP 3).

– Making a further effort to de-compartmentalise and deregulate. The boundaries between the pillars have to dissolve further. Internal co-ordination between the ministries has to improve. The number of different budgets involved will be cut back. From 2005 on, national budgets for the MCP-cities will be sampled in a limited number of broadly focused subsidies (Broad Goal Budgets). These will be based on the priorities safety / crime reduction, cultural integration of ethnic minority groups, sufficient shelter for homeless people, psychiatric patients, youngsters, fostering social cohesion, youth and education, strengthening the economic structure of cities and neighbourhoods, re-structuring of (the housing stock of) vulnerable neighbourhoods.

– With these broadly focused subsidies , cities will receive more freedom of choice and of spending to tackle their specific problems. More space for tailor-made work and selectivity will also be fostered by non-financial means. For example by giving more attention for policy innovation and quality. And by:

– Realising a longer time of preparation for the new period of the MCP for the state and the cities. The aim is to develop tailor-made contracts between each city and the state.

– Reaching visible and robust, sustainable results while at the same time reducing the bureaucratic requirements to a minimum is the essential credo for 2005-2009. Cities will be hold (contracts) to reach concrete, measurable results and to account on that.

– A national expert-team ´implementation MCP´ can, at almost no costs, be called in to help cities finding solutions for problems in the implementation of the MCP.

– Monitoring the results of the policy should not increase the administrative burden. The facts and figures collected anyway by the ministries should be integrated and up dated. The information obtained from the cities´ self-analysis, and the visits of the expert committees, will be used in a more fashionable manner.

– Strengthen the social infrastructure.

– Increase regional co-ordination and co-operation (Ministry of the Interior 2002b).

5.5   Conclusions

From our in-dept knowledge of the Dutch Major City Policy and our understanding of the relevant Swiss policy (context), the relevant outcomes of this case can be situated in the following domains:

– A common (national) urban policy can contribute to the quality of (social) urban policy

With all shortcomings, the main achievement of a nation-wide urban policy, is that it can contribute highly to the linking of policy goals and programmes to each other and the exchange of ideas. This achievement is especially important in a situation in which on

several important fields the competencies have been decentralised over the years (or have always been primarily a local responsibility) without simultaneously strengthening the conditions for local policy making. A national urban policy can prove to be a valuable step forward for the quality of policy on the municipal level. It can even be seen as an input to enhance the quality of municipal policy processes in general. Instruments for evaluation, monitoring and mutual learning like visits by external experts and elected politicians from other cities, self-evaluation by cities, a knowledge centre on urban policy and the possibility to get assistance by a group of experts can contribute to that.

– A nation-wide urban policy can bring a sense of urgency to all levels.

As civil servants from ministerial departments verify, through the MCP, cities have brought a previously missing sense of urgency to the national administration. Another effect is that cities themselves did discover social problems as a priority, at least equal to the economic development of a city and the need for spatial urban planning. Some provinces did discover the social and economic condition of cities as a new field, and started supporting cities in stead of keeping distance and / or controlling them.

– MCP gives insight in (blockades on) the way towards policy integration

Another useful element can be the way the integration of the different policy domains (social, spatial-physical and economic) is taken at hand, locally and nationally. So far, MCP did only partially help to release previously locked up resources for cities or to connect civil servants and professionals in different branches. But, here again, at least the awareness of the undesirability of this situation has grown fast. One example that might be stimulating in the search for a more content based understanding of each one's role at national or confederal, provincial or cantonal level: The Ministry of Housing, Planning and Environment is currently re-thinking its role, leaving the lead to the social sector in districts where the nature of problems is predominantly a social one (joblessness, loneliness among the elderly, tensions between ethnic groups), oppressing the reflex to come up with physical-spatial measures to improve districts.

– The danger of slipping into technocratic -bureaucratic operations.

The Dutch experience shows clearly the risk of slipping into technocratic-bureaucratic policies. The strong stamp that civil servants in departments and at local municipal services and town halls put on policy has clear advantages: there is maximum agreement on the direction of the policy, and the continuation of the policy is more or less secured, regardless the political colour of national or local governments. But national politicians keep aside too much, not steering nor backing up the local professionals and local politicians, who on their turn do not succeed to get their hands on the policy, let alone to bring it to life for the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods concerned (the exception proves the rule). From time to time the goals and strategies of the policy should be debated deeper by more people in order to adjust and fine-tune policies. We already mentioned the danger of cities playing at safe and copying the goals and programmes from others, without translating them to their own situation

– From setting specific goals, to setting a common agenda

To what extent should a central, federal or even confederal government try to formulate goals? Of course, these are political goals after all and can be set at the national level. There are nevertheless reasons to abstain from it. As seen in the Dutch case setting nation-wide goals was not the most successful part of the urban policy anyway and might add to

the a-political, technocratic impression of urban policy. Do all cities want the same? Do they pursue the same goals? Are there no conflicting goals to deal with? Sometimes it looks like that. The harmonising tendencies prevent cities from carefully examining their own problems and strengths, the specific possibilities in their own society, the strengths and weaknesses of their own business community, of the local educational field. It prevents them for taking profit of the differences, instead of trying to look just the same as the others.

An answer might be to formulating less goals and investing more in common efforts to set a local, or preferably regional agenda. And this with a maximum of freedom for regions to translate the general goals to their own situation, and to formulate their own strategies. (The latest developments in Dutch MCP go in that direction.)

Working on a common agenda for the region can boost a sense of a genuine shared ownership of problems (Davelaar, Duyvendak, Ter Woerds 2002).

–   The need for a constant changing between scales

Almost ten years of national urban policy clearly showed the need for working on all different scales and a constant changing between these scales. Depending on the nature of a problem governments on all levels should be able to adjust their policies.

The neighbourhood focus proved its value, and made clear that general policies are not sufficient. It led to a re-discovery of the residents / community as a potential partner in policy making. It led to the formulation of problems and solutions at the ground, in close collaboration with those involved (residents, clients, small business, housing companies , social workers, representatives of services in an area (schools, health centres). Linking the efforts of these new partnerships to the cities' policy processes, i.c. in making municipal services more demand and district oriented does not prove to be easy (although in some cities quite substantial shift in budgets and personnel towards districts has been effectuated) It is a question of structure (budgets shifts, well paid municipal District officers jobs) and it demands a culture shift in local administrations.

The limits of such an approach, i.e. an a priori choice for the neighbourhood or district, have become clear by observers, not by all administrations yet. Let there be no misunderstanding: focussing resources and personnel on those areas and people who need it most, and in that way working on more demand oriented public services is essential to improve the quality of life for people in those areas. It prevents services and other institutions from hiding behind rules and regulations and from denial of developments that do take place in reality. But it can not go without a constant debate on how national / con-federal or regional/cantonal policies interact with local actions. Now, while that notion may touch on common ground, it is complicated for governments (and their public and private partners) to invest in understanding, let alone, influencing processes going on at the regional or agglomerational level.

–   Reinforcing the regional dimension in (social) urban policy

And yet this is an essential level for (social) urban policy. It should host a minimum of shared problem-ownership. Voluntary or law-based structures for co-ordination should develop on this level. Here, there is not so much to learn for Switzerland from the Dutch case. The Dutch region is a source of anxiety, with no level willing nor able to force or seduce others to invest really in co-operation. Of course, in seven areas formalised regional authorities have been established, but they are very much tied to the municipalities

and seen as only organising a minimum of common issues (police, medical aid, a general level of care). They are failing to create networks on such urgent issues (in the Dutch context) as housing, employment, crime, services for the homeless, drug-addicts, psychiatric patients. It seems interesting to study the thesis that in the other less formalised ´network cities areas´ in The Netherlands more progress is made and the willingness to co-ordinate social, economic and spatial policies is more wide spread.

In addition, one can point out that the provinces, traditionally focussing on the rural areas (due to the fact that most of its policy instruments and competencies lay there and due to the cultural background of most of them involved in provincial politics), did make a change and facilitate their cities with substantial resources and are prepared to 'walk along with them'. But especially in the field of social policy they still have a long way to go to build expertise and influence. And afterwards the traditional provincial "centres of gravity" (like spatial planning) still have to be made sensitive for these 'new' issues.

Added to this the debate on regional structures that reaches a deadlock over and over again is not much of a help: continuous fights about establishing formalised forms of co-operation between communes did cause frustration and mistrust. But things seem to change for the better lately. The voluntary nature of co-operation is emphasised. Cities and provinces dare to move again. And they search for co-operation on the basis of complementarity (make use of the difference between main cities and surrounding smaller / rural municipalities) to avoid the side-effects of competition (every municipality competing to have al the good and keep out all the bad). We mentioned some positive indicators:

−   Cities, assisted by provinces, work on a regional agenda –linked to new local agendas-, including social issues: interesting examples are the co-operation between the Drecht-cities and in the IJssel river delta.

−   Provincial urban programmes in Noord-Brabant, Overijssel and Gelderland: aimed at learning, exchange, identifying common interests, et cetera.

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Our Neighbourhood's Move

The plan `Our Neighbourhood's Move' (`Onze Buurt aan Zet') was launched in June 2001 by the minister for Urban Policy and the Integration of Ethnic Minorities, to give the deprived areas of large cities an extra incentive through a financial impulse, with the objective of improving quality of life and safety and integration. The total amount involved is 90 million guilders (€ 40,84 million), spread over a three-year period. The conditions are that the cities increase this amount by fifty percent and that safety and life in the selected `neighbourhoods requiring special attention' has demonstrably improved. Participation of the inhabitants is a further requirement.

www.onzebuurtaanzet.nl

Digital Playgrounds

ICT can contribute to quality of life in a big city, according to the minister of Ethnic Minorities. Which is why, on his initiative, so-called digital playgrounds have been set up in thirty cities: low-threshold ICT provision in the neighbourhoods requiring special attention, to allow people to learn about ICT and computers, and learn how to use them. In Haarlem, for instance, a digital neighbourhood newsletter was started up, Groningen provided e-mail addresses for its homeless people and in the Rotterdam district of Spangen, a computer centre was set up to support young entrepreneurs, The initiative of Digital Playgrounds was, in short, embraced by the big cities often in consultation with sponsors from the business world. A total of 20 million guilders (€ 9.08 million) has been poured into the project. In November 2001, Digital Playgrounds Trophies were awarded in three categories: for best participant, best volunteer and best playground.

Examples and more information can be found at:

www.trapveld.nl

Urban Expert Centre

July 2001 saw the opening of the Urban Expert Centre (Kenniscentrum Grote Steden) in The Hague. The aim of this data centre is to provide data for decision and policy makers in cities and government departments, for tackling urban problems. The purpose of the data centre is to collect data, and analyse best practice and research at home and abroad. To achieve this objective, the Urban Expert Centre has its own website and research programme, and organises training, workshops and conferences.

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6. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in England

Introduction

The British Government launched the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS) in 2001. This national Strategy has had many interesting predecessors and currently functions as an umbrella over various in itself big and long-lasting nation wide programmes. Next to giving promising examples and bad examples of programmes and projects, we choose to focus in this chapter on certain elements of urban policy in England:

– The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy as a unifying concept over various programmes, projects and funds. What makes this National Strategy necessary on top of the daily efforts and the previous programmes?

– The vertical and horizontal relationships between and within levels of policy formulating, policy making, and implementation.

– The role of the concept of Local Strategic Partnerships in these programmes and within vertical and horizontal relationships.

6.1 Country context relevant for the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy[3]

In this subchapter we aim to present relevant information on the context of the NRS. Therefore, we pay attention to some recent experiences and developments in the field of urban policies in England.

6.1.1 Former experiences with urban policies

Since the early 1990s successive British Governments have placed increasing emphasis on regeneration programmes, including concerted efforts at local, regional and national level to achieve sustainable regeneration in the country's most deprived communities. In recognition of the amount of work still to be accomplished and the failure of previous approaches, Tony Blair, Prime Minister, established the Social Exclusion Unit within the Cabinet Office after the elections in 1997. He asked it to work on developing a new and integrated approach to reverse the decline of hundreds of neighbourhoods that were scarred by unemployment, educational failure, crime and lack of prosperity (Social Exclusion Unit 2001).

