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Title: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND PROCESSES OF
MARGINALISATION ON THE NORTHERN EUROPEAN PERIPHERY

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Abstract

The study focus on a number of different research questions which ultimately help to provide an explanation of the ways in which unemployment experiences may lead to social marginalisation or exclusion in seven countries in northern Europe.

Surveys were carried out among representative samples of 2,000-4,000 young unemployed people in Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Scotland.

The response rate in the surveys reached 73 per cent in Finland, 60 per cent in Iceland, 56 per cent in Norway, 63 per cent in Sweden, 55% in Scotland and 79 per cent in Denmark. The entire sample consists of 8600 unemployed young people, aged 18-24 years. The study is based on national representative samples of young people who all of them had been unemployed for at least three months. At the time of the interview – 6 to 12 months after the sampling had taken place – they were either within or outside the labour market. Some of them had succeeded in finding a job, had started studying, were participating in an employment scheme, or they were still unemployed.

In Ireland, the researchers were denied access to the unemployment register. It was therefore impossible to use the same survey design. The Irish research team therefore used the ECHP (European Community Household Panel) data from Ireland and eight other European countries of unemployed youth in the same age group.

All young people in the sample were unemployed. One year after, 41 per cent in Finland were still unemployed, 42 per cent in Scotland, 19 per cent in Iceland, 27 per cent in Norway, 29 per cent in Sweden, and 29 per cent in Denmark. The proportion of those who had found a job was highest in Denmark and Iceland, and lowest in Finland and Scotland. However, In Scotland, 40% were re-employed compared with 20% in Finland. The high proportion of those still unemployed in Scotland could be explained by the fact that only 3% of the unemployed had returned to education compared with nearly 20% of young unemployed in Finland. It is also important to stress that even if the unemployment level was much higher in Finland (30%) than Scotland (12%), the proportion of long-term unemployed (longer than 12 months) was much higher in Scotland than Finland.

Generally speaking, women had a better chance of securing employment than men, except in Denmark where women were clearly less likely to find a job. Women also had a much higher probability of re-entering education than men in all countries except Iceland.

The results also clearly indicate that structural factors, such as working experience and the duration of unemployment, had a significant effect on the probability of finding employment. The tendency was the same in all the countries.

The study does not provide any evidence of social exclusion among the majority of unemployed youth. They were well integrated with close contact to family and friends. However, they reported more mental health problems than young people in employment and in some countries had a higher consumption of drugs and alcohol. They spend their

leisure time in the same way as other young people, and were not very different from the general population of youth in northern Europe. There was no evidence that they form their own subculture group, where employment is devaluated. It is, however, important to stress that both sociability, participation in leisure activities and mental health problems were strongly related to their experience of financial problems. The results give clear evidence of the importance of the financial situation among unemployed youth.

This is of course dependent upon benefit entitlement, which is very different across countries. Denmark and to some extent Sweden have very generous welfare provision, Norway and Finland are in the middle, while Iceland, Ireland and Scotland have very low benefits, especially for those under 20. In especially Ireland and Scotland some of these young people have a very difficult situation, where there are high rates of unemployment in the household.

The political discussion about benefit entitlement has been heavily related to research evidence of the disincentive effects of generous benefits especially regarding unemployed youth. In this study we have evaluated the disincentive effects in countries with very different compensation levels. The results showed that in countries with a high compensation level (especially Denmark), we found lower work motivation, lower job search activity and consequently lower probability of re-employment compared to countries with a low compensation level. On the other hand, the Danish unemployed reported a much better life situation with less financial problems, better mental health and better coping with unemployment than in the other countries, which implied a higher probability of re-employment. This was probably the reason why the same proportion of unemployed youth in Denmark had returned to employment as in other countries with the same unemployment level.

A lot of young unemployed are not entitled to benefits because they lack work experience. Many of them will therefore be dependent of their family and/or social assistance. In the study we found that social assistance clients had a more difficult life situation in all countries, with more mental health problems, more financial problems and a longer duration of unemployment compared to other unemployed youth in all countries.

Another important feature of labour market policy is the effects of training schemes for unemployed young people. When studying the significance of labour-market policy programmes, it appeared that labour-market programmes affected the chances of employment; however, this positive effect was only significant in Sweden. When taking a closer look at which labour-market programmes had been effective, the findings show that primarily work-creation measures had had significantly better results. Repeated participation in employment schemes had a negative effect on the chances of being employed. This trend was, however, only significant in Sweden. In northern Europe, the demographic changes with a significant drop in the birth rate since 1986 will create a high demand for young people in the labour market, which will especially affect new entrances. The decline in the age group 15-24 year old is significant. It is therefore of great importance to implement strategies to qualify unemployed youth in accordance with the demands of the labour market.

The study has evaluated the probability of return to post compulsory education among unemployed youth in the different countries. The countries have different educational policy. In Scandinavia, the majority of young people take upper secondary education, while in Scotland and Iceland more young people leave school with only compulsory education. In these countries vocational education is also less developed.

The results showed that it was not the access of education which in itself influenced the probability of return to education. The probability was highest among males in Iceland and lowest for both males and females in Scotland. Furthermore, the higher the initial level of education among the respondents, the higher was the probability of re-entering education. In other words, it was not those with the lowest level of education or school drop outs who tried to catch up with their comparable age group. In all countries except Iceland, females had a much higher probability of re-entering education than young unemployed males.

The project has been extended by a new contract with the Commission for the project: Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion in Europe. This project also include further data collection in Germany, Spain, Italy and France, using the same questionnaire and research design.

1. Executive Summary

Marginalisation can be related to a weak position on the labour market, but can also refer to social, financial, cultural and political spheres. The problems involved are determined by the relationship between normality and marginality. Marginalisation is not a position with clear boundaries. The virtual disappearance of youth employment has destroyed many former routes, and the options of the young have decreased. However, we also know from previous studies that, beneath all the changes, the old predictors, such as the link between young people's family and educational origins, and subsequent employment prospects, seem to have remained .

The dynamics of the process need to be stressed. Unemployment may lead to depression, family break-up and social isolation. However, the unemployed are not destined to be, or to stay, at the bottom of the heap. Under different labour market conditions they would perhaps never have been there. Hence, the concept of marginalisation contains a dynamic dimension.

The concept of marginality is used in this study as an analytical category describing a person's position on the labour market. Movement is essential to the concept of process. You move either towards integration or towards exclusion. Thus, the process is interdependent, and both risks and chances are inherent.

Marginalisation has been described as the process of becoming detached from the moral order, or from the prevailing norm in society, and as exclusion from the "principal social milieus". It is seen as a multidimensional disadvantage, which dislocates people from the major social and occupational opportunities in society: from citizenship, housing, adequate living standards or employment

Marginalisation has been defined as a lack of participation in situations in which people should participate to be able to comply with the prevailing norms in society.

These norms express existing rights and obligations more generally. According to this interpretation there are various norms with which people are supposed to comply (concerning work, the family, politics, education and culture, for example) according to their societal position with regard to age, gender, marital status, household type, class, ethnicity, and civil and vocational situation. One of the vital points is how these norms are codified objectively and how they operate and are comprehended socially by the individual.

Two conditions should be added to this normative aspect: (1) the necessary resources for participating in society, e.g. work, education, and income support, and (2) the individual capacity and will to adjust to the norms and to appropriate necessary resources.

Thus, the concept of marginalisation can be seen as an ongoing process, which changes over time. This perspective is open to two possible interpretations. On the one hand, it may be seen as a spiral, starting with a certain incident, such as unemployment, and then leading gradually to marginalisation from the labour market with consequences for other areas as well. On the other hand, it may be considered a circle in which different elements and events rather interrelate and where no single factor can be seen to “cause” it. It is rather the covariance of exclusion from different dimensions in combination with the lack of resources that creates a situation where marginalisation occurs.