The Social Exclusion Unit set out the need for a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal for deprived neighbourhoods which would be agreed by all Government departments and other strategic agencies. The goals of the new National Strategy (which, after the devolution of powers to the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly applies only to England) would be:

– To bridge the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of England.

– In the poorest neighbourhoods to achieve:

    – lower long-term unemployment;

    – less crime;

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[3] The information presented in this paragraph, although to be found in official documents as well, leans heavily on the study by British researcher Christine Holman (2002) Housing and Regeneration Initiatives in England and Scotland, commissioned by the Dutch ministry for Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment.

–   better health;

–   better qualifications;

–   improving housing and improving the physical environment in most deprived areas (Holman 2002: 3)

Intensive policy development was undertaken by 18 cross cutting Policy Action Teams whose membership included civil servants and practitioners with experience of living and working in deprived areas. Each Policy Action Team had a Ministerial 'champion'. The themes covered were, besides the above mentioned, business, neighbourhood management, housing management, unpopular housing, anti-social behaviour, community self-help, arts and sports, schools plus, joining it up locally and information.

The Policy Action Teams undertook their work against a background of existing government programmes, in particular the New Deal for Communities, and policy initiatives including work on the Urban and Rural White Papers, the Housing Green Paper and the Modernising Government Agenda with its emphasis on ´Best Value´ designed to deliver the promise of a 'joined up' approach.

The Policy Action Teams presented 569 recommendations to the Government for consideration in the development of the National Strategy, most of them being adopted. 85 recommendations from the Policy Action Teams focused specifically on ethnic minority issues (Christine Holman 2002: 4)

6.1.2   *Area based initiatives*

In its first term of office (1997 - 2001) the current Labour Government launched a wide range of 'zone-based', or area-based, initiatives that aim to tackle social exclusion and to deliver improved services in the most disadvantaged areas.

These include (list taken from Holman 2002: 5):

–   **Education Action Zones** which typically encompasses two or three secondary schools and their feeder primary schools in areas of under achievement or disadvantage. 25 zones were created in the first bidding round and 48 in the second.

–   **Employment Zones** assist people over 25 years old to obtain sustained employment or self-employment. There are now 15 fully-fledged Employment Zones.

–   **Health Action Zones** develop and implement a local health strategy to deliver measurable improvements in public health, health outcomes and quality of treatment and care in their areas. 26 Health Action Zones with a life of seven years have been created in two waves.

–   **New Deal for Communities** tackle multiple deprivation and social exclusion in the most disadvantaged (and typically very small, up to 5000 households) areas, 39 in total. They provide a model for innovative practice in neighbourhood regeneration. This is by far the most concentrated and ambitious of all the action programmes listed here, with the unrivalled budget of approximately £2 Billion. Running time is 10 years. It overrules every other neighbourhood or district programme in Europe by far in the amount of money invested (Dijkstra 2003).

–   **New Start** aimed to re-engage 14 - 17 year olds who had dropped out of learning or were at risk of doing so.

- **Single Regeneration Budget** schemes address a range of social, economic and environmental aspects of regeneration in an integrated, often area based, programme. Over 900 schemes are in operation.

- **Sure Start** programmes work with parents and children to promote the physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of pre-school children especially those experiencing disadvantage.

- **Community Legal Service Partnerships** co-ordinate the planning and funding of legal advice services.

- **Crime Reduction Programmes** contribute to reversing the long-term increase in crime rates by targeting resources on innovative and high impact projects at local level.

6.1.3   The regional level

Government Offices

In 1994 Government Offices (GOs) were set up in each of nine English regions to deliver regional services for the major central Departments of State. In the Government Offices for the regions representatives of the main national offices are based. The regional level (covering very big areas when compared to continental European standards) is mainly an administrative entity.

Regional Development Agencies

Regional Development Agencies were launched in eight English regions in 1999 to co-ordinate regional economic development and regeneration. The ninth, in London, followed a year later with the creation of the Greater London Authority (the only one with an elected leadership so far.) These agencies are partnership bodies whose business led boards draw one third of their representation from local authorities and reflect regional interests. They aim to:

- enhance the economic development and the regeneration of their area;

- promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness in their area;

- promote employment in their area;

- enhance the development and application of skills relevant to employment in their area, and

- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (Holman 2002: 15)

The Government will increase the degree of budgetary flexibility the Regional Development Agencies can exercise. Increasingly they will be able to bring together disparate funding streams into a single programme. They have to make sure that regional priorities are met where the scope of existing programmes is too narrow.

Regional Development Agencies, mainly working on economic development, work closely with, but independently of, Government Offices in the Regions which retain responsibility for housing, planning and transport and for social policy matters. (Holman 2002: 15-16)

The future: Regional Assemblies?

In May 2002 the Government published a White Paper -Your Region, Your Choice; revitalising the English Regions - setting out its vision for regional policy including a strengthened role for the Regional Development Agencies and the creation of directly elected Regional Assemblies. These as-

semblies should become the democratic counterpart of the Government Offices for the regions. In the past only a greater London assembly existed, but it never gained a lot of influence, and was abolished by the Conservatives, until New Labour blew it to life again.

6.1.4   Local authorities

The local level has been far more important in the political process and in policy implementation than any level between central and local government. But compared to central Government, local authorities, in recent history never had much policy autonomy nor sufficient resources. However, the trend is that over the last years local authorities have gained influence and increased their resources. A government official stated: 'The Conservative governments were, in the name of local democracy, centralising power in the departments and in Quango's. The budgets for local authorities decreased over the years from 45 % to 27%. Under this government it has climbed up tot 32% again. We hope to end half way.' This does not imply a break with the high expectations and ambitions traditionally attached to central Government: 'At the same time this Government is the most directive Government we have seen in years. But with the goal of improving local democracy.'

6.1.5   Some other characteristics of urban society

Tradition and experiences with public-private partnerships

A permanent lack of public resources to carry out tasks that are viewed as necessary, and the strong tradition of charity, has lead to a substantial involvement of private organisations that carry out or fund 'public' tasks. The range and scope of voluntary organisations is huge and growing as Government policy increasingly emphasises their role in providing an alternative 'third' sector. They are key partners in Local Strategic Partnerships. They vary in size from small single issue groups to very large housing associations. Some provide direct services, others provide advice or support. These voluntary groups are governed by an unpaid board of management. Some are efficient businesses generating regular surpluses, but many will seek financial support from statutory, private and charitable sources.

According to Holman voluntary organisations are recognised by their:

– independence - constitutionally independent and not directly controlled by a profit organisation or the state;

– self governance - with its own internal decision making process and making no payments (other than for reasonable out of pocket expenses) to members or trustees;

– voluntarism - benefiting from a meaningful degree of philanthropy;

– public benefit - demonstrating that its objects and activities benefit the wider public and that it operates in ways which are open and inclusive (Holman 2002: 24-25)

Housing

Unlike the Netherlands and Switzerland the housing estates are mainly owned by the local authorities, although ownership by housing societies is also widespread. The Government states it is putting a lot of effort in restructuring the social housing sector, for example by demolishing the run down apartment buildings from the sixties and seventies. However it is hard to avoid observing that a large part of the social housing stock is still in a very bad condition – just like its inhabitants behind the fenced doors and windows. A lot needs to be done. Local authorities lack the financial means to do so. It is not surprising to find housing conditions, together with crime reduction, on top of the list of things residents want to see improved. To make things worse, apart from the need for physical re-

generation, there is the stigma. In Britain you do not tell anyone you are living in social housing unless you really need to. According to them, it stands for being unemployed or being a member of a 'problem family'.

The private owned housing sector, that has always been stimulated in the past, shows a more mixed picture. Even in districts notorious for their problems or with a reputation as such, housing prices have gone through the roof. In cities like London the cost of housing is high, although some places are even more expensive than others. When compared to other countries, in Britain a huge amount of the private property is rented out. The privately owed houses, especially (but not exclusively) those that are rented out, suffer often from a lack of maintenance and overcrowded houses are a constant worry for local authorities. A lot of owner-occupants do not have enough money to invest in their houses.

6.2   The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

In January 2001 the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan was launched. 88 Local authorities in England, among which areas of high deprivation, are involved. The Strategy focuses on these 88 most deprived local authority areas in England (and about 1 % of all wards, the administrative sub-division of a local authority). Most of these areas are located in urban areas but 16 of them enclose substantial rural areas. The Strategy's targets are set by the national level and translated to the local level by the LSPs into Local Strategies (Social Exclusion Unit 2001: 12-15).

6.2.1   Vision, goals and focus of the Strategy

The Government's vision is reflected in two long-term goals:

1. Within 10 to 20 years, no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live. Therefore, the strategy aims to deliver in the poorest parts of the country:

    –   economic prosperity;

    –   safe communities;

    –   high quality schools;

    –   decent housing;

    –   a better physical environment, and

    –   better health.

2. To narrow the gap on these aspects between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of England.

All partners involved should be working on 105 commitments in 3 key dimensions of the Strategy:

–   new policies, funding and targets;

–   better local co-ordination and community empowerment: find effective drivers of change at local and community level, and

–   national and regional support.

The new approach emphasises:

- attacking the core problems of deprived areas including weak economies and poor schools;

- harnessing the power of all sectors to work in partnership, and

- focusing existing programmes explicitly on deprived areas.

The Strategy has a running time of ten to twenty years. Longer than most urban programmes elsewhere in Europe. A careful decision in the light of the great effort that have to be made and the ambitious goals.

The Strategy focuses on:

- increase co-ordination:

  - between the different departments;

  - between programmes: the NRS is mend to be the umbrella over all other programmes.

- mainstream and improve existing services;

- increase & establish in a more regular way the involvement of communities, and

- better information, better learning. Spread lessons and results over more neighbourhoods (Social Exclusion Unit 2001: 8-11, 25-29).

Some essential quotes on the Strategy:

- ´Whitehall departments will be judged for the first time on areas where they are doing worst rather than on the national average´.

- 'In the NRS it is not the average that is important.' It is the low standards.

6.2.2   Floor targets

The Government is seeking to narrow the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest of the country. Targets have been set to improve the outcomes in these areas and are achieved by core spending programmes. The 'floor targets' should be reached in each and every single Neighbourhood. Statistics on education, crime, health, unemployment, housing and air quality are not allowed to fall below these levels. For each of these targets a Government department will have lead responsibility. But they will have to work closely with other departments, as well as stakeholders at local authority and neighbourhood level, to achieve them (Social Exclusion Unit 2001: 9, 30).

Minimum floor targets have been set to enable departmental performance to be assessed on their worst areas and not on national averages. The new targets are:

- reduce substandard social housing by one third by 2004 and eliminate it totally by 2010;

- ensure by 2005 that no area has burglary rates three times higher than the national average;

- ensure at least 25% of pupils in every school and 38% in every local authority area achieve five or more General Certificates of Secondary Education at grades A* to C;

- reduce, by at least 10% by 2010, the gap between the quintile of areas with the lowest life expectancy at birth and the population as a whole;

- reduce, by at least 60% by 2010, the conception rate among under 18 year old's in the worst 20% of wards, and thereby reduce the level of inequality between these areas and the average by at least 26% by 2010, and

- raise employment in the 30 local districts with the worst labour market problems and narrow the gap between these and the overall rate. (Holman 2002: 30)

6.2.3   Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)

With the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) projects are financed that meet wider strategic aims such as enhancing participation of the community, filling in the gaps, fostering the quality of the regular services and fostering co-operation in multi-agency projects.

The limits and focus of the NRF are made clear:

> "The major impact on deprivation will come through the bending of main departmental programmes to focus more specifically on the 88 most deprived areas rather than making additional funds available (although recent government expenditure plans have increased overall spending in some areas)." To help ensure that the national targets are delivered, Government departments will be reviewing funding allocation processes to ensure that sufficient funds reach deprived areas. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), with resources nationally of £100 million in 2001-02, £300 million in 2002–03 and £400 million in 2003–04, will be paid to local authorities in the most deprived areas of England. "The purpose of these additional non-ring fenced resources will be to help local authorities in the most deprived areas focus their main programme expenditures in order to deliver better outcomes for their most deprived communities. The Government will expect to see evidence that funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is being used to improve the delivery of services to the most deprived wards and neighbourhoods within the eligible areas" (Social Exclusion Unit 2001: 83).