1.1 Objectives

The study focuses on a number of different research questions which ultimately help to provide an explanation of the ways in which unemployment experiences may lead to social marginalisation or exclusion:

- * How are different levels of youth unemployment in different countries with different educational, labour market and social policies related to the marginalization processes and how do different career trajectories lead to the integration or social exclusion of young people ?

- * How are young people's trajectories related to the previously identified problems such as mental health problems and drug use?

- * What is the relationship between mental health, unemployment and social exclusion ?

- *How does educational policy influence the probability to return to education in different countries ?

- *How is the relationship between unemployment and political attitudes and participation ?

- * What is the impact of different level of unemployment insurance and job search behaviour in young people?

* How do different active labour market measures in different countries influence the ways in which the long term unemployed cope with unemployment ?

1.1.1 Research Methods

In countries with different labour-market and educational policies, unemployed youth can end up in work, education, employment schemes or permanent unemployment. This research investigates the outcome of long-term unemployment among youth.

Surveys were carried out among representative samples of 2,000-4,000 young unemployed people in Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Scotland. Representative samples were drawn from national unemployment registers, and the respondents were young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who had been unemployed for a period of at least three months over the previous six months. The final sample consisted of 2,386 young unemployed people in Finland, 4,000 in Sweden, 2,000 in Iceland and Norway, and 1,500 in Denmark and 1500 in Scotland. The surveys were carried out in late 1996/1997, and were initially based on postal questionnaires, with additional telephone interviews carried out to minimise the bias caused by a skewed response rate.

The response rate in the surveys reached 73 per cent in Finland, 60 per cent in Iceland, 56 per cent in Norway, 63 per cent in Sweden, 55% in Scotland and 79 per cent in Denmark. The entire sample consists of 8600 unemployed young people, aged 18-24 years.

In Ireland, the researchers were denied access to the unemployment register. It was therefore impossible to use the same survey design. The Irish research team therefore used the ECHP (European Community Household Panel) data from Ireland and eight other European countries of unemployed youth in the same age group.

1.1.2 Research Design

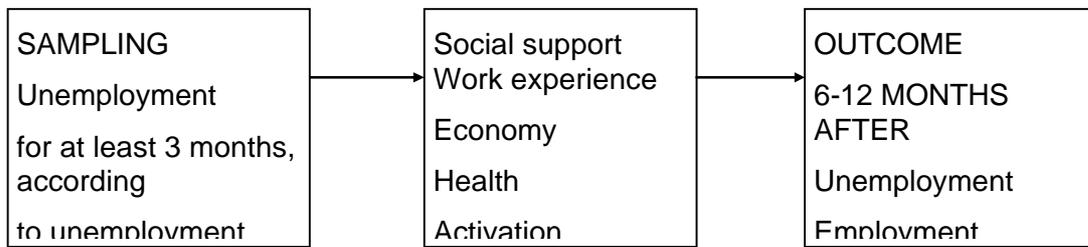
We chose marginalisation as the leading concept. The main research question was to study to what degree position on the labour market correlates with other social circumstances in the life situation of young people.

Different aspects of marginalisation in relation to youth unemployment are highlighted and analysed in the study. We chose the following different dimensions of marginalisation and integration:

- employment
- family situation
- living conditions
- social network
- politics and society

The study is cross-sectional. At one point of time, a group of young people who had been at least 3 months continuously unemployed during the first half of the year was selected as a sample. Thus, we chose to study a group, which, according to marginalisation theories, had a more problematic relationship with one central area: employment. The crucial question is, then, to what extent can this position be interpreted as problematic in relation to other domains as well? To what extent does this covary with access to other resources and with the individual capacity of the young people involved?

The research design can be illustrated as follows:



At the time when the samples were drawn, all of the young people in our study were unemployed. Approximately a 6-12 months after, when they were interviewed, the situation had changed. What factors could have had an influence on this outcome? We chose a certain number of variables to problematize this relationship, as follows:

- social support
- work experience
- unemployment experiences
- financial situation
- health situation
- experiences of labour-market schemes
- political attitudes.

From an analytical perspective, however, it is not self-evident how these variables should be regarded. Do they reflect circumstances that can be influenced by an outcome, or are they more permanently structured? To deal with the time dimension we included different time perspectives in our questions under the assumption that certain variables are stable enough to be regarded as being able to influence employment outcome.

We chose this research strategy in order to shed light on how different degrees of marginalisation, or rather different levels of integration into the labour market, may be related to other circumstances in the lives of the young people in our study. Our aim was also to be able to form an opinion on the processes of marginalisation in terms of the relationship between the outcome of unemployment and differences in the life situations of young people in the countries.

1.2 Summary of Scientific Results

Unemployment increased dramatically among young people in the northern European countries during the 1990s. However, it reached very different levels in each of these countries. In 1993, at its peak, it reached 6 per cent in Iceland and 36 per cent in Finland. In 1995 – the year we started this research – the youth unemployment rate was 29.9 per cent in Finland, 15.3 per cent in Sweden, 11.8 per cent in Norway, 9.7 per cent in Denmark, 11 per cent in Iceland and 12 per cent in Scotland.

Youth unemployment is today considered a serious political problem in all the Nordic countries. Many critical voices have been raised over the seriousness of the problem. On the other hand, long-term unemployment has turned out to be a more serious problem among middle-aged people than among young people. Even though youth unemployment tends to be of short duration, it is characterised by the fact that youth have several short periods of unemployment behind them. Surveys have also proved that middle-aged people have been affected more seriously by unemployment, while young people have shown fewer signs of negative sociopsychological consequences. The reason for this is partly to be found in the strength of the social network. Thanks to family and friends, the negative effects on young people have been cushioned.

The surveys are based on the assumption that there is a connection between young people's position vis-à-vis the labour market and their social situation. The central question of the research is to what extent a person's position on the labour market as young and unemployed can be connected to what could be defined analytically as marginalisation processes. Marginalisation is interpreted in this survey in terms of various aspects of participation:

- participation in various domains (labour market, economics, culture, and politics)
- resources for achieving participation (economic, social and cultural capital)
- willingness and desire to participate

Information on the different aspects of participation, or lack thereof, can provide systematised information about youth unemployment in the countries. Compared to other European countries, there is a remarkable similarity among the Scandinavian countries in the basic structure of the welfare state, and in the way their citizens view the state and the society in a deeper meaning, making the relationship between them different from that in other European countries. As far as developing social policy and constructing the welfare state are concerned, there still is a certain degree of variety between the Nordic countries. One could perhaps say that Finland and Iceland form the peripheral poles, while Sweden, Norway and Denmark constitute a group in between. By comparing countries with different unemployment histories (experience of unemployment and unemployment level), it is possible to analyse their differences and similarities. On the other hand, Scotland and Ireland represent a more liberal welfare state model, with less generous welfare provision.

Which overall picture emerges from a study of approximately 8000 young unemployed people in the six countries? Are there certain typically patterns or special features? Is it possible to discern variations in their experiences of unemployment and perhaps connect them to the different unemployment situations in the countries? What features are typical of each country?

We summarise our results in terms of the following three issues:

What characterises the situation of the young unemployed people in the countries?

Which factors are related to the risk of marginalisation?

What is the probability of escaping unemployment and entering the labour market?

When looking at the social situation of young people, we find similarities, as well as differences, between the countries. In Finland, Scotland and Iceland, unemployment is more of a teenage problem than in the other countries. This is largely due to the educational system and the later investments in activating policies directed towards the young unemployed, especially those under 20, compared with Sweden, Denmark and Norway. In these countries young people below 20 are guaranteed an offer of employment, education or labour market schemes.

Generally speaking young people move out from their parental home relatively early due to an improved housing situation. Looking at the young people in our research group, we find that in Iceland, Scotland, Norway and Finland young people live at home with their parents more often than in Sweden or Denmark. The same goes for the young people in their establishing phase (22-24 year-olds): approximately one fourth of them still lived at home, compared to just one tenth in Sweden and Denmark. Another milestone in entering adulthood is parenthood. Again, there are interesting differences within the countries. Iceland, in particular, but also Norway differs from the other Nordic countries in that a considerably larger percentage of young people have children. It is obvious that both economical and cultural factors influence the social situation of the young. In Iceland women traditionally have had their first child at a young age, and the proportion continues to be higher among the interviewed young women than for young women in general .

Taking the social background into consideration, the young people in Iceland and Scotland differ from those in the other Nordic countries in that most of them have only attended compulsory school. There is a wider variety in the basic education in the other countries. It is obvious that the unemployment level of a country affects the composition of the research group. The lower the level of overall unemployment, the more the unemployed tend to form a socially and culturally selective group. On the other hand, the degrees of long-term unemployment and unemployment in the family are higher in countries with a higher overall unemployment level. This is seen clearly in Finland and Scotland with a considerably higher degree of long-term unemployment and unemployment in the family than in the other countries. There is a great variety of unemployment burden and working experience in the countries. A small group can be characterised as being marginalised from the labour market (5 per cent) in the five

Nordic countries, defined here as having been mainly unemployed between 1993 and 1995 (five out of six semi-annual periods). However, this group is higher in Scotland, where escaping unemployment seem to be more difficult than in other countries with the same unemployment level.

A larger group, close to one fourth, have experienced unemployment but have not seen it as their main activity during any of these six periods. There is generally less unemployment among women than men, although women have less working experience. The only exception was Denmark where unemployment among women was higher than among men. Despite different unemployment levels among women and men, the level of activation, i.e. the proportion participating in various labour-market schemes, is higher among women than men in all the countries.

Young people generally have reported favourable experiences with labour-market schemes. The study shows that most of the young people feel that they have learned something new, they appreciate having something to do, that the atmosphere at work is good, and that they take an interest in their jobs, all this despite the fact that there are considerable variations in labour-market schemes between the countries. This shows the importance of labour-market schemes as a means of social function. In Finland, where the unemployment level is the highest, the attitude towards such schemes is the most positive. There is, however, a strong tendency among young people in all the countries to consider the demands of the schemes too low; in particular, the traditional labour-market schemes are being criticised. This indicates a certain discrepancy between the demands of the labour-market programmes and the resources and wishes of young people.

Which factors are related to the risk of marginalisation?

Age has an independent significance for the unemployment burden. The younger a person was when becoming unemployed for the first time, the greater the unemployment burden. This, of course, is clearly related to education. Young people with only compulsory education have a greater unemployment burden. Education itself may not be the only factor that affects the risk of marginalisation. Young people with lower levels of education often have parents whose level of education is low, and they are not encouraged to further studies by their parents. Another important factor is the way in which teenagers experience school. Maladjustment at school clearly correlates with high unemployment burden. These results indicate that unemployment is linked to a life situation, which is dependent upon the availability of a certain type of social and cultural capital.

In all countries except in Norway and Denmark there were statistically significant correlation between bad health (physical, mental and general state of health) and unemployment. The longer a person had been unemployed, the less healthy the person was. Unemployed young people and those in activation were least healthy. Conversely, young people working or studying, thus having the shortest unemployment experience, were most healthy. There were also certain significant correlation between the length of the unemployment period and use of alcohol for Scottish, Finnish, Icelandic and Danish men, as well as for Swedish women.

Social support can influence the young person's ability to cope with unemployment, but it is important to differentiate between different dimensions of support: support from parents or friends, moral support, counsel, practical assistance and financial support. The results show that support is spread unevenly. Those unemployed at the time of the interview had experienced less social support than those who were employed, but had received more instrumental support. This reflects the ambivalent social situation for young unemployed persons.

Financial problems are also clearly related to unemployment. Young people are at a stage in life where their financial situation often can get strained. Setting up one's own home, getting established on the labour market, having small children and low income are clearly related to financial problems. There is a correlation between financial problems and unemployment in all the countries, except in Denmark where the young unemployed have less financial problems. The financial problems are greater among those who have received social assistance, mainly in Norway and Finland. Young people who received social assistance felt more stigmatised than other unemployed young people. They also reported more problems related to anxiety and depression.

One could expect differences in attitudes towards society and the future between the countries and between the different groups within each country. However, there seems to be a strong similarity in the attitudes towards society between men and women, between the countries and between different employment statuses. There are no clear indications that the studied group had any clear tendencies towards alternative lifestyles based on radically differing views on society. There are, however, several indications that actual political participation and willingness to exert political influence differ within the groups. Almost half of the young people are politically uninterested. Political activity is highest in Iceland and Sweden, and lowest in Finland. In Finland there is a higher potential for more expressive and more demonstrative political activity, and women are more active than men. When comparing the different employment groups the results indicate that the unemployed are less active politically and have a different political profile from those studying, working, participating in labour-market programmes, or living with their parents. It also seems that with more unemployment experience the acceptance of and participation in more demanding actions increases, whereas the opposite applies for participation in election processes. This could indicate that unemployment is connected to a certain frustration with traditional and official political channels.

In summary, it can be concluded that the unemployed express that unemployment involves sociopsychological problems. They feel less healthy, they experience problems with their social support, they experience more financial problems, they are less involved politically, and they support radical political opinions to a greater extent. Still, there is no proof that any particular clear-cut societal view is related to unemployment.

What is the Probability of Re-entering the Labour Market?

Our central research question was to study processes and strategies in connection with youth unemployment. The study is based on national representative samples of young people who all of them had been unemployed for at least three months. At the time of the

interview – 6 to 12 months after the sampling had taken place – they were either within or outside the labour market. Some of them had succeeded in finding a job, had started studying, were participating in an employment scheme, or they were still unemployed. Are there different patterns to be found in the different countries?

Of the young unemployed youth at the time of the interview, 41 per cent in Finland were still unemployed, 42 per cent in Scotland, 19 per cent in Iceland, 27 per cent in Norway, 29 per cent in Sweden, and 29 per cent in Denmark. The proportion of those employed was highest in Denmark and Iceland, and lowest in Finland and Scotland. However, In Scotland, 40% were re-employed compared with 20% in Finland. The high proportion of those still unemployed in Scotland could be explained by the fact that only 3% of the unemployed had returned to education compared with nearly 20% of young unemployed in Finland. It is also important to stress that even if the unemployment level was much higher in Finland (30%) than Scotland (12%), the proportion of long-term unemployed (longer than 12 months) was much higher in Scotland than Finland. In other words, the proportion of unemployed and employed reflects the national unemployment level to a certain extent, except for Scotland and partly Norway.

Generally speaking, women have a better chance of securing employment than men, except in Denmark where women are clearly less likely to find a job. Young unemployed women also had a much higher probability of re-entering education than men in all countries except Iceland.

The results clearly indicate that structural factors, such as working experience and the duration of unemployment, have a significant effect on the probability of finding employment. The tendency was the same in all the countries. The less working experience the young people had and the longer they have been unemployed, the more difficult it is for them to become established in the labour market. This proves the importance of preventing unemployment by giving the young increased possibilities to obtain working experience, i.e. through various labour-market measures.

Qualifying measures, i.e. training (education), apprenticeships and job training in the private sector, as opposed to more traditional public activation, seem to produce more positive effects (Schröder 1991; Try 1994; Aho et al. 1996; Calmfors 1996; Mikkonen 1996). The duration of the activation program also seems to affect the end result, since short as opposed to long educational courses have been found to produce less beneficial results (Torp 1992; Madsen 1994; see also Korpi 1994). If the measures are part of a long-term strategy or development plan, then the probability of success increases (Sehlstedt & Schröder 1989). Positive results are produced not only through relevant education, but also because of the fact that job training offers connections with potential employers (Rosdahl 1996). Experience in Sweden has shown that results depend highly on whether the initiative is part of a concrete and individual action plan (cf. Madsen 1994; Schröder 1994). Even though the aims of labour-market initiatives are integrative, there are still many side effects, and also the risk of marginalization. Research (Edin & Holmlund 1991; Furlong 1993; Hammer 1996; Spies 1996) has shown that the measures per se might form employment traps. Those who participate in programs constantly circulate between initiatives and unemployment. The probability of

finding employment has also been shown to diminish the more the person has participated in different programs (Korpi 1994). A contributing reason for this is that activation in some countries qualifies the unemployed for a renewed period of benefits. This kind of circulation is especially common in Sweden (Björkman & Harkman 1995). Evaluation of different schemes for unemployed people has mainly been undertaken in a national context. We lack thus comparative knowledge of how schemes function in different settings. It is also important to evaluate schemes not only as labour market measures but as a social policy measure, which may help young people to cope with problems related to unemployment. Furthermore, increased educational motivation and return to education is also an important outcome.