The grant can be used by local authorities "to improve outcomes in their more deprived areas in whatever way is considered suitable for local circumstances" (Social Exclusion Unit 2001: 83). So, the Government gives way to local freedom, under the following conditions:

- recipients must be part of and working with a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and must have agreed with the LSP a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy; .

- each year local authorities will be expected to provide a short statement of usage of their NRF resources, showing how they support the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. The local authority will agree it with the LSP who will want assurance that the NRF resources are contributing to their wider strategy for tackling deprivation, and

- the authority should make a commitment to contribute towards the achievement of the national targets that have been set (Social Exclusion Unit 2001: 84).

6.2.4   Other funds

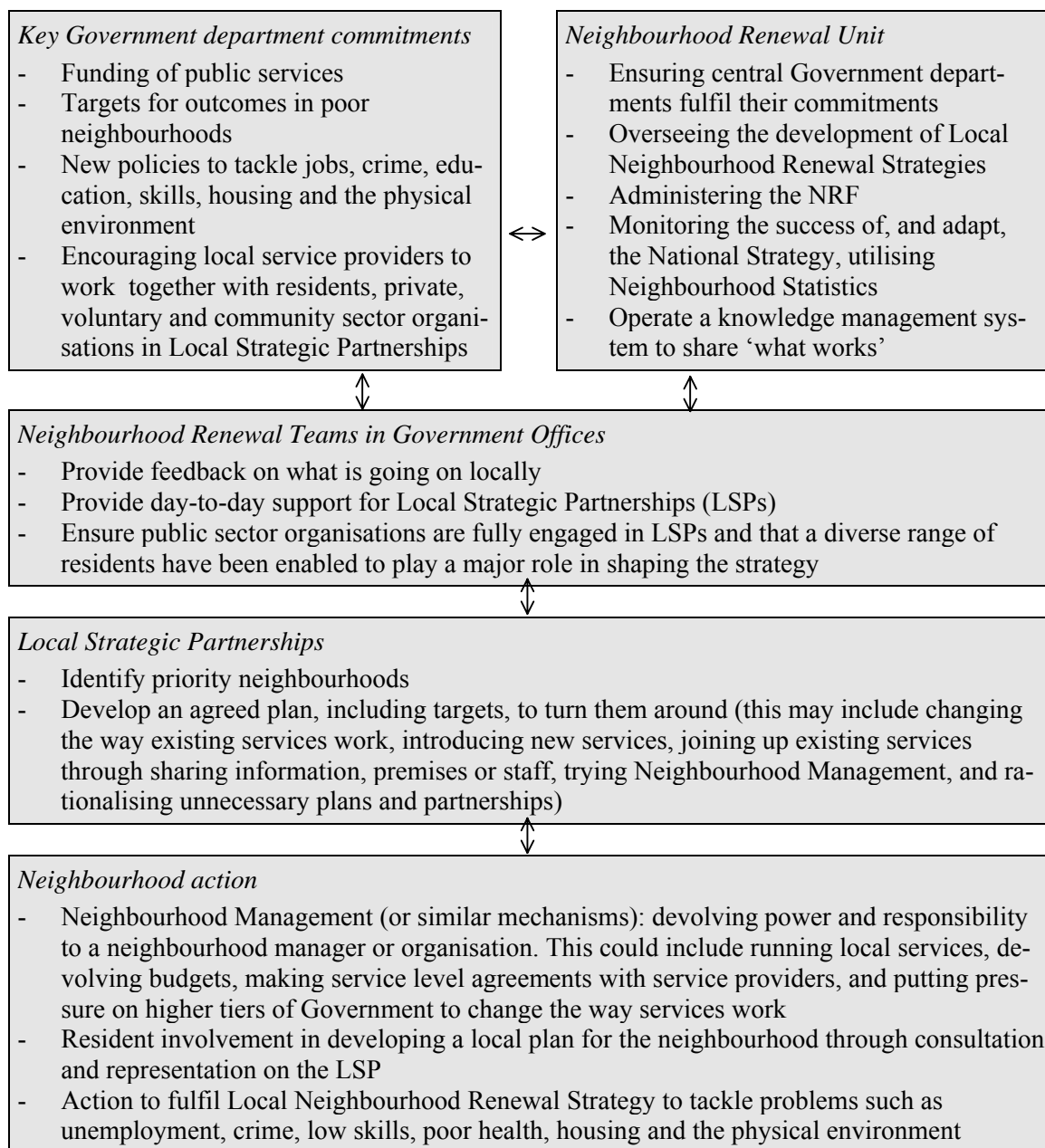The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is not only running the 'new' Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, aimed at improving services in the most deprived neighbourhoods. It is also responsible for other (older) financial programmes such as:

- £45 million over three years for neighbourhood management programmes designed to help communities focus services on their priorities or to run local services themselves;

–   £36 million through the Community Empowerment Fund to help communities become in-
    volved in local decision making;

–   £50 million for 'community chests' to support small community projects with locally
    administered grants, and

–   £1.12 billion funding for 21 Round 2 New Deal for Communities partnerships (announced
    in April 2001) bringing the total amount of money dedicated to all 39 partnerships to £1.9
    billion over the next 10 years. (Holman 2002: 13-15)

6.3   Key relationships from national to neighbourhood level in Neighbourhood Renewal

Figure 6.1   Key relationships from national to neighbourhood level

Key Government department commitments
-   Funding of public services
-   Targets for outcomes in poor
    neighbourhoods
-   New policies to tackle jobs, crime, edu-
    cation, skills, housing and the physical
    environment
-   Encouraging local service providers to
    work together with residents, private,
    voluntary and community sector organi-
    sations in Local Strategic Partnerships

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
-   Ensuring central Government depart-
    ments fulfil their commitments
-   Overseeing the development of Local
    Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies
-   Administering the NRF
-   Monitoring the success of, and adapt,
    the National Strategy, utilising
    Neighbourhood Statistics
-   Operate a knowledge management sys-
    tem to share 'what works'

Neighbourhood Renewal Teams in Government Offices
-   Provide feedback on what is going on locally
-   Provide day-to-day support for Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)
-   Ensure public sector organisations are fully engaged in LSPs and that a diverse range of
    residents have been enabled to play a major role in shaping the strategy

Local Strategic Partnerships
-   Identify priority neighbourhoods
-   Develop an agreed plan, including targets, to turn them around (this may include changing
    the way existing services work, introducing new services, joining up existing services
    through sharing information, premises or staff, trying Neighbourhood Management, and ra-
    tionalising unnecessary plans and partnerships)

Neighbourhood action
-   Neighbourhood Management (or similar mechanisms): devolving power and responsibility
    to a neighbourhood manager or organisation. This could include running local services, de-
    volving budgets, making service level agreements with service providers, and putting pres-
    sure on higher tiers of Government to change the way services work
-   Resident involvement in developing a local plan for the neighbourhood through consultation
    and representation on the LSP
-   Action to fulfil Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy to tackle problems such as
    unemployment, crime, low skills, poor health, housing and the physical environment

(Taken from: Social Exclusion Unit, 2001: 57)

6.3.1　National leadership & joint working at national level: the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

"Lack of leadership and poor joint working at national level have bedevilled past efforts at regeneration", according to the Government. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) was created in April 2001 to lead and oversee the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is sited within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister but does not 'belong' to that, or any other, Department. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established after the 2001 elections as a central Department of State (or ministry). Its new responsibilities emphasise cross cutting regional and local government issues including regional policy, local government finance, planning, housing, urban policy and the Neighbourhood Renewal. The work of the NRU is overseen by a cross-departmental group of senior Ministers, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. A special unit co-ordinates the work of the departments and guards the consistency from a policy point of view. In addition, there are ministerial working groups on different aspects of Neighbourhood Renewal and there are teams on Neighbourhood Renewal in all relevant offices influencing the policies of these offices.

The Unit has "an open and outward-looking approach, and will be staffed by a mixture of civil servants and those with experience from outside. It will monitor the implementation and further development of the Strategy, and it will be responsible for a number of the funding streams" (Social Exclusion Unit 2001: 29). It works alongside all Government Departments and other partners to deliver broad based sustainable neighbourhood renewal. The Unit alone employs currently about 150 people.

Its key functions include:

- overseeing and supporting the central Government contribution to the national strategy on neighbourhood renewal;
- running key central funding streams;
- leading and mobilising key sectors;
- driving the skills and knowledge strand of the strategy, and
- monitoring the success of the strategy.

Information & learning

One of the main tasks of the Unit is to address the information barriers. The NRU leads a Skills and Knowledge strand of the Strategy to ensure that knowledge about what works is properly collected, disseminated and applied across projects and cities.

Neighbourhood Statistics

The Office for National Statistics is ordered to develop Neighbourhood Statistics, which can be used to diagnose, address and track the problems of very small areas.

Interdepartmental committee on community capacity

Community involvement is central to the NRS and in general to all Area-Based initiatives promoted by Government. This is reflected by the existence of a heavy interdepartmental committee on community capacity stimulation. A special team within the Unit is focussing on Community Participation. Representatives of communities across the country are advising the Government on this issue (Social Exclusion Unit 2001).

6.3.2   *Neighbourhood Renewal Teams in Government Offices for the Regions*

At the regional level, the NRU works closely together with Neighbourhood Renewal Teams in Government Offices for the Regions (GOs). Those teams will be the main interface with LSPs, are responsible for accrediting them, and have to intervene in case of trouble between LSP partners (in practice they will call in independent advisors first). They have an important task in the delivery of funding to communities. The Community Empowerment Fund and others are administered through GOs. So according to the Strategy, the direct day-to-day contacts with LSPs and even neighbourhoods are the business of the nine Government Offices for the Regions. Next to this, an important task is joining up regional activity, working closely with Regional Development Agencies and other regional players.

Their position seems to be rather weak when compared to central government. Comments on the neighbourhood level range from a "purely administrative body", with a task on monitoring and not much regulatory power, till "we do not know what they are doing or can do for us". What the NRU can do is much clearer and is set out in numerous documents and policy action plans. Moreover, the NRU itself wants to keep in close touch with the practices at the neighbourhood level. So, both the local and the central level have many reasons not to pass all interaction on to the in-between-level of the GOs.

6.3.3   *Direct communication between NRU and ´the ground´*

Given the weak profile and the limited possibilities of the GOs to fulfil a task in the communication between national and neighbourhood level, communication is still much stronger between local authorities and the NRU at central level. The NRU wants to think alongside with local projects and stay informed. This relatively tense involvement of the Government (the NRU) with local authorities and even neighbourhoods was confirmed by respondents at all divers levels of government. The weak link of the GOs in the chain is of concern for the head of the NRU who is worried by the fact that local authorities and neighbourhood representatives do regard communication with the NRU itself as more important and feel more supported by NRU than by the GOs (Discussion with Joseph Montgomery, The Hague, 3 September 2003).

The local authority of Newham is engaged in a ´tense discussion' with the GO for London, on financial matters and on the nature of experimental projects. But they do feel the need to also communicate directly with the office of the Deputy Prime Minister and with parliament: "It is a necessary PR exercise for us to make clear to government and parliament what we do achieve with and within our communities." The communication with the heart of Government is important to make sure 'Newham is on the map'. And drawing attention to specific local developments such as the fact that it has a very young and fast growing population and in housing a high level of asylum seekers and refugees

6.3.4   *Joining it up locally: Local Strategic Partnerships*

The compulsory Local Government Act 2000, required all local authorities in England to produce a community strategy to improve the co-ordination of services and development across their area from all relevant partners. The main vehicle for developing and implementing the community strategy is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), but other mechanisms fostering the participation of citizens can be chosen in addition. Emphasis was placed on the active involvement of local communities and voluntary organisations. So in theory citizens have a say in the translation and implementation of the targets of the national programmes on neighbourhoods. The first LSP began to develop from 2001 onwards. They are often chaired by the elected mayor, but occasionally also by a business representative, or a director of a public service. LSPs should have direct representation from neighbourhood

communities. In reality, this representation is not always significant. The LSP in Newham, on the contrary, claims its core consists out of representatives of the community forums. The LSP's are highly recommended and actively promoted but non-statutory. However, the 88 NRS neighbourhoods are obliged to have a LSP. Despite the fact that they have to depend on progress made in the LSP, and the fact that the LSP should decide where the NRF-money goes, local authorities stay accountable for the NRF and for Local NR Strategies. LSPs are involved in other issues than Neighbourhood Renewal, themes like regional economic development and child mortality are on their agenda as well.