When studying the significance of labour-market policy programmes, we found that labour-market programmes affected the probability of employment; however, this positive effect was only significant in Sweden. When taking a closer look at which labour-market programme had been effective, the findings show that primarily work-creation measures have had significantly better results. Those having participated in labour-market training had a slightly smaller chance of getting a job, nevertheless labour-market training improved the probability of obtaining further education. Repeated participation in employment schemes had a negative effect on the chances of being employed. This trend was, however, only significant in Sweden where those having participated in schemes only once had a clearly better chance of being employed than those having participated repeatedly.

Another important aspect of labour market policy across countries, is the level of unemployment benefits. The compensation level of benefits varies between countries. The results showed that in countries with a high compensation level (especially Denmark), we found lower job search activity and consequently lower probability of unemployment compared to countries with a low compensation level. On the other hand, the Danish unemployed reported less financial problems, better mental health and better coping with unemployment than in the other countries, which implied a higher probability of re-employment.

This was probably the reason why the same proportion of unemployed youth had returned to employment as in other countries with the same unemployment level.

The majority of unemployed youth in the different countries were well socially integrated. A rather small proportion (14%) reported social isolation related to their experience of unemployment.

Financial problems were stronger related to mental health problems than social isolation. However, the results also indicate a selection to unemployment among young unemployed with mental health problems.

Social assistance clients had a more difficult life situation in all countries, with more mental health problems, more financial problems and a longer duration of unemployment compared to other unemployed youth in all countries. They also had a lower probability of re-employment in all countries, especially young unemployed women with children in Iceland.

Youth unemployment is primarily an expression of structural changes in society. Youth unemployment as a phenomenon in society can hardly be interpreted in any other way than as an expression of the fact that the young are treated unfairly in their efforts to integrate into society. Difficulties in securing a position on the labour market causes difficulties in other aspects of normal life as well. This does not mean that the young unemployed people in this study would differ markedly from other young people. But it means that their experiences of unemployment form a slightly different participation. Whether this way of life is seen as marginalisation or not is another question. Still, one cannot deny the fact that there are differences in working-life experiences, and that these differences conflict with the norms of full citizenship. In this sense the data in the survey show that youth unemployment provides clear evidence of marginalisation among unemployed youth in the six northern European countries.

1.3 Youth Unemployment in Ireland

The nature of youth unemployment in Ireland must be viewed in the context of the major changes that have occurred in the economy and the youth labour market over recent years. Since the mid 1980s Ireland has shifted from having one of the highest rates of youth and adult unemployment in Europe to having the highest rate of employment growth. Not only has the overall demand for labour increased dramatically there have also been significant changes in the type of labour required. Changes in the occupational structure and sector shifts have increased the demand for service sector workers, part-time workers and skilled workers while reducing the demand for unskilled manual workers. These changes mean that while the employment prospects for most have improved substantially others have found their prospects deteriorating despite the economic boom. This is particularly true of young people with few qualifications. The significant expansion in the Irish educational system means that fewer and fewer young people leave school without qualifications, but members of this dwindling group are becoming more disadvantaged in the labour market. One group which appears to have benefited from sector changes in the labour market are young women, women's over-representation in the expanding service sector is likely to contribute to the sex differences in youth unemployment rates outlined above.

The increasing prosperity and wealth in Ireland may also increase the feelings of disadvantage and exclusion among the young unemployed. There is little evidence that the young unemployed in Ireland form sub-cultural groups where employment is devalued and non-work identities are emphasised. While a certain amount of social segregation is evident from the reported levels of unemployment in the networks of the young unemployed, the high level of psychological distress experienced by unemployed youth highlights the continuing importance of having a job for young people's self-worth and well-being. The low levels of benefit entitlement among the unemployed aged under 20 coupled with the high rates of joblessness in their households suggests that few unemployed young people have the economic resources to form an acceptable lifestyle outside employment. Financial constraints may also account for the lower levels of sociability among unemployed school leavers. The willingness of the young unemployed

to accept either part-time or full-time employment further suggests a flexibility that is inconsistent with a lack of employment commitment and an acceptance of unemployment. However, this result may be biased by our focus on the ILO unemployed, which excludes those who are not involved in active job search. Further research on the job search behaviour and attitudes of the young unemployed is needed to establish the levels of work commitment among this group.

Due to demographic changes, there is a very real possibility of labour shortages in the near future. A shortage of labour may mean employment opportunities will filter down to young people with lower educational qualifications and increase the need for employers to provide training for their recruits. However, as the unemployment rate falls the stock of skills among the unemployed is likely to drop as the more highly skilled are hired first, and considerable effort will be needed to place the residual group of unskilled unemployed youth into jobs. The discussion of labour market programmes suggests that current practices are not sufficient to integrate the most marginalised unemployed.

Our initial descriptions of labour market transitions among the young suggest that there is a high level of movement in this section of the labour market. Nevertheless, young unemployed people were found to experience considerable difficulty in finding a job, even over a two year period. Further analysis of this data will allow us to investigate the factors associated with successful transitions from unemployment to employment and the factors linked to moves from employment to unemployment .

1.4 Implications for Policy

The study of unemployed youth in northern Europe does not provide any evidence of social exclusion among the majority of unemployed youth. They are well integrated with close contact to family and friends. However, their political participation and activity are lower, they are more passive, and they sympathise with traditional left wing policy. They also report more mental health problems than young people in employment and in some countries seem to have a higher consumption of drugs and alcohol. However, they spend their leisure time in the same way as other young people, and are not very different from the general population of youth in northern Europe. There is no evidence that they form their own subculture group, where employment is devaluated. It is, however, important to stress that both sociability, participation in leisure activities and mental health problems are strongly related to their experience of financial problems. Actually, their financial situation seems to be more important even than the duration of unemployment.

The results give clear evidence of the importance of the financial situation among unemployed youth. This is of course dependent upon benefit entitlement, which is very different across countries. Denmark and to some extent Sweden have very generous welfare provision, Norway and Finland are in the middle, while Iceland, Ireland and Scotland have very low benefits, especially for those under 20. In especially Ireland and Scotland some of these young people have a very difficult situation, where there are high rates of unemployment in the household .

The political discussion about benefit entitlement has been heavily related to research evidence of the disincentive effects of generous benefits especially regarding unemployed youth. However, review of the research literature shows very ambiguous results. In this study we have evaluated the disincentive effects in countries with very different compensation levels. The results showed that in countries with a high compensation level (especially Denmark), we found lower work motivation, lower job search activity and consequently lower probability of unemployment compared to countries with a low compensation level. On the other hand, the Danish unemployed reported a much better life situation with less financial problems, better mental health and better coping with unemployment than in the other countries, which implied a higher probability of re-employment.

This was probably the reason why the same proportion of unemployed youth in Denmark had returned to employment as in other countries with the same unemployment level.

Another important feature of labour market policy is the effects of training schemes for unemployed young people.

When studying the significance of labour-market policy programmes, it appeared that labour-market programmes affected the chances of employment; this effect was especially significant in Sweden. When taking a closer look at which labour-market programmes had been effective, the findings show that primarily work-creation measures have had significantly better results. Those having participated in labour-market training had a slightly smaller chance of getting a job, nevertheless labour-market training improved the probability of obtaining further education. Repeated participation in employment schemes had a negative effect on the chances of being employed. This trend was, however, only significant in Sweden where those having participated in schemes only once had a clearly better chance of being employed than those having participated repeatedly.