Local Public Service Agreements

Local PSA's (Local Public Service Agreements) are voluntary partnership agreements between individual local authorities and the Government. Their aim is to improve key outcomes more quickly and/or to a higher level than would otherwise be the case for the residents of that area. With their partners, local authorities will decide upon 12 ambitious targets. In return the Government will provide start-up funding, agreed upon extra flexibility, and additional grant to authorities that hit their enhanced targets. Any local PSA should include a clear focus on deprivation (Social Exclusion Unit 2001: 26, 30).

Developing effective LSPs takes time

The Government recognises that it takes time to develop effective partnerships. In doing so, local authorities are reliant on securing the co-operation and participation of a range of local partners for such partnerships to work. The Government believes that in the majority of the most deprived areas of the country substantial progress has been made in developing strategic local partnership arrangements, mainly through developments such as the Local Government Association's New Commitment to Regeneration initiative, Health Action Zones, Crime and Disorder Partnerships and so forth.

The Government wants the emergence of Local Strategic Partnerships to build on the best models that are already functioning locally, in order not to set up separate and overlapping new partnership mechanisms. Continuation of support through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund will be conditional on effective Local Strategic Partnerships, which fully involve key local players, particularly voluntary groups and local communities.

6.3.5 Joining it up locally: Neighbourhood level

Community empowerment

The Government is committed to ensure that communities' needs and priorities are represented in neighbourhood renewal and that residents of poor neighbourhoods have the tools to get involved in whatever way they want. Effective engagement with the community is one of the most important aspects of LSPs work and they will have failed if they do not deliver this. It is a core job of many public services and special initiatives to consult with the communities they serve. The LSP should see it as a high priority to harness such efforts and add to them in a sustained and logical way. LSPs are expected not only to welcome involvement from these organisations and individuals, but to actively engage these actors. The Government is providing financial support (Community Empowerment Fund) so that communities and the voluntary sector have access to some resources of their own, specifically for this purpose.

Community involvement is considered a complex process and it takes at least the following steps:

  − outreach, especially to excluded communities, to raise awareness that they have the chance to express their views and directly influence service providers;

- facilitation to pull together the community's views and procedures for choosing community members of the LSP;

- participation of community members in sufficient numbers on the LSP, for which they might need training and other forms of support (e.g. pre-meetings, briefings), and

- Government Office action if an LSP does not engage with the community appropriately, and does not take sufficient account of community interests.

Many of these issues can best be approached at a small geographical scale. Rather the neighbourhood itself than the wider area the LSP covers. Special efforts need to be made to engage communities of interest who may not be concentrated in one place, and those who may be harder to reach because of language or access difficulties. Government realises that representing the differing (and sometimes conflicting) views of communities on a LSP can be tricky (Social Exclusion Unit 2001: 51, 52).

Neighbourhood Management

Neighbourhood Management is a radical solution to the problems of deprived neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood Management works by placing a single person, team or organisation in charge, someone local people can turn to if they face a problem. Neighbourhood managers, sometimes called pathfinders, are people "visibly taking responsibility at the sharp end". They can help services to focus on priorities of residents and customer needs by making service level agreements, running local services, managing a devolved budget and/or putting pressure on higher tiers of Government. Managers could be employed by either a Neighbourhood Management partnership or by a partner on the LSP, such as the local authority. Neighbourhood managers can be supported by neighbourhood forums and other methods of community involvement (Social Exclusion Unit 2001: 50, 51).

6.4   Output and outcome: results and weaknesses

In this paragraph we discuss the progress made so far, and highlight some tensions and critical points other than already discussed in previous paragraphs.

6.4.1   Evidence on outcomes

The Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies have only been in place since 2001, so it is hard to say somehting on its effectiveness and its influence. So far, there is only limited evidence on the outcomes. Besides that, the result and output of the Strategy can not easily be measured in isolation. As we have seen, the NRS builds on experiences from previous programmes. The programme can not be detached from other programmes aiming at the neighbourhood and local authority levels. Just like these programmes it introduces some new instruments and funding, but, next to that, the NRS is mainly aiming at fostering comprehensiveness, clearness on responsibility and mainstreaming.

The NRS did not start from scratch, so it may be judged against quit high standards. In fact, the Government itself set clear and fairly ambitious goals upon which it wants to achieve improvement supported by figures, both in terms of long-term goals and floor targets. Nonetheless, research and evaluation programmes only just started:

- the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is currently working on a performance management system to measure how objectives are translated into proceedings, for instance via ´Low level monitoring';

- the search for valid indicators on community involvement is in progress. The government is planning to evaluate the impact and outcomes of community involvement in neighbourhood renewal and will be examining the success of three of its funding programmes to promote community participation in neighbourhood renewal;

- measuring progress in citizens' participation. Currently the search for making quantifiable results in this area is in progress: how is small and slow progress in getting citizens involved in neighbourhood work accounted for against hard results on crime reduction, reduction of traffic accidents, etc.?, and

- neighbourhood statistics are being developed.

6.4.2   Results

Some of the most manifest results:

- the Strategy managed to set co-ordination between departments of Government and their programmes on the agenda and created safeguards to keep it there. The cross-departmental work is reviewed at the highest level;

- awareness of the need for joined working was raised at every single level,

- the Strategy succeeded in reallocating very large amounts of money to a limited number of deprived areas, and

- more resources and more personnel is available for the neighbourhoods.

6.4.3   Lacking behind

A reasonable level of basic services in the most deprived neighbourhoods of England is still not evident. To give some examples: Many authorities and residents are struggling to get rid of abandoned cars (a priority to many boroughs) in front yards, or to collect rubbish on time and prevent people to dump their waste (see projects in Newham and Brighton). Residents of social housing estates are asked to engage themselves in neighbourhood renewal consultation, but first want decent heating in their apartments.

Social housing is part of the NRS. Private renting, on the other hand, is not a core area in the Strategy but it does contain a large sector of people with no alternatives. Local authorities do not have the means to do what is necessary: address private owners and force them to take measures do secure decent living conditions. Only in a limited number of neighbourhoods direct and large-scale physical regeneration was carried out. "If only the physical state of our neighbourhood was on Dutch levels, we could spend all our resources on social and economic renewal."

6.4.4   Linking area based initiatives and vertical lines of government

The opportunities for collaboration and co-operation between the vertical levels of government - from neighbourhood to city, borough or district to regional to national - and area based initiative (ABI) programmes have not always been maximised. In addition, the emphasis on consumer and community involvement has frequently overestimated the strategic capacity available within a neighbourhood, particularly where there has been a multiplicity of initiatives. These were reasons for Government to commission research into the co-ordination of area based initiatives (Holman 2002). The main mid-term conclusions and implications for area-based policy which emerge from the research, and have to be addressed by the NRU, LSPs and others, are:

–   Whilst in local areas there is now some familiarity with ABIs and accommodation to the demands they place on local organisations, the continuing stream of initiatives represent an ongoing demand on local capacity.

–   Most ABIs represent a distraction from mainstreaming rather than a contribution to new ways of thinking responding to core problems in mainstream services. ABIs must be closely connected into the mainstream, and government – central and local – needs to make a major investment in the transfer of learning from ABIs into mainstream service delivery.

–   Government in the regions plays a helpful part in supporting ABIs and making links between them, but GOs (and the Regional Co-ordination Unit) have been as yet unable to resolve the conflicting requirements of different government departments. The drift apart of the economic and social agendas as a consequence of the respective roles of GOs and RDAs is a cause for major concern at local level.

–   Working in partnerships is complex, dependent on the history, geography, identity of the area, and on the vision, skills and behaviour of key individuals. It is through collaborative working and shared experience that partners learn to work together. Both local partners and central government need to value and make time for shared learning.

–   The speed at which localities can develop effective new ways of working in partnerships has been underestimated and the time needed should be thought through carefully. Partnership overload leads to ineffective joint working. There remains a major need for capacity building – in the statutory sector as much as in the voluntary/community sector if collaborative working is to become a reality.

–   Networks are a useful complement to formally structured collaboration and fulfil a need for interpersonal and inter-organisational exchange which avoids excessive bureaucracy. Encouragement, support and time should be devoted to effective networking.

–   There is widespread evidence of joined-up delivery, but this often occurs in an ad hoc manner dependent on the energy and imagination of individuals. More attention should be given to removing the obstacles and increasing the incentives to joint working.

–   Evaluation is focussed mainly on individual ABIs rather than on the examination of the effectiveness and impact of cross-cutting working. New methodologies of evaluation are needed to assess the ways in which ABIs contribute to integrated service delivery, and government in the regions should take a more pro-active role in bringing national and local evaluation together and in encouraging evaluation networking across initiatives.

–   There are inadequate mechanisms for ensuring that successful initiatives continue – whether in the mainstream or as projects – and little understanding of, or commitment to, long-term sustainability. (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit 2002: 128/129)

6.4.5   Bottom-up or top-down after all?

In theory the introduction by Government of new 'floor targets' across all policy areas addressed by the strategy can cause tensions with the starting points of LSPs planning and leading the strategy at a neighbourhood level. Thus the question is: do communities really plan? How are the national targets broken down at the local level?

The NRU stresses the bottom-up character of the Strategy. Local authorities only have to fulfil a few conditions to receive funding, one of which is the existence of a LSP. Our respondents from the

NRU gave as an example their limited possibilities to intervene from their level in the affairs of a local partnership, even when there is hard information that a certain LSP could do much better.

Some observers and community representatives say the Government is interfering so much that the idea of putting neighbourhood communities in 'the drivers seat' is under pressure (Government tries to intervene already in an early stage to make local strategies fit into the national framework, in some cases overruling proposals made by residents). The Government moved itself in a difficult position by on the one hand proclaiming community participation as central to deliver the Strategy on the ground, whereas on the other hand putting heavy emphasis on measurable targets, on monitoring and on fast progress in the implementation of projects. The latter occurred, some say, driven by a strong believe in measurability and by fear of being attacked in case the Government can not put forward clear evidence that the money is invested properly. A New deal for Consultants or for Communities? (Dijkstra 2003).

Our respondents at the local and neighbourhood level recognise this tension but are more or less satisfied with the freedom to translate the National Strategy and its commitments to their neighbourhoods. "Government is setting floor targets. Not all are relevant to all neighbourhoods: a neighbourhood can already meet up to some of them on a certain field" (Hollingdean). They do not consider the strategy as a dictate. Within the national framework, there is a 'huge scope for allocation' of the budgets (Newham), so even in financial terms there is enough freedom to move. Nevertheless, they admit having to engage over and over again in discussions on outputs: be accounted for getting "numbers through the door, or be accounted on the quality of outputs, on how many youngsters are helped for the longer term." At least, it can be said that the local level feels not intimidated by the need to show quantifiable results.

In addition, direct discussion between the NRU and Newham is going on concerning 'risk-taking'. According to Newham this is the cornerstone of neighbourhood renewal. As an example they presented the discussion on whether or not problem kids should be 'rewarded' by handing out free gym memberships. The example shows that there is a healthy debate between central Government and the local level on the content of the Strategy, not only on accountability. However, it shows at the same time that the involvement of the centre in local projects can go far.

6.4.6   The voice of the residents in the LSP?

Is the LSP connected to other, older or more local forums such as area committees or neighbourhood committees and is that where the real participation takes place? Do LSPs try to build bridges between public and private sectors? Do LSPs use the power of informal networks in local communities? The (first) answers on these questions give a mixed picture. But local practice indicates that the interplay between the level of formal networks aimed at external intervention and the level of informal networks aimed at 'spontaneous' community development is still limited. In the Neighbourhood of Hollingdean, the LSP for Brighton and Hove is seen as 'on distance'. Hollingdean is 'on board from the beginning', although not represented directly. The LSP is in pace since spring 2002 and is still struggling with what its tasks exactly are, according to the respondents. A Neighbourhood Renewal review group functions at city level. The citizens' participation in the group is not strong. 'Talking about mainstreaming means involvement of all services and of citizens on strategic (read: city, not only neighbourhood) level as well.' The Newham LSP seems to be well underway in transferring responsibility and money to community forums in the neighbourhoods.