A lot of young unemployed people are not entitled to benefits because they lack work experience. Many of them will therefore be dependent on their family and/or social assistance.

In the study we found that social assistance clients had a more difficult life situation in all countries, with more mental health problems, more financial problems and a longer duration of unemployment compared to other unemployed youth in all countries. They also had a lower probability of re-employment in all countries, especially young unemployed women with children in Iceland.

In northern Europe the demographic changes with a significant drop in the birth rate since 1986 will create a high demand for young people in the labour market, which will especially affect new entrance. The decline in the age group 15-24 year old is significant.

It is therefore of great importance to implement strategies to qualify unemployed youth in accordance with the demands of the labour market. This can be done by motivating unemployed youth for further education in the formal educational system and

allow them to keep their benefits while in education, or by creating attractive training schemes related to special demands in different employment sectors.

The study has evaluated the probability of return to post compulsory education among unemployed youth in the different countries. The countries have different educational policy. In Scandinavia, the majority of young people take upper secondary education, while in Scotland and Iceland more young people leave school with only compulsory education. In these countries especially vocational education is less developed.

The results showed that it was not the access of educational places which in itself influenced the probability of return to education. The probability was highest among males in Iceland and lowest for both males and females in Scotland, in both countries further education is less developed compared to the other countries.

Furthermore, the higher the initial level of education among the respondents, the higher was the probability of re-entering education. In other words, it was not those with the lowest level of education or school drop outs who tried to catch up with their comparable age group.

Danish unemployed youth had the highest level of education compared to the other countries, probably because of the dual education system in this country, where education is strongly based on apprenticeship training.

However, the most interesting results presented here is the higher probability of re-entering education among young unemployed women compared with young unemployed men. Most European countries increase the number of places in post compulsory education in order to combat youth unemployment. The results here show that it is primarily young women who use this option. This has some political implications which should focus on how re-entering education could be a more attractive option also for young unemployed men.

2. Background and Objectives of the Project

2.1 Youth Unemployment in Europe

Unemployment among young people is a particularly severe problem in most industrial societies. In Europe, unemployment rates among those aged under 25 have exceeded 20% for most of the decade of the nineties, and in most years are twice the rate for those aged over 25. The persistence of high youth unemployment occurs despite a long-term decline in young people's participation in the labour market, due in part to a long-term trend towards an increasing proportion of young people remaining longer in education.

These general trends notwithstanding, however, the rate of unemployment among young people varies widely between European countries, even more so than the overall rate. In 1996, youth unemployment ranged from under 10% in Germany, the only country where the youth rate was similar to the adult rate, to about 30% in Greece and Italy, to over 40% in Spain (European Commission, 1997). These differences must be interpreted with some caution, however, since in many countries, the proportion of people under 25 actually participating in the labour force is very low, since the majority is still engaged in full-time education. Youth unemployment is particularly sensitive to fluctuations in labour market conditions, and the damaging effects of labour market slack can be particularly severe for young labour market participants with low levels of educational attainment.

In recent years, much of the comparative literature on unemployment has focused on how institutional differences between countries influence the distribution of employment and unemployment. Thus, for example, Müller and Shavit (1998) show that institutional characteristics of national education systems affect labour force outcomes for new entrants to the labour force. Other institutional factors held to influence employment prospects include labour market regulations (Grubb and Wells, 1993) as well as the incentive structure created by tax and welfare systems, and active labour market policies directed at the unemployed (OECD, 1998).

We have focused on the process of getting a job, using event history data to analyse the transition from unemployment to employment among young people in nine European countries. This allows us to compare across different countries, and therefore between differing institutional settings, how the employment prospects of young unemployed people are affected by their personal characteristics such as age, gender and educational attainment, as well as by previous employment experience and unemployment duration.

2.2 Youth Unemployment and Marginalisation

Marginalisation can be related to a weak position on the labour market, but can also refer to social, financial, cultural and political spheres. The problems involved are determined by the relationship between normality and marginality. Marginalisation is not a position with clear boundaries. Today, people shift in and out of categories more than they used to, and what is central or normal can alter. What, in fact, is normal today, when social structures are loosening and job trajectories cannot be argued to be clearly signpost? The virtual disappearance of youth employment has destroyed many former routes, and the options of the young have decreased. However, we also know from previous studies that, beneath all the changes, the old predictors, such as the link between young people's family and educational origins, and subsequent employment prospects, seem to have remained.

The dynamics of the process need to be stressed. Unemployment may lead to depression, family break-up and social isolation. However, the unemployed are not destined to be, or to stay, at the bottom of the heap. Under different labour market conditions they would perhaps never have been there. Hence, the concept of marginalisation contains a dynamic dimension.

The concept of marginality is used in this study as an analytical category describing a person's position on the labour market. Movement is essential to the concept of process. You move either towards integration or towards exclusion. Thus, the process is interdependent, and both risks and chances are inherent.

Marginalisation has been described as the process of becoming detached from the moral order, or from the prevailing norm in society, and as exclusion from the "principal social milieu". It is seen as a multidimensional disadvantage, which dislocates people from the major social and occupational opportunities in society: from citizenship, housing, adequate living standards or employment

Marginalisation has been defined as a lack of participation in situations in which people should participate to be able to comply with the prevailing norms in society.

These norms express existing rights and obligations more generally. According to this interpretation there are various norms with which people are supposed to comply (concerning work, the family, politics, education and culture, for example) according to their societal position with regard to age, gender, marital status, household type, class, ethnicity, and civil and vocational situation. One of the vital points is how these norms are codified objectively and how they operate and are comprehended socially by the individual.

Two conditions should be added to this normative aspect: (1) the necessary resources for participating in society, e.g. work, education, and income support, and (2) the individual capacity and will to adjust to the norms and to appropriate necessary resources.

Thus, the concept of marginalisation can be seen as an ongoing process, which changes over time. This perspective is open to two possible interpretations. On the one

hand, it may be seen as a spiral, starting with a certain incident, such as unemployment, and then leading gradually to marginalisation from the labour market with consequences for other areas as well. On the other hand, it may be considered a circle in which different elements and events rather interrelate and where no single factor can be seen to “cause” it. It is rather the covariance of exclusion from different dimensions in combination with the lack of resources that creates a situation where marginalisation occurs. The concept of marginalisation has been used to characterise a position between social integration and social exclusion. A marginalised position in the labour market may or may not lead to social exclusion. The term social exclusion has become a key sociological concept, However, its theoretical underpinnings are not always clear. For some, it is portrayed as a process, for others it is regarded as an outcome (see Berghman, 1997). Jordan (1996) regards social exclusion as a process in which dominant groups exclude outsiders so as to protect their own position. Room, on the other hand, links exclusion to a lack of resources which results in ‘inadequate social participation, lack of social protection, lack of social integration and lack of power’ (1995: 105). As Silver (1995) acknowledges, social exclusion is an ‘essentially contested concept’, it involves economic position as well as cultures and value systems which are linked to life chances. Exclusion is not simply linked to a prevailing situation of an individual or group, but is also linked to future prospects and draws on past experience. As Atkinson argues, ‘people are excluded not just because they are currently without a job or income, but because they have few prospects for the future’ (1998: 6). In this sense, exclusion is also related to past labour market experiences which may leave ‘people feeling that they lack control of their lives’ (O’Brien, 1986). In other words, the concept of social exclusion is used to highlight dynamic linkages between material situations and attitudes and values which may be seen as reinforcing a situation of disadvantage. It underlines the ways in which disadvantage in one dimension of life can result in a new and more debilitating set of disadvantages.

2.3 Long-term Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion

In many respects, a period of unemployment has become a normal part of youth transitions and in many European societies a majority of young people will now experience unemployment at some stage between leaving education and obtaining their first full-time jobs. For many, unemployment represents a temporary stage in an otherwise smooth and predictable trajectory. Yet it is clear that others find it extremely difficult to escape from unemployment and establish settled labour market positions.

In addressing issues of social exclusion among young people, it is necessary to acknowledge that paid work has traditionally been regarded as central to the process of social integration (Levitas, 1998). At the same time, it is also necessary to recognise that there are a range of subjective factors (such as attitudes, values) which are not simply outcomes of labour market processes, but which can themselves mediate patterns of exclusion. Long-term unemployment, for example, may in some circumstances lead to

social exclusion, yet high levels of social or financial support may reduce the chances of exclusion.

We have used cluster analysis to identify different unemployment careers across countries. Then, we have analysed in which way the different careers are related to different dimensions of social exclusion both regarding economy, level of living and quality of life.

2.4 Youth Unemployment, Social Exclusion and Mental Health

In modern society, employment is a central feature of daily life and the main source of financial independence, status, prestige, identity and social participation. In terms of theory, it is important to differentiate between unemployment, poverty, deprivation and social exclusion. As a consequence of unemployment, the individual may or may not experience poverty and deprivation – but not necessarily social exclusion. Social exclusion can be described as the process of becoming detached from the moral order or from prevailing norms in society (Room 1995). In accordance with previous studies (Berghman 1995), social exclusion may be described as a dynamic and multidimensional concept. Employment promotes social integration, but unemployment may not necessarily imply social isolation.. Are unemployed youth socially integrated, in the sense that they are not isolated but have a close social network involving social participation and contact with friends and family? Here we must differentiate between the frequency of contact and the quality of social support, as high frequency of social contact does not necessarily imply social support.

A further question is whether high social integration is related to increased job chances, or if social integration may moderate mental health symptoms, which in turn may increase the probability of re-employment.

The family is clearly important for unemployed young people, as regards both financial and social support. Family background may also be important for young people's mental health as well as selection to unemployment. It is well known that social background influences the probability of unemployment: the majority of unemployed young people in an OECD study were found to be working-class youth with low education (OECD 1996). Some studies have also revealed that psychological stress related to unemployment is higher among those with a working-class background because of greater exposure to unemployment and economic deprivation (Whelan 1994). Additionally, research has documented that parental divorce or growing up in a single-parent family increases the risk of poverty and mental health problems (Hammer 1992, Jeffs & Smith 1990). Moreover, there seems to be an inter-generational transmission of poverty and disadvantage. Unemployment runs in family, especially in countries which have experienced high unemployment for many years such as Ireland and Denmark (Nolan et al. 1994, Christoffersen 1994). In other words, close contact with the family does not necessarily provide a buffer against social exclusion. We need to evaluate young peoples' own experience of social support and quality of contact with their families.

Naturally enough, this will also depend on their family situation, whether they are living with their parents or not.

Some studies have focused on increased isolation and loss of social contact among unemployed youth (Donovan & Oddy 1982). Especially among unemployed single mothers, isolation has been registered as a serious problem leading to depression (Beck-Jørgensen 1991). On the other hand, several studies have suggested that young unemployed people tend to form their own social networks within groups of unemployed. These groups may develop their own culture, a subculture that rejects the norms and values of society. Prolonged unemployment may therefore create an anti-work culture, which may explain why the risk of continued unemployment is so high among the previously unemployed (Hammer 1997). Earlier research from a Norwegian longitudinal study has shown that a close social network of friends seemed to moderate mental health problems among unemployed females, but not among unemployed males involved in more marginal subcultures characterised by drug use and illegal behaviour (Hammer 1993). This points up the importance of differentiating between frequency and the quality of contact experienced by the individual.

Whether social integration acts to moderate mental health symptoms may also be dependent upon the individual's coping strategies towards unemployment. In terms of theory, it is important to differentiate between coping strategies like 'problem solving' (such as economic strategies, activities in the informal economy etc). and strategies related to 'emotional coping' to maintain self-esteem and cope with emotional problems such as anxiety and depression. In our study we include both questions about financial problems as well as coping strategies such as increased time spent with family and friends, hobbies and leisure activities. Social integration may increase the individual's ability to cope in a way which reduces mental health symptoms and prevents social exclusion. On the other hand, it is also important to look into the accumulation of disadvantages. Financial problems and social isolation may interact, and accelerate processes of social disqualification, In turn increasing the probability of continued unemployment (Paugam 1997). Such processes may also increase mental health symptoms.

We have analysed the relationship between social exclusion and mental health across countries. Are unemployed young people socially isolated, and may social integration act to moderate mental health problems among unemployed youth ?

2.5 Youth Unemployment, Mental Health and Social Support

In addition to economic cost of youth unemployment for both the young and their societies, there are considerable social and psychological costs involved. On a societal level, unemployed youth signify costly unemployment benefits and other social welfare expenditures, wasted production potential and lower tax revenues. On the individual level, unemployed people experience worse physical health and higher levels of psychological distress, including depression, anxiety and low self-esteem (Dooley and Prause,

1995; Banks and Jackson, 1982; Hammerstrom and Janlert, 1997; Sigurdardottir, 1998; Carle and Julkenen, 1999). Accordingly, unemployed individuals have been found to be more likely to suffer from suicidal ideation, to attempt suicide, and to ultimately commit suicide (Brenner and Mooney, 1983; Dooley and Catalano, 1980; Platt, 1984). Unemployment furthermore appears to be associated with somewhat higher levels of illicit drug use (Gunnlaugsson and Galliher, 2000; Hammer, 1992; Carle and Julkenen, 1999). Interestingly, re-employment is apparently not associated with a corresponding decrease in illicit drug use (; Carle and Julkenen, 1999). In general, research suggests that the longer unemployment lasts, the more severe the adverse effects of unemployment on individual well being become (Hammer, 1993; Carle and Julkenen, 1999; Warr, Jackson and Banks, 1988).

The vast literature on social support demonstrates the importance of close emotional ties and practical help in times of distress (e.g. Cobb, 1976; Jacobson, 1986; Thorlindsson and Bjarnason, 1998; Vilhjalmsson, 1995). Indeed, there is strong evidence of social support buffering the effects of unemployment on individual well being (Gore, 1978; Hammer, 1993; Hammerström and Janlert, 1997; Pearlin et al., 1981). Social support is a multidimensional construct, and the effects of such support on individual well being may vary across contexts and by the type of support involved. For instance, Ullah, Banks and Warr (1985) found material support among unemployed youth to be associated with less psychological distress in general, while emotional support was more specifically related to less depression

Unemployed youth who enjoy parental support are more likely than others to find a job (Sigurdardottir, 1998, Carle and Julkenen, 1999), but relatively little is known about the importance of different types of social support in different labour market outcomes over time. We have analysed the effect of social support upon mental health and how such processes may influence probability of re-employment

2.6 Youth Unemployment and the Insurance System

A lot of research has focused upon the relationship between the unemployment insurance system and the rate of unemployment in different countries. The hypothesis is that work disincentives arise from too generous unemployment benefits systems which encourage people to become dependent on benefit and lowers their desire to find work. The idea is that people respond to financial incentives in a simple economist calculus of cash benefit against effort, so that the evasion of work is in direct proportion to the size and accessibility of the reward for not working. In other words, a generous insurance system may influence people's commitment to work and create a dependency culture (Dean and Taylor-Gooby 1992).

However, the empirical evidence to support such ideas are rather ambiguous. Gallie and Alm (1997) analysed the data from the Employment in Europe survey among employed and unemployed in the EC member states. They did not find that the generosity of welfare provision influenced work commitment. First, the unemployed in all of the European countries attached greater importance to having a job than people

who were actually in paid work. The general pattern was consistent with the argument that employment may have vital latent functions for psychological well-being which tend to be taken for granted until people have the experience of being without them. A closer examination of the association between people's perception of replacement ratios and employment commitment also indicated that the level of benefits was of little relevance to actual commitment. Finally, comparisons between countries with very different welfare regimes showed that those countries which had the most generous regimes were among those where the unemployed had the highest level of employment commitment (Gallie and Alm 1997).

It is also difficult to find a positive correlation between the level of benefits and the aggregate rate of unemployment across countries. It seems to be the duration of unemployment rather than the level in itself which is related to the compensation level (Layard 1991). Burda (1988) found a strong positive correlation between a measure of the generosity of unemployment benefits available and the ratio of long-term unemployment for fourteen OECD countries in 1985, based on aggregate data.

Research based on individual data is, however, highly inconclusive. There is a huge body of theoretical and empirical evidence on the incentive effects of cash benefits (Moffit, 1992, Barr 1992). Some studies find a positive relationship between duration of unemployment and level of compensation, other studies no relationship at all, or even a negative one (Narendranathan 1991). Different groups of people seem to behave in different ways, giving ambiguous results. In a British study Narendranathan (1989) found that receiving unemployment benefits was related to a high unemployment level among teenagers, but not among older workers.

On the other hand, the OECD Jobs Study (1994) argued that countries with a high level of unemployment benefits also have a higher rate of unemployment in general. Analyses of time series data from the OECD countries showed that the generosity of the benefits system has a lagged effect upon the rate of unemployment. However, among young people in the age group 14 to 24 years old, they found no correlation between duration of benefits and the share of long term unemployment of total employment in the EC countries. They argue that this might be so because of the little relevance to them of social benefits system. In most countries benefit entitlement depends upon having a record of earlier employment, which tends to exclude young people. The OECD report concluded: «Countries which currently have high unemployment and significantly reduce benefit disincentives may experience a considerable improvement in their unemployment situation within a few years» (p. 213). Accordingly, OECD presented this recommendation (Implementing the Strategy, OECD 1995), to all the member states and there ensued an intensive political debate about the level of unemployment benefits.

Indeed, this question is important, and there is a need for more research in this field. From a sociological perspective, cultural differences between countries concerning work ethics and work commitment may also be very important in explaining differences between countries. The countries seem to have a very high work commitment compared to other European countries in spite of including some of the most generous social benefits systems (Halvorsen 1997). However, a previous Nordic study found clear

differences in commitment to work even between the Nordic countries. Norway showed very high commitment, while Denmark scored very low (Marklund 1993).

Furthermore, especially for young people, whether they live at home with their parent or not might be of much greater importance for their economic situation than the actual level of benefits. There are also cultural differences between countries to be considered. Differences in social policy and levels of social security benefits may also have greater significance for young people who are not entitled to unemployment benefits. In other words, there is a need for future research on the relationship between compensation levels in a broader sense, work commitment and job seeking behaviour among young unemployed people between countries with different compensation levels, and levels of unemployment. The central question in this study is how the level of compensation is related to work commitment and job seeking, and how these influence job chances among unemployed young people. There are different possible ways of looking at this.

The compensation level may influence both attitudes towards work (work commitment) and job seeking. From one perspective, a high compensation level will appear to lead to less involvement in work and certainly less investment in job seeking (Atkinson and Mogensen 1993). Young unemployed in such countries will therefore have a lower probability of re-employment. On the other hand, work commitment may be culturally and not economically determined, implying a close relationship between work commitment and job seeking independent of economic factors. However, economic deprivation may also lead to a decreased probability of getting back to work. Previous research has found that economic problems are related to increased mental health problems among the unemployed youth (Rosvold and Hammer 1991). The financial situation can also influence how the individual copes with unemployment, which in turn may affect job seeking behaviour. Job seeking and other forms of contact with the labour market, may also in be regarded as coping strategies, which help the individual to maintain an identity as a worker (Kaul and Kvande 1991). Indeed, job seeking activity may be regarded as the only legitimised social role for the unemployed in a society with high work commitment.

Obviously, it is also important to consider the duration of the unemployment period. Norwegian research (Hernæs and Strøm 1994, 1996) has found a positive duration dependence among those entitled to unemployment benefits and a negative duration dependence among those without such rights. However, they found a longer duration of unemployment among persons without entitlement to unemployment benefits. In Sweden, Edin (1989) found a positive duration dependence, but did not differentiate between those entitled to or not entitled to unemployment benefits. In any case, Hernæs and Strøm explain the positive duration dependence as an effect of the social benefits system. However, they did not find that the level of unemployment benefit in and of itself had any effect upon the probability of re-employment. They argue that this is so because of the low compensation level in Norway (Hernæs and Strøm 1994).

We have analysed the influence of the different compensation level of unemployment benefits upon job seeking behaviour, work motivation and how such factors influence the probability of re-entering employment.

2.7 Youth Unemployment and Education

A lot of research has been carried out regarding the labour market career among previously unemployed youth. However, for unemployed youth, return to post compulsory education is another important option. This is especially important in the current situation in European labour markets.

First, because previous research has found that unemployed youth have low education and often lack qualifications demanded in the labour market (OECD 1998). Declining youth cohorts from the middle of the eighties, may imply an increased demand for young people in the labour market in many European countries. To give unemployed youth better qualifications seem to be an adequate measure. Second, better qualifications may help the less advantage group and thereby redistribute unemployment more evenly among young people. If unemployment does not hit one especially marginalised group, but is more evenly distributed, it would not have such adverse consequences. Many European countries increase places in education in order to combat youth unemployment. However, we know very little about who among unemployed youth do re-enter education and under what conditions.

In Norway and Sweden, upper secondary education is well developed and about 96% of the cohort enter upper secondary school. Vocational education is integrated in the school contrary to Denmark which is more similar to the German dual system with vocational education organised according to an apprenticeship system. In Iceland and Scotland, upper secondary education is less developed, especially regarding vocational education, and about 30% leaves school with only compulsory education.

Differences between countries imply that post compulsory education will be a more available option for unemployed youth in Scandinavia than in the other countries. Especially in Denmark, since apprenticeship training may be more attractive to unemployed youth than school based education.

The countries also differ greatly in terms of the level and history of unemployment.

In other words, both the availability of education and the unemployment rate may influence the return to education or employment, and explain different outcomes between countries. We have analysed what kind of factors seem to influence the probability of re-entering education among unemployed youth across countries.

2.8 Youth Unemployment and Political Behaviour

An often-discussed thesis in social research is the association between unemployment and political behaviour. The empirical facts that support this are however not as clear as they seem to be in the public debate.

One of the consequences that are widely discussed in research is if a person's possibilities to take an active part in political matters really is associated with the position in the labour market.

Unemployed youth tend to participate less in political activity and are less informed about political issues. They also tend to feel that they have less capacity to control their life situation. Such results are reported in a variety of studies from many different countries. But at the same time a variety of studies also indicate that there are no clear connection between unemployment and political activity. There is, in fact, no clear evidence that unemployment produces alienation from politics (Furlong & Cartmell 1997, Wallace & Kovatcheva 1998, Rantakeisu, Starrin & Hagqvist 1997, Petersson et al 1998, Griffin 1993).

The indication of political alienation is less clear than it seems to be in the public debate. Instead the evidence goes in many different directions. It is not that clear whether unemployment is associated with sympathies to the left or right on the political scale. In fact, both trends are reported in research (Furlong & Cartmell 1997, Wallace & Kovatcheva 1998). In some studies there is also evidence showing that unemployment does not influence young people's political behaviour at all. Instead it seems that other factors besides unemployment play an important role and interplay with people's political activity, for example gender, family background, social class, origin of birth within and outside the country (Furlong & Cartmell 1997, Wallace & Kovatcheva 1998).

In societies where people in addition to participation in political organisations and participation in elections also have (or feel that they have) other possibilities to influence the political agenda, unemployment seems to have a different effect on political behaviour compared to societies where this is not the case (Wallace & Kovatcheva 1998). One example is membership in social and cultural organisations outside the labour market (religious or non-religious). Sometimes such membership means that unemployed people have access to the political system. In southern Europe as well as in some of the Nordic countries, membership in religious organisations is such an example. Another example relevant for the Nordic countries is membership in a temperance movement which traditionally may imply access to power, since a number of parliament members also are members of such organisations. In some countries family network and relations are an important factor, which interplay with and influence people's political activity.