6.4.7   Complaints on the organisation of the Strategy

Main complaints are to be heard on the organisation of the strategy and all it's different branches and ways of funding, and less complaints are heard regarding the national guidance. NRS started to

bring more cohesion and co-ordination into the different programmes and initiatives, a broadly appreciated effort. There is still a long way to go, so it seems. On the different levels of policy itself there seems to be clearness, vision and willingness to co-operate to a high degree. The relationships between those levels are less solid and clear.

Newham, 'for decades underfunded' can surely use the money, but is 'quite unhappy' with having to allocate 23 million pounds in 18 months. 'Drops in the ocean' or not, even for a large borough like Newham (230.000 inhabitants) spending this amount of money in such a short period of time is no sinecure. They 'already broke the rule' and continue deciding were the money should go after the deadline. 'We want to do it more community oriented.' And that takes time.

The numerous ways of funding by Government departments, but also by charities are demanding. 'We decided to stop putting our hand out for a while' (Newham). "What comes across as a bit confusing at the end of the day are all the different lines of financing and leadership. Lots of people and projects are funded out of targeted fundings" (Hollingdean). The jobs of local authority officials in Brighton and Hollingdean sometimes resemble those of workers in the voluntary sector: constantly busy raising money.

They have local authority lead projects, projects lead by charities, by regional Development Agencies, by the Home Office, by the Educational Office. All funded separately, all aimed at different objectives, but often at the same target groups. For example, there are 4 programmes addressing children currently running in Hollingdean.

The confusion and bureaucracy on the ground did not yet disappear. As a side-effect the special funds are sometimes creating rivalry between neighbourhoods, some can spend much more than others can (Dijkstra 2003).

Asked for the complexity the first answer, from the side of the NRU, is: 'It has to be a complicated picture, because the problems are complicated. If they were simple we would have solved them yesterday.' Nevertheless, this and previous governments seem to be, at least partly, responsible for the complexity. After Labour came to power a tremendous amount of programmes and national initiatives was launched in the rush to deal with the severe problems in cities. Add to that the considerable amount of projects out of private funding and chaos is lying on the brink. A new, complex, initiative to co-ordinate previous competing programmes was needed.

That the Government is struggling in order to prevent the complexity to stand in the way of effectiveness is shown by the attention at the national level given to co-ordination. The willingness to simplify things is there. But some keep their doubts about the route chosen: 'People wonder if neighbourhoods need such a big national head, if the money is not better invested in the neighbourhoods themselves.'

6.4.8   *The continuation of mainstreaming*

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is, although quite substantial, in itself is just 'a drop in the ocean'. The NRU and actors at local level agree on this point. The NDC is more substantial in financial terms, but limited to 39 small neighbourhoods. And even this amount of money is insufficient to narrow the gap between the deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country. (Let it be clear: the funds do help. Newham had 3 years ago 5 people working on youth crime. Now 70 people working on 50 more projects are involved.)

The overall purpose of the neighbourhood strategy is to influence 'mainstream budgeting' and to change the behaviour of mainstream agencies, by experiments and pilots. Mainstream agencies should concentrate more on the vulnerable neighbourhoods and on joining up with other services

and with the communities themselves to create a comprehensive neighbourhood approach. The NRF-money should help setting the changes into motion. But was it for the money only, the change would not occur. Reality and research show how difficult this will be: the NRS and NRF–funded initiatives are sometimes seen as yet another additional programme or project. There is a risk, especially when there are so many holes in services to be filled-up, that it will splinter into hundreds of projects.

And what if the political wind changes? Or what if bad economic weather will reduce the amount of funding? Will the services not fall back to their old levels and ways of operating? The culture change –from a schoolteacher previously having to deal with 26 different agencies, to one employee based at school working for several partners- should be under way by then, Newham believes. And besides that: the new commitments are firmly written down, at all levels.

6.5   Conclusions

The relevant outcomes of this case for the Swiss context will be presented here. To start with: it is hard to compare the challenges that Swiss and English cities are facing. The level of deprivation is of a different order. And so are the statistics on the level of urbanisation and on the percentage of ethnic minority groups living in the cities and on the length of their presence in English cities. Above we discussed the position of the social housing sector in society and the enormous challenge the England is facing regarding the physical regeneration of neighbourhoods.

6.5.1   *Regional governance*

Regarding governance at the level of regions and agglomerations, the contribution of this case study is limited. The steering capacity of administrative bodies on this level seems to be limited in England. Most issues are dealt with by either local authorities or the Government, or by direct co-operation between those levels. There is evidence of limited co-operation between regional agencies (RDA, GOs), although the greatest obstacles are recognised by government and attempts to strengthen regional government, including a democratisation, (either directly or by representatives of local authorities, the voluntary sector or communities) is set into motion.

The level of 'the region' in continental European terms sometimes resembles the British local authority level, which varies in growth, but can easily obtain 300.000 inhabitants. Our view of the co-ordination on this level undertaken by local authorities is however too limited to make any statements.

6.5.2   *Income policy*

What is striking is that the NRS is not at all about income levels or income policy. Given the fact that compared to European standards levels of financial assistance are relatively low, one would have expected a strategy or at least a discussion on the level of a vital minimum income for those not able to work, or on the problem of the working poor.

With all the differences in context, and with all the criticisms (the vertical relationships being a major point of concern) that can be addressed to the Strategy (see in much more detail paragraph 4), the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy contains interesting and appealing elements for the development of (social) urban policies in Switzerland. We want to highlight the following elements:

- Horizontal co-operation and co-ordination: joint working in the Government, in LSPs and in neighbourhood management.

- The way urban problems are addressed in the heart of central government.

- The way the Strategy was developed: policy action teams, the input of practitioners and others on the ground is clearly visible.

- Innovative elements: Long-term vision, sharp targets, key commitments, neighbourhood statistics.

- Although it brings along certain pitfalls (you can manipulate figures, it can lead to copying), setting floor targets is a courageous and ambitious attempt: No satisfaction with raising average levels.

- The focus on mainstreaming and sustainable changes in stead of running short-lived projects only.

- The necessity of working on Community involvement that is brought to the heart of government.

- The fact that local authorities are accountable but a LSP is deciding. It urges the authority to take other partners on board right from the start. So, the development of a local strategy, and not only its implementation, becomes a matter of joined action.

- The attention given to learning, information-sharing, dissemination.

- Innovations in policy areas as: youth policy, involving local communities, inter-cultural actions.

Addendum

1.   Respondents

Nicky Cambridge, manager Neighbourhood Renewal Hollingdean (Brighton and Hove local authority).

Tina Chande, Community Participation policy advisor, Community Participation team, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

Bill Feinstein, Skills and Knowledge team leader, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

Angela Freeman, resident, chair of the Partnership Community, Hollingdean, Brighton and Hove.

Dave Nicholls, programme manager, responsible for the integration of the area-based initiatives in Hollingdean (Brighton and Hove local authority).

Peter Nicholson, head of Youth Offending Services, Newham Youth Offending Team.

Jane Woolley, head of Neighbourhood Renewal, Newham.

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www.newham.gov.uk

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7. Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

In this final chapter, we bring together the most fundamental, and sometimes remarkable, observations from the previous case studies. We will link them with the threats and challenges for Swiss cities. A first draft of this chapter, presented as elements for discussion, served as a starting point for an expert meeting where representatives of the country cases and a number of Swiss key players and experts were gathered. The outcomes of the expert meeting are used to complete the issues highlighted in this chapter and to formulate the recommendations.

We do not pretend to give a comprehensive summary or comparison of the previous case studies. The goal of this exploratory survey was to sample and analyse potentially interesting or useful elements within the Swiss context. Moreover, the readers might be interested in other themes or developments than those chosen to be highlighted here. This chapter can not replace reading (substantial parts of) the survey.

First we discuss developments, opinions and strategies related to vertical co-ordination and co-operation. Secondly, we focus on horizontal relationships, such as the co-operation between cities, between cantons or regional bodies, and the policy integration and new networks on the level of cities and agglomerations. The horizontal and vertical relationships and divisions of responsibilities are, however, not always easily seperated. In a third paragraph, we present some policy innovations in specific domains. The fourth paragraph discusses questions of (financial) solidarity in the relationships between and at different policy levels. The final paragraph gives a few recommendations. It summarises also some of the discussions at the expert meeting in order to better situate and understand these recommendations.

7.1   New governance between different levels: Roles and responsibilities in vertical relationships?

Why is there a need for renewal of vertical relationships? In key words this need comes from:

- New interdependencies;

- the growing complexity of policy structures and the need for better implementation, and

- 'new' views on governance: voluntarism versus legalism, subsidiarity versus straightforward (unconditional) decentralisation.

7.1.1   About the relation between levels: understanding new interdependencies and the need for mutual assistance

We have seen throughout this study that cities do not face problems on their own. Even in the decentralised field of local social policy higher levels of government can play a supportive role and have, under influence of the prominence of urban problems, entered or re-entered the scene. This trend seems to be apparent in more centralist-organised states, but also in federal states like Switzerland.

Not only higher levels get increasingly involved in urban themes. Within numerous municipalities, intra-municipal decentralisation has emerged as a significant development, ranging from elected

district councils, borough councils and district committees to community boards. This intra-munici-pal decentralisation seems, in almost every situation, to have two goals:

– strengthening the legitimacy of local politics, and

– bringing implementation of policies to a higher level.

So, on the one hand cities face an increase of scale as a result of growing interdependencies on the scale of agglomerations, of nation-wide converging tendencies and even of international interde-pendencies. On the other hand, due to the decrease of scale and "proximity politics" and the concen-tration of problems within cities, they face de-concentration and decentralisation. Of course, the divergent histories of countries and cities still produce significant differences, but this "double-movement-trend" is occurring everywhere. The nature of the Swiss confederation and its very dis-tinct (power) relations between its levels of government makes it hard to carry on easily these lines of thought from the more centralised states like the United Kingdom or France to Switzerland. Swiss society is influenced by the same tendencies, and although different in absolute terms of power and influence, the relative shifts are more or less in the same directions.

7.1.2   *Structural complexity and the need for better implementation*

We have observed very complex policies and relationships: the responsibilities for implementation of the RMI in France, the NRS in England, and the MCP in the Netherlands (which is also struggling with complexity in its social security system). Even if there is a certain logic in the distribution of roles between central, departmental and local governments, this logic is often not systematic, nor is it clear for everyone. This distribution is partly the result of political and institutional power games (in the past).

Solutions to this problem can be found in:

– more clarity about the existing division of responsibilities between the levels;

– structural changes to improve the logical distribution of responsibilities and improve the quality of implementation at all levels;

– a generalised decentralisation;

– new forms of subsidiarity, and

– more (voluntary) willingness to co-operate.

In the last two solutions new views on governance come into the picture (although subsidiarity and voluntarism in governance are not new in itself).

Subsidiarity

Good results are too often reached in spite of the structural complexity. This costs a lot of energy that could be saved. Among those opting for structural changes, there is a debate on decentralisation as a solution for better integration of services. But further decentralisation in itself will not always resolve the problem. The promoters of decentralisation seem to forget the power games that will continue between the different levels and partners involved.

A well-organised system of subsidiarity among the different governance levels seems to be interest-ing. Three major variables should define the rules of such subsidiarity regulations:

– the importance of distance vs. proximity;

– the reality of different contexts, and

– the importance of equality vs. specificity.

One should look carefully to define the best level for tackling each specific matter. It is clear, for example, that proximity is of most importance to put into practice good individual integration plans, both socially and economically. The living environment of people is essentially the neighbourhood and to some respect the city or the commune. It is important for social services to be present and to organise at that level. To monitor and evaluate, on the contrary, a certain distance has its advantages. With further decentralisation these roles – usually fulfilled on higher levels – risk becoming less important, which could in turn have a negative effect on local mobilisation and activity. Regional and national levels are more appropriate for these purposes. To organise and plan employment integration or social housing it seems that the level of the agglomeration is more appropriate than the level of the city, since the local labour and housing markets contexts are more agglomerational.

Governments respond to the subsidiarity trend by delegating responsibilities downwards (France and Switzerland) to cities, who uplift these – voluntarily and responding to the search for an appropriate scale – to the agglomeration or regional level.

Does this mean that the agglomeration level should become a new *statutory* level of government? Or should this level – responding to new ideas about good governance – remain a *voluntarist* partnership structure?