This may have an important impact on young people's way of coping with unemployment in general. Political activity is therefore a reflection of young people's life situation as a whole, where gender, age, social class and other social matters may have a significant influence.

The key question, which is under constant debate in social research, is how the relationship between unemployment and social and political behaviour could be understood. One possible connection is between the inflow and duration of unemployment on the individual and collective level and the formation of certain political and social behaviour. It is perhaps possible to find evidence, which shows that the experience of unemployment will lead to a certain social and political behaviour. If we look at methodology there are very few studies which actually can tell us stories about life course changes, no cross sectional study will give you that type of data (if they do not include historical data of course).

A few panel studies have been made which show some connections between different types of social situations in people's life courses (in which unemployment is calculated as one key situation) and what is thought to be different types of social and political behaviour. But not even in these panel studies is it possible to find a clear cut association between unemployment and social and political behaviour. If people become unemployed during periods of their life course, it does not automatically mean that they will change their social behaviour in a certain way, and conversely that unemployed people change their way of thinking and living once they get a job.

It has been said that unemployment is particularly harmful to young people's life chances and future prospects in life. They may be socialised into certain ways of living and thinking which are assumed to be difficult to change during their life course as adults. A lot of research on youth and youth cultures also reflects the idea that the way of life that are established during adolescence will hang on into adulthood. This is especially true for attitudes and social behaviour.

Compared to adults, young people's behaviour and thoughts also reflects the future. Since unemployment has been experienced by a lot of young people in our society, this will in some sense be a part of young people's way of interpreting life. Youth unemployment is also something that happens in a phase in the life course where people are mouldable. Finally, unemployment is also something that happens in a certain historical period where different generations have different experience from which they interpret the experience of unemployment. Political reactions and social behaviour are answers to both historical as well as individual experiences. So if we want to examine if unemployment goes hand in hand with a certain type of political behaviour or a certain way of living, the best way to do so would be to consider the general situation for young people. If we want to make comparative studies that go beyond gender, age, social background etc. and also include different countries, one realises the huge problems at hand.

In our European study we have the possibility to analyse three interesting indicators related to political activity. These indicators are (I) what type of political activity the young people have participated in (II) would consider to participate in (III) and would not consider participating in (IV) and finally political attitudes measured as the common used left and right scale.

2.9 Gender Differences in Youth Unemployment

Research on the effects of unemployment upon mental health has shown that women generally tend to adjust to unemployment better than men (Lahelma 1989; Mannila 1993; Gershuny 1994; Hyyppä 1996). One explanation is that women have more extensive social networks offering support for the unemployed (Vähätalo 1983, Vähätalo 1998; Gershuny 1994), and that they maintain their level of activity better when unemployed (Vähätalo 1983; Kotilainen & Mäenpää 1993; Gershuny 1994). Another explanation is that women have lower salaries and fewer career opportunities, and thus view employment as less important than men do (Gallie & Marsh 1994). The family situation can serve as a buffer for women's negative experiences of unemployment (de Witte & Wets, 1996). De Witte & Wets' (1996) study of unemployed women showed that the availability of an alternative role, such as being at home with the children made the experience of unemployment less distressing, especially among women with low education.

However, results from empirical studies on women's adjustment to unemployment are controversial. Some indicate that young women in particular view unemployment as very negative (Carle 1992; Nordenmark 1995, Hammarström 1996; Malmberg 1997). Recent findings (Malmberg 1997) have also shown that young women are more work-motivated than young men. Background variables such as age, education and duration of unemployment did not explain the differences in women's experiences of unemployment and work involvement, in the way they did for men. These results indicate that traditional explanations of why women adjust better to unemployment are no longer valid for contemporary work-oriented young women, and. We need to examine women's experiences more thoroughly, also taken family structure, living arrangements and incentives to enter the labour market into account.

Women's participation in working life increased all over Europe during the 1990s. In 1997 the employment rate for women rose to 51 per cent, and the gender gap was 20 per cent compared to 26 per cent in 1990. Although women's participation in working life has increased generally, the unemployment rate among women in Europe remains high. Between 1994 and 1997 the rate for young men under 25 fell by 3.5 percentage points, while the rate for young women fell by only around one percentage point (Employment in Europe 1998). These changes have also been visible in the Nordic countries, where the unemployment rate among women has generally been lower than among men.

The labour market remains highly gendered even though women's participation in working life has increased (Westergaard-Nielsen 1995). The percentage of women in paid work is lower, they work part-time and employment growth has been mainly concentrated in the service industries and occupations where their presence was already strong. The gender differences in the labour market are linked to the fact that women take greater responsibility for unwaged care work at home and in the community. Motherhood has a great impact on the employment participation rate. In general, mothers in Europe have lower employment rates than women without children. The employment rate in Europe for women with children under five years is over 20 per cent

points lower than for women without small children (Rubery & Fagan 1999, *Employment in Europe* 1998).

The impact of children on participation in working life among mothers varies in different countries however. In the UK, women with small children are more often economically inactive compared to women without children. The trend is the opposite in the Nordic countries: mothers with small children have higher levels of economic activity than childless women. Recent statistics also indicate that economic inactivity among women with children mainly affects those with a low level of education. In Europe, 78 per cent of all women with children under five were employed or looking for work in 1997, while the figure was only 43 per cent for women with basic schooling (Rubery & Fagan 1999, *Employment in Europe* 1998, *Reconciliation of work and family life and the quality of care services* 1997).

Part-time work is a way for women to reconcile work and family. About 40 per cent of women work part-time in Sweden, Denmark and UK and almost 50 per cent in Iceland and Norway. However, the percentage of women working part-time in Finland is only 11 (Nososko 1997). The large proportion of women in Finland working full-time has a long history and can be explained by the importance of the agricultural sector, which has been a more important employer than elsewhere in the Nordic countries, for both women and men (Melkas & Anker 1998, Haavio - Mannila 1990). The public sector has played an important role in the development of women's employment in the Scandinavian countries (Sconfienza & Gamberale, 1997). On the other hand flexible working hours cause women more difficulties in combining family and work, since it is difficult to arrange childcare during irregular working hours (Bellaagh 1998). Still, less-educated women more easily combine family and work, because they are more able to find informal solutions and to work shifts (Kremer 1999).

A key factor that enhances women's chances of being economically active is naturally childcare possibilities while parents are working. The most common care arrangements in the UK, are informal, combined with the mother working part-time. In the Nordic countries, on the other hand, childcare is mainly a public service², and parental leave is relatively highly remunerated (*Reconciliation of work and family life and the quality of care services*, 1997; Bergqvist 1999). Another key factor involves the economic conditions and regulations for job security, working time and wage conditions, all of which affect the way in which women enter the labour market. These institutional differences play a central explanatory role in accounting for international differences.

Countries have different welfare regimes, which create incentives or disincentives to enter the labour market. Traditionally, there has been a distinction between the male breadwinner and the dual breadwinner models. Lewis (1992) distinguished between strong, weak and modified breadwinner welfare-state systems to highlight the extent to which policies encourage or inhibit women in terms of working when they are wives or mothers. According to this research all Scandinavian countries are examples of weak male breadwinner models, and the UK belongs to the modified male-breadwinner model. Fagan and Rubery (1999), on the other hand, have argued that focusing solely on differences in childcare arrangements and welfare policies which encourage or hinder

women's labour supply is one-sided. Other factors such as economic conditions, labour-market regulations and other organisational features of employment affect women's job options. Fagan & Rubery (1999) found five different models of maternal employment: high full-time involvement in employment (e.g. Finland), high involvement with extended leave plus other working-time adjustments (e.g. Sweden and Denmark), reduced involvement and short part-time hours (e.g. the UK), reduced but full-time involvement (e.g. Italy), and low full-time involvement for all women (e.g. Greece).

We have analysed young people's unemployment experiences, job-search intensity and employment possibilities from a gender perspective in Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Scotland. Special