Looking for the appropriate mix

It seems less appropriate to follow general options like decentralisation, deregulation and privatisation. Each situation, domain or issue should be studied in order to find the most appropriate governance mix.

Decentralisation and discretionary relief

In the debate on the local versus national level positioning of social security arrangements there are viewpoints on such a mix that seem to offer a paradox.

In Norway we saw that some of those in favour of co-ordinated and integrated individual care – tailor-made interventions as close to the people concerned as possible – on municipal or, if possible, even neighbourhood level, want to centralise part of the social security arrangements to a higher level. They plead for a central co-ordination of benefits while social services will remain at local level. The advantage is that it creates time for guidance, as no more time will be lost by time-consuming financial assessments. The idea is to improve efficiency by transferring financial arrangements to the national level. At the same time, there are voices pleading to decentralise even more social benefit arrangements. The advantage is that this makes local co-ordination across several areas of intervention possible. They want to be able to do more with their limited amount of time and with their local knowledge, and not only give financial assistance but also immaterial quality care. They want to reduce the complexity of co-ordination between the levels, and reduce the variety in financial regulations horizontally, not because they are against tailor-made arrangements for the individual receiver of benefits, but because they want to cut back the (financial) bureaucracy that every single town sees itself confronted with. Moreover, they hope to enlarge transparency for clients and (social) workers alike.

Other "centralists" are first of all concerned with the lack of control of the national level when it comes to the implementation of national legislation at the local level. They want national government to impose minimum standards for services and financial transfers delivered at the local level.

7.1.3   The need for constant shifting between scales in taking policy actions

Several years of national urban policy in different European countries clearly showed the need for working on all different scales and the need for constant shifting between these scales. Depending on the nature of a social problem, governments on all levels should be able to adjust their policies.

The neighbourhood focus proved its value, and made clear that general policies are not sufficient. It led to a re-discovery of the residents, or the local community, as a potential partner in policy making. It led also to the formulation of problems and solutions at grassroots level, in close collaboration with those involved (residents, clients, small business, housing companies, social workers and representatives of services like schools and health care centres). Linking the efforts of these new partnerships to the cities' policy processes, i.c. in making municipal services more demand oriented and district oriented, does not prove to be easy (although in some cities quite substantial shift in budgets and personnel towards districts has been effectuated). It is a question of structural change (budget shifts, well-paid municipal district officers' jobs) and it requires a cultural shift in local administrations.

The limits of such an approach, i.e. an a priori choice for the neighbourhood or district, have become clear to observers, but not to all administrations yet. Let there be no misunderstanding: focusing resources and personnel on those areas and people who need it most, and in that way working on more demand oriented public services is essential to improve the quality of life for people in those areas. It prevents services and other institutions from hiding behind rules and regulations and from denial of developments that do take place in reality. But it can not go without a constant debate on how national (federal) or regional (cantonal) policies interact with local actions. Now, while that notion may touch on common ground, it is complicated for governments (and their public and private partners) to invest in understanding, let alone influencing processes going on at the regional or agglomerational level.

7.1.4   Consequences for the roles of different government levels

After presenting these more fundamental themes above, we now want to raise some points of discussion regarding the roles and responsibilities of the different levels. First, in this paragraph with the vertical relationships in mind. In the next paragraph from a horizontal perspective.

The perspective of the national level

We presented some noteworthy examples in this study:

- We see that separate national government ministries join the municipal administrations in thinking about new strategies and projects. They extend their core business of national guidance and control. When not co-ordinated, this new involvement can have unintended consequences (cities and neighbourhoods being over-demanded by projects and initiatives);

- Where a common (national) urban policy is emerging it can contribute to the quality of (social) urban policy. With all shortcomings, the main achievement of a nation-wide urban policy – whether leaning on the national level (England), or on national government and cities alike (The Netherlands) or on tripartite structures (Switzerland) – is that it can contribute highly to the linking of policy goals and programmes to each other and to the exchange of ideas. This achievement is especially important in a situation in which on several important fields the competencies have been decentralised over the years (or have always been primarily a local responsibility) without simultaneously strengthening the conditions for local policy making. Instruments for evaluation, monitoring and mutual

> learning, like visits by external experts, politicians from other cities and self-evaluation by cities, can contribute to that.

– Regions, provinces or cantons have started entering the arena of local social policy in countries where before that was not part of their responsibilities. The provinces in the Netherlands e.g. also focus on strengthening regional co-operation, partly because of the administrative vacuum in tackling social problems that calls for a regional approach.

In Switzerland the cantons, with agglomerations within their boundaries, might fulfil their tasks with a growing sense of urgency and take up responsibilities in the field of urban development, in that of the tensions between cities and their surrounding communes, the mobility of people and the differences in taxes and services levels (cities host special services in care, in culture, etceteras; rural communes often lack basic services). Besides being challenges for politicians and administrations in themselves, these aspects ask for a redefining of (financial) solidarity between and within government levels. As an alternative, cantons could transfer responsibilities to either the federal level or the cities.

In this respect, the central question that returns time after time is how to strengthen both national leadership and local (c.q. regional) autonomy?

By following the open method of co-ordination?

The actual regulation of the French RMI has a number of characteristics that are similar to the European Union's open method of co-ordination. Missions and targets are centrally defined (or commonly agreed), but local authorities can decide on the methods and means for realisation of these missions and targets. With the further decentralisation of the RMI this principle becomes even stronger. Strong points of the French RMI are the large but strict frameworks in which local governments (departments) have to function.

But how sharp are the targets set? How large is the freedom of local authorities? And how strict the framework? The British and Dutch cases show us that these questions are crucial:

– Goals formulated at the national and (partly) local level can be too vague and broad, not enough focused on reducing the problem itself. Especially goals formulated on social issues do often lack a sharp end.

– Cities are not always able to define clear targets: programmes of the cities show a lack of variation and local specificity (and a lot of copying).

– As a consequence, city programmes sometimes are not enough tailor-made. Cities do not define how they will prioritise and how they will try to meet the goals within their specific context.

– Furthermore, most goals were formulated as organisational-administrative goals, rather than goals in terms of a problem in society in need of a solution.

Or by a movement from setting specific goals, to setting a common agenda?

To what extent should a central, federal or even confederal government try to formulate goals? Of course, these are political goals after all and can be set at the national level. There are nevertheless reasons to abstain from this. As seen in the Dutch case, setting nation-wide specific goals was not the most successful part of the urban policy anyway and might add to the a-political, technocratic impression of urban policy. Do all cities want the same? Do they pursue the same goals? Are there no conflicting goals to deal with? An answer might be to formulate fewer goals and investing more in common efforts to set a local or preferably regional agenda. And this with a maximum of freedom

for regions to translate the general goals to their own situation, and to formulate their own strategies. (The latest developments in Dutch MCP go in that direction.) Working on a common agenda for the region can boost a sense of a genuine shared ownership of problems.

Better indicators should be developed

Can a set of goals or indicators be constructed that is limited enough and yet sensitive enough to really measure progress in the vitality and liveability of cities and city districts? Monitoring could prove more effective when it will be more closely aimed at effects and outcome, rather than at output (= programmes and projects set into pace). Then they can at least tell something about the relative effectiveness of cities and of (governmental) services.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in England tries to proceed in that way. Can a country do without any comparable indicators or parameters after all?

Improving the quality of local policies is as important as accountability

Ideally, the local government's view on specific urban problems is heard by the national government. The national government has experts who can serve as advisors on the basis of relevant experience with, and knowledge of, 'good' and 'bad' practices. Of course accountability is crucial, and the municipality must demonstrate that resources were used effectively. It is also true that the formulation of accountability criteria harbours the danger of homogenising tendencies. It is therefore essential that – in addition to this form of 'accountability' – the national government also contributes substantially to municipal governments: with ideas, by providing access to national and international examples of good and bad practices, but also by encouraging risk–taking and experimenting and by granting free space. Improving quality can also be a national government's task.

Following the English example of working with policy action teams (with participants from all levels, and with civil servants and practitioners) would enhance mutual learning and mutual understanding of (un) intended consequences. This would the also increase the sensitivity of different actors for the combined efforts of different policies. Tripartite working groups with a broad agenda, should be – or should be brought – in the position to achieve the same.

Regional and local level perspective

Continuous fights about establishing formalised co-operation between municipalities and between them and provinces or cantons cause frustration and mistrust. Perhaps, the voluntary nature of co-operation has to be emphasised more. Cities and provinces / cantons can search for co-operation on the basis of complementarity (make use of the difference between main cities and surrounding smaller / rural municipalities) to avoid the side effects of competition (every municipality competing to have al the good and keep out all the bad). We mentioned some positive indicators:

–   work on a regional agenda, linked to new local agendas;

–   provincial / cantonal urban policies aimed at learning, exchange, identifying common interests, etceteras.

A nation-wide urban policy, even for Switzerland?

"Each disadvantage has its advantage" (Johan Cruyff)

A nation-wide urban policy – regardless of its specific form – can contribute greatly to structural and cultural improvements in dealing with local social (urban) policy. Having said that, the main challenge is to prevent any form of nation-wide urban policy, be it comprehensive, be it on specific domains (e.g. social assistance) from becoming a bureaucratic operation. How to prevent the important

notion of integrality from becoming a meaningless mantra? How to prevent urban policy from becoming a circuit of ongoing but rather powerless projects?

The diverse and complex Swiss picture – 26 different policy-systems, various centres of gravity – could prove to be a blessing in disguise. It might prevent the Swiss, regardless which forms of Swiss federal urban policies (or should we say inter-cantonal?) may develop, from falling into uniformity and bureaucratic abstractness. It can be an advantage too for building the right conditions to a situation-specific analysis of a region or agglomeration. Of course: one should be keen on learning from others and should have the will to engage in new forms of co-operation. Cantons could be more active in setting the social agenda, which means: no prescriptions, but showing that they do bother about social problems, not exclusive for, but concentrated in cities.

Cantons and their committees and working groups (e.g. CDAS) could (further) explore the path towards:

− Trying to enhance stimulating policy initiative (experimenting);

− Facilitate the exchange of information and ideas;

− Take care of integrated policies. Tear down the old walls between the domains on all levels by focusing on the joint efforts needed to solve complex problems of urban regions;

− Work together in building an agenda for (social) urban renewal. Beside a national agenda (starting point the existing tripartite working groups?) cantons and cities could work on area based regional agendas;

− The agenda should contain working on common definitions of:

  − Most urgent problems

  − Understanding the nature of those problems and the best level to tackle them

  − Finding win – win situations or deals to improve complementarity and avoid competition: strong regions need strong cities and vice versa

  − Ways of creating mutual advantages by co-operation between communes.

7.2 New governance on different levels: ways of horizontal co-operation and co-ordination

7.2.1 Central level

At the central government level there are good reasons for further strengthening the internal co-ordination within Government, between departments and offices. If one strives for more integrated policies – is the argument – then there has to be more co-ordination at all levels. Co-ordination units can do this by combined task forces, by interdepartmental working groups or liaison-officers in all relevant departments.

The risk of these specific co-ordinating bodies is that their activities remain marginal within each department or in relation to specialised offices. An exception to this can be found in the U.K. where the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is situated in the deputy prime ministers office and has regular meetings of high ranked government officials form all departments. This means that such bodies can be influential, if they are situated at a sufficient high political level.

Another way to achieve more co-ordinated action at national level is that one department leaves the overall responsibilities for specific territories (neighbourhoods) to another department. Such exam-

ple can be found in the Dutch Major City Policy, where the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment (VROM) leaves its responsibility in some very vulnerable neighbourhoods (but with reasonable housing conditions) to the Ministry of Social Welfare (VWS). The argument is that the Department with the biggest tasks in a certain territorial area could take the lead in integrated policy development.

7.2.2   Inter-city co-operation

Co-operation between cities is of limited importance for the direct implementation of local social policy. This does not mean that it is not important, but its functioning is indirect. On the one hand it can defend the interests of cities in a collective, and thus powerful. way to other governance levels. On the other hand it can foster mutual learning and support. Examples of this can be found in all countries within the associations of cities. Some of the co-operation activities are in specific domains.

In the Netherlands, positive results have been achieved with the development of common instruments for monitoring and evaluation. These were a combination of self-evaluation and visits of external experts, deputy mayors (aldermen) from other cities and representatives from the Provincial Executives. Furthermore, pools of experts have been formed to act as advisors "on demand" of cities.

In several provinces the provincial government plays an active role in setting up a network of cities to organise mutual learning and support in a more common regional context (than nation wide).

Even if co-ordination at national level and inter-city co-operation are important, the central issues about horizontal co-operation in our study are on the local level. It is about co-operation between cities and their surrounding communes (agglomerations, urban regions) and it is about co-operation between different partners within cities.

7.2.3   Co-operation in regions and agglomerations

In the countries of this study, the level of the agglomeration is not a formal government level; it is a voluntary organisation (association) of municipalities. This means, as we already stressed, that competencies for this level can only be defined by delegation from the lower level. In a number of cases these are competencies that already were delegated to the municipalities from an upper level. In spite of this complexity, we did not hear suggestions to make agglomerations another formal government level. In France, they have a proper associative status, regulated by government. In the Netherlands there is an ongoing discussion about the introduction of such a status.

Where a proper status exists, there are positive opinions about the degree of voluntarism, based on shared common insights, and the willingness to set a common agenda.

Nevertheless, we noted reluctance to co-operate, coming from different actors, related to their relative power at the region or agglomeration level, and thus how much they have to loose on power by leaving competencies (most often by delegation) to another level. In the Netherlands cities (municipalities) have most to loose, in France the departments, in Switzerland the cantons. In England neither cities nor regional bodies have any say about the future of the regions. Only central government decides on this.

There is not much to learn form England and The Netherlands concerning effective ways of formalised co-operation. On the other hand, authorities in those countries have been forced to struggle or work together for a long time now, by the sheer prominence of old and new, fast developing urban regions, to a much higher degree than those in Switzerland. In that sense, there is a lot of experience, be it positive or negative, and it would be interesting to study these urbanisation processes and their

urban societies as such. One of the lessons learned from the Netherlands is that an exclusive focus of the cities on the surrounding municipalities joining a "city region" structure in order to solve the cities' problems, has been a mistake. Essential for co-operation within urban regions is the reciprocity between cities and the surrounding communes, taking into account the interests of all partner communes involved. This is pleading for using the differences and searching for complementarity, and thus reducing or avoiding the negative consequences of competition. Both the tendency towards homogenisation and competition lead to sub-optimal outcomes of policy: too much shopping centres, too much industrial sites, too little new affordable social housing, etceteras. There is also sub-optimal use of knowledge and infrastructure in the cities (e.g. on care, while at the same time there are shortages in care on the countryside). The focus on formal co-operation and on fights with neighbouring municipalities makes cities miss the facts and actual developments.

7.2.4   *Joining it up locally: local partnership relations*

As to local partnerships, a main issue for debate is the question how local government can fulfil its desired leading role, e.g. in creating integrated services on work and income or in regulating and directing neighbourhood renewal. Local government finds itself often in a situation with major players or interests that can not or do not want to be steered because of important financial interests or because those actors are organised on a different scale and are accountable to others.

In such situations local authorities have to adapt their role constantly:

-   It has to be leading in situations where it cannot expect partners to act easily in function of public interest. This could e.g. be the case when local government looks for a place to situate a centre for the homeless or for drug addicts;

-   It has to be regulating in situations where there is lack of good rules for living together. This could be the case in traffic issues;

-   Sometimes local government should only mediate between partners that have all possibilities and competencies to solve their problems, but who need each other and have difficulties in finding ways for collaboration;

-   In other cases, local government plays a purely facilitating role for individual actors.

All levels accumulate at the district or the neighbourhood level. Integration of services, the collaboration, and mutual learning, of professionals in the field are therefore essential.

That social problems can not be solved without joined efforts from the economic and physical sectors is something that sounds logical to most policy makers and professionals. But it is also the other way round: problems of a physical-spatial origin can not be addressed properly without expertise from the social sector. Public spaces (railway stations, parks, squares), residential areas and even complete neighbourhoods cannot be build or restructured without knowledge of, and permanent monitoring of, movements and developments in the social sphere.

7.3   Innovation in social policies

We selected the cases for this study not only because of new ways of governance between and within levels of government and related to civil society, but also to come across remarkable renewal in strategies and approaches to tackle negative developments and strengthen positive ones. We briefly mention these examples here again. They are described in more detail in the former chapters.

7.3.1   Area-based policies: the need to focus policy

The knowledge that it is more favourable to think situation-specific in stead of problem oriented gained influence during the last decade. This implies that one has to start from the threats and opportunities of an area and the people that live there, in order to tackle the situation in an integrated way.

At the same time, this focus on specific areas has problematic sides. It can reinforce bad images ("wrong postal codes") and thus frustrate attempts to recover places or communities. The U.K. government showed the courage to address these problems in a rather unorthodox, straightforward way by focusing its neighbourhood policy on the 88 most vulnerable neighbourhoods. Perhaps there was no other choice given the state of these 88 neighbourhoods. The Dutch government now follows with a – less ambitious – 56 neighbourhoods' plan.

7.3.2   Mainstreaming and improving existing services

Single projects, how well funded they might be, remain "drops in the ocean" if they are not adopted or integrated in the mainstream at the longer run. Starting short-lived projects without a vision of their continuation often occurs. A clear commitment to influence mainstream budgeting and changing the behaviour of mainstream agencies, as in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, aims at a culture change within organisations and in structural shifts in the way resources are used. Of course, setting these changes into motion asks for experiments and pilots. But should these actions still be funded without a clear vision on their contribution to mainstreaming?

7.3.3   Integration of services on work and income

Although with limited success in terms of outcome, due to continuing complexity in the structures and power games between partners, but with 85% of all claimants on individual contracts, the French case showed us important conditions for integration of services at grass roots level. We mention:

– Integration contracts: One of the specificities of the French RMI is the principle of an integration contract between the authorities and each claimant. The basic idea is that the authorities have to offer an integration programme to each claimant. The claimant then, by signing a contract, commits him- or herself to the terms of that programme;

– A broad perspective on social and economic integration, with attention for the housing and health situation of the unemployed. It is considered necessary for the individual claimant, and also a way to improve the performance of the system;

– Collaboration between the labour exchange and the municipal social service within the so-called mixed support teams;

– The integration logbook is another interesting feature of the approach in Rennes;

– The need to overcome that networking and professional innovation only depends on the voluntarism of some workers. Continuity is secured with consolidation of good working relationships between workers of different institutions through partnership contracts between their institutions, and by official dissemination of the content of innovative approaches;

– What is important to note is that often these forms of service delivery are introduced for efficiency reasons, while our respondents insist on the fact that the effect is situated more on the efficacy side.

7.3.4 Creation of (demand driven) integrated services

Conditions

- The creation of demand driven services (as in the case of the Centres for Social Services Delivery in Madrid) needs careful preparation. It can provoke new demand or bring to the surface a previously non-recognised demand.

- Flexibility when in operation: creating a strong and workable structure without building a rigid and/or permanent institution. Changes need to be made and the structure has to be able to adapt to new developments and be open to these in order to be successful. This is an ongoing learning process.

- What was felt as essential in the experience in Madrid in setting up the centres was political and economic support. The political parties gave high priority to social services as such while before these were not on top of the priority list.

The introduction of the Centres, functioning as one-stop-shop, turns out to have the following advantages:

- There is exchange of information and communication between the three levels of government; this is remarkable since in most cases direct co-operation of the Social Service Centres is limited to one level of government.

- Procedures have been simplified and general criteria have been developed on how to proceed in the different areas of service.

- The opportunity to systematically collect data as input for management processes.

- An image of increased and good quality of services is established.

- The increased motivation in general among the workforce, a lot of young people entered the centres as social workers or in other functions.

- The proximity to citizens turns out to be a success factor, it created the possibility to work with case managers, it gave an improved insight into the needs of citizens and due to this success more clients came to the centres.

7.3.5 The labour market & modernising social security

The labour market remains (Norway) or is becoming (the Netherlands) the most important tool in social policy of all to combat poverty and social exclusion of families and children. Nevertheless, it is more and more recognised that "modern poverty" asks for keeping systems of relief and social care up to date. This means to have appropriate levels of assistance, a good quality of care, and re-thinking of the division of responsibilities and tasks between the different levels of government. This importance given to a good "safety net" is regardless the importance given to integration on the labour market. In the U.K., however this trend is the least visible.

7.3.6 Modern family policy

The Norwegian case shows that a modern family policy should be oriented towards equal participation of men and women in the labour market. This is dependent on, and has to enhance, the reconciliation of work and family life. Such policy principles have great consequences for labour market policy, for social security, for services both in terms of type of services as in terms of their geographical situation and opening hours and moreover the organisation of time and space in the city.

Interesting features of family policies to bring into debate:

- Parental leave & the fathers' quota;

- The quota for women in political representation (and boards of companies);

- The instrument of Gender Budgeting;

- The introduction of paid leave for illness of one's children and care for relatives and friends;

- The discussion on working hours & the planning of meetings (opening possibilities to deliver and pick up one's children at childcare facilities or schools).

7.4   (Financial) Solidarity

Within the limits of the chosen cases and referring to the priorities coming from the chapter on Switzerland, the following topics, related to financial solidarity are of importance:

- The repartition of organisational and financial responsibilities on social assistance between different government levels;

- The enlargement of financial autonomy of cities in relation to their local social policies;

- The solidarity between cities and the surrounding municipalities;

- The solidarity between richer and poorer neighbourhoods within and among cities.

7.4.1   Organisation and financing of social assistance

The discussion on this topic has three major entrances:

1. The discussion on financing social assistance at city level is between the cities being forced to repair "holes" in the social security system and cities having the freedom to give tailor made assistance;

2. The discussion on the freedom in organisation of social assistance at city level is essentially between the creation of good general social services that can give tailor made accompaniment and the realisation of social rights (equality between all citizens);

3. The discussion between being responsible for the organisation of the minimum income scheme and the responsibility of organising social and economic (re-) integration of social benefit claimants.

One of the remarks made about social assistance (minimum income scheme) in Switzerland is the lack of coherence of the social system. There has never been an attempt to harmonise all the different social provisions, with their different history. The social insurances in Switzerland are not branches of the same tree. They are just several trees.

In the French system there was a clear separation between the responsibility for the financial part of the minimum income (the central state) and the organisation of re-integration (the department – often delegated or in co-production with cities). The reason for that was the principle of equality in income distribution and tailor made approaches of re-integration activities. At the same time this system made tailor-made income policy more difficult.

In taking the decentralisation one step further, departments will have to take care of the whole package of minimum income distribution and re-integration. The mirror of the before-mentioned advantages and disadvantages can be foreseen.

7.4.2   Enlarging the financial autonomy of cities?

The financial autonomy of cities is seen as an important condition for the development of city-specific social policies. There are two aspects in this issue. The first is the degree to which cities have there own direct income (via local taxation), and secondly the degree of freedom for cities to spend the money as they want. The latter depends on the more general rules and reglementations for local governments, but also on the fragmentation in funding.

There are big differences between countries as to the degree to which municipalities have their own direct income (e.g. 10% in The Netherlands, 55% in France, and 70% in Switzerland). The difference in local taxation however does not say so much in itself about the policy autonomy of different levels. In the Netherlands for example, local government has great policy autonomy and almost no financial autonomy, while in France it is traditionally the other way round.

As to the income from national government, until now, and in spite of political promises, there are few examples of effective and massive grouping of funds for different aspects of city policy. This complex picture hinders effective integrated local policymaking.

On the other hand, the dominance of budgets in the discussions about possibilities for developing effective local social policy leads to:

−   A limited view of organisations en authorities on problems;

−   A reduced willingness and (financial) capability to look for real co-operation outside each ones own government or municipal department.

Historically grown structures and fear of loosing influence to others, of whom it remains the question if they are as capable as they say in "dealing with the job", prevent the money from following the societal problems.

It is clear however that less central or regional (financial) bureaucracy, steering on headlines and grouping of funding are the most logical trends if one would like to see integrated local social policy to be developed. These trends should be accompanied by a set of arrangements, agreements or covenants about targets, criteria and indicators to measure these.

7.4.3   Forms of voluntary chosen solidarity / financial co-operation

The financial solidarity (through the redistribution of taxation) to enable real co-operation within Rennes Métropole (36 communes) is an expression and guarantee for the continuity of the broader co-operative culture in that region.

The rules for this solidarity between communes in France are national, but there is room for local policy within these rules. It seems worthwhile to compare the exact similarities and differences between the French and the Swiss system of solidarity between municipalities.

7.4.4   Forms of enforced solidarity

In the British case, and now also in the Dutch case, we saw a provoking example of dealing with the tension between guaranteeing equal social rights for all (equality between all citizens) and giving tailor made accompaniment for the individual who needs most or the neighbourhood that needs most. It expresses the non-satisfaction with average support to everyone, and the acceptance that poor people in better off neighbourhoods "will have to wait" (too long). It is discriminating in favour of the worst off.

7.5   Recommendations

We will first look into the content of social policy and how to bring an issue on the policy agenda. The second section will be about structuring or restructuring social policy governance. Then we will give some extra process suggestions and finally a remark on evaluation.

7.5.1   An urban social policy agenda for Switzerland?

The case studies in this report include some remarkable developments in different social policy domains. We just mention here again the gender equality and modern family policy in Norway; the long term national strategy and mainstreaming within the English Neighbourhood Renewal policy; the sense of urgency as to the Dutch Major Cities Policy; the combination of social and economic inclusion strategies of the French Revenu Minimum d'Insertion; the universalist and integrated approach of the one stop shop Social Services in Madrid.

Since the social problems of Swiss cities have a lot of similarities with those in other countries, one could argue for transferring these good examples to Switzerland. But since the social, economic, political, cultural contexts of those other countries are also very different from Switzerland, one could argue that the transfer of good policy practices is not self evident.

In that sense each country has to follow its own track, starting from its own perception of urgency of specific problems. To gather good ideas from inside as well as from outside one's own country is a good thing. But at least as important and perhaps even more important for all actors is to know how to bring social issues and ideas for new social policies on the political agenda.

During the expert meeting two examples of policy topics were chosen:

The *gender* equality issue as it developed in Norway, came (and remained) on the agenda through different ways:

- − It all started with the organisation of open debates on different levels and between different types of actors (scientists, pressure groups, social partners, politicians, government);

- − Pressure groups played an important role;

- − The presence of an ombudsman puts pressure on all actors involved (supported by facts and figures);

- − The framing of the issue as an opportunity to raise economic productivity (instead of an obligation) by creating better conditions for women to take up a position on the labour market;

As second example, one could ask if and how *migration* could be brought on the political agenda. It is interesting to see that each country has its own possible ways of framing the issue and specific hindering factors.

In England the key words are social and community cohesion. Discussions are about bonding and bridging. Both are valued. Diversity is part of the British culture: one can perfectly be Asian British. Apart from that one can use existing law (the Race Relations Act) to bring integration issues to the fore.

France on the other hand is a country where assimilation (in line with republican values) is the rule. On the other hand, one could use the general acceptance of fundamental social rights for everyone.

At this moment it seems that in Norway and the Netherlands there is not much room for diversity. The tendency is towards assimilation, but without the basic consensus about fundamental citizens' rights as in France.

In Spain, the Social Services could use the universality of social rights and services to bring integration issues on the agenda. But one should recognise that the social sector, because of its weak organisation, would have difficulties to bring specific social issues on the political agenda.

Discussing the issue of urban social policy in Switzerland, it is clear that a first important step is to develop an urban culture and urban consciousness, in a country that – politically spoken – is still dominated by a rural culture.

However, if one observes recent developments, it is clear that the possible recommendations on the subject of specific urban (social) policy are already on the way of implementation in Switzerland:

1. Organise public debate (and find *neutral ground* for it) among all partners involved;

2. Collect and disseminate facts and figures on the issue;

3. Use pressure from interest groups and organisations;

4. Look for the appropriate way to frame the issue;

5. Start experimenting with new approaches and flexible / voluntary structures

But this last point brings us to the following section.

7.5.2   Governance structures for Social Policy

Four basic recommendations could be drawn from our study and the discussion at the expert meeting.

1. *The principle of subsidiarity* could be very useful if it would be used in a consequent, but flexible way.

   Consequent means that not everything should be organised at the lowest possible level – as subsidiarity is often interpreted – but at the most appropriate government level. This means that the government level holding competence in a certain matter can delegate either to a lower or to a higher level.

   Flexible means that, depending on the issue at stake or on the situation, competencies within one social policy domain could be divided over different government levels. In an earlier paragraph of this chapter we mentioned three criteria that can govern this process:

   – The importance of distance (e.g. evaluation, monitoring) vs. proximity (e.g. job integration accompaniment, social service delivery);

   – The reality of different contexts;

   – The importance of equality (to organise at a higher level) vs. specificity (to organise at a lower level) .

   Subsidiarity should indeed be about competencies and not about more or less power. It is not – as would be straightforward decentralisation – a question of a less active central or regional government and a more active local government. Consequent and flexible subsidiarity leaves behind the idea of a zero sum game between the power of different government levels. Each level has to develop more activity, and more power if you like. So,

different government levels are more equal. This could be very well expressed by contractualisation between government levels.

2. An *open method of co-ordination* as it is defined in the EU context could be an interesting working model to use in the Swiss context too. But one should learn some lessons from the countries represented in this study.

In the Netherlands, where central government defined the goals and leaves the instruments and methods to use for achieving these goals to local authorities, the evaluation of the Major Cities Policy showed a lot of uniformity in local urban policy plans. The evaluation committee came to the conclusion that there was too less attention for the specific local issues, problems and opportunities. The Neighbourhood Renewal programme in England also sees the danger of window dressing when it comes to respond to centrally defined goals and targets.

Therefore, it would be better to insist on local mechanisms for agenda setting and for identifying locally and commonly agreed goals and targets. The French example of the obligation for each department to define regularly and with local partners a Departmental Plan for Integration (of minimum income beneficiaries), including the means and instruments to implement it, as well as the obligation to report on the results, is a good example of such mechanism. It emphasises local creativity instead of lining up with central goals and targets. The remark of the Spanish participants in the expert meeting, that one has to accept in a way vague goals and shifting goals seems to go in the same direction.

The consequence of this recommendation – in combination with the subsidiarity principle – is that each level of government would be responsible for setting its own goals (in its own competence fields). The level that is delegating competencies prescribes the mechanisms and defines (part of) the agenda.

3. The next two recommendations have to do with the complexity of governance due to competencies in certain domains being spread over different government levels (vertical) or issues and problems being situated across territorial boarders (municipal, cantonal and even national boarders in the case of Switzerland).

It is recommended to focus more on *voluntary multi level / multi territory partnerships*, rather than on trying to sort out all competencies to one level, or to create new levels of government or new formal territorial boarders. If ever, these new formal configurations should rather be the outcome of collaboration processes than being the starting point of these.

Good examples of these are the more general co-operation initiatives such as the agglomeration structures in Switzerland and France. These seem good umbrella structures to host multi-level initiatives and organise (financial) solidarity between cities and surrounding municipalities or communes.

At the same time, there is a need for more focused multi-level and multi-territory partnerships. Interesting examples of these are the Local Strategic Partnerships (for Neighbourhood Renewal) in England, the "Commissions Locales d'Insertion" (for minimum income beneficiaries) in France, and the tripartite commissions (for Social Service delivery) in Spain.

As one English participant at the expert meeting showed, a model like the Local Strategic Partnership could very well be adapted to the Swiss context, where the central social policy actor is not central government (the Confederation) but the Canton government.

One extra recommendation on this point would be to limit this kind of partnerships to issues of high political priority and where the competencies are clearly situated on more than one government level or within more than one (related) territory. In other words: be selective in the creation of such partnerships, since otherwise and to the extreme, one could ask what is the role of regular government bodies and administrations. New partnerships may not turn into an alibi for government bodies to avoid taking up responsibility or to prevent others from doing so. This refers again to the different possible roles of government. If, e.g. there is an urgent need for harmonising (aspects of) social security among cantons, than the confederation should (be allowed to) play a regulating role.

4. If the former recommendation tended towards accepting complexity and organising alternatives – in some cases competence division is complex because the issues that have to be tackled are very complex themselves – the last recommendation in this series goes in another direction.

As one participant in the expert meeting said: co-ordinating complexity is not always a good solution. More in particular on project level, one should aim at *simplifying complexity by having one project leader*.

This is not contradictory to the former recommendation, since we talked there about the level of strategy and programme development. At that level, commonly agreed diagnoses and common "ownership" are very important. At the level of project development and concrete interventions it is important to "use one methodology developing one project for one user". This principle applies for very different levels and very different types of actors, not just at grass roots level. There is the example of the Netherlands, where the Ministry of Housing leaves the intervention in certain vulnerable neighbourhoods – also in housing issues – to the Ministry of Welfare, since this Ministry has the most important intervention role in these neighbourhoods. In the same sense, one local actor should take the lead in locally defined projects. This should be the actor with the most trust from the others and/or with the most capacities / enthusiasm. It could mean that in different neighbourhoods of the same city different types of partners (schoolteachers, community workers, social workers, and police...) are leading the same type of project.

Even on an individual level where it is important to have one case manager for each client, social workers of different institutions or organisations could take up this role within a "chain approach".

7.5.3   Process or practice recommendations

It is not self-evident to distinguish process aspects from content and structural aspects as discussed in the two former sections of this paragraph. These aspects are very much interlocked. In this section we give some process or practice recommendations that were not already included in former recommendations.

The key word of this section is *visibility*. In different ways and for different reasons we suggest to make issues, problems, organisations and interventions in local / urban social policy as visible as possible.

In the first place, the Madrid example of the one stop shops in Social Service teach us that being outreaching towards potential clients is an important factor in the realisation of equal rights to social service for everyone. Especially vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and migrants have traditionally too less access to social services. To be outreaching made an increase of 12% immigrant clients in one year.

In France, the minimum income law (RMI) stipulates that local authorities have the obligation to "find" possible beneficiaries.

In the second place, visibility of services and clients of social service as well as visibility of actions and results of integrated projects and programmes creates legitimacy towards the political scene. And in return, it creates legitimacy for the policy makers who committed themselves to these actions and programmes.

In the third place, organising visibility in terms of mapping the issue, problems and social (intervention) infrastructure is an instrument for institutions and professionals to improve their concerted actions. At the same time it can be a means to show the importance of these issues and problems and the possible need for extra (financial) support from the authorities. A nice example of this is the so-called "tableau de bord" in Rennes. It is an electronic (CD-rom) inventory of social data and infrastructure information on all neighbourhoods in Rennes. One can see easily where the concentrations are of e.g. elderly persons, minimum income beneficiaries, and youth; and how the geographical spreading of infrastructure in terms of schools, neighbourhood centres looks like. The "tableau de bord" itself is governed by an association of public and private social welfare institutions, where all partners committed themselves to deliver the necessary data. It is thus an exponent of and a stimulus for co-operation. Here again, one can see an instrument for further development of a commonly agreed diagnosis on local social issues and problems. This is always a first step to the development of common strategies and common ownership of actions and interventions.

7.5.4   On the need for evaluation

Everybody stresses the need for good evaluation of integrated local social policies, but there are very few good evaluation studies carried out. There is a lot of monitoring going on, there are interesting case descriptions. We hope that ours is a useful example of such study. But there is very little study on satisfaction of users, clients, residents, and citizens. Most studies are about direct targets (output) and made from a government's perspective. There are almost no solid studies on outcome, let alone longitudinal studies or comparative studies.

We found it interesting to see a striking difference between England and the Netherlands. Community involvement in England is directly aimed at better schools, better housing, less crime, and a cleaner environment. The English seem to be reluctant to work with the objective of enhancing social coherence. Even if it is a key word in framing the local social issue, they are instrumentalising it, one could say. Where as in the Netherlands there is much emphasis put on this broad but rather vague goal.

The NRS wants to deliver prosperity and jobs, safety, better education, housing and health. So to sum up: better services, new social-economic impulses and better environmental qualities, public spaces, etceteras in neighbourhoods. But it aims as well at "fostering a new sense of community among residents". However, we know that investments in the former does not produce automatically a better quality of social relations, more participation, more social cohesion? What strategies are developed to increase these essential values? As for the English case, this remains an essential question for the evaluation of all urban (social) policies.

Addendum

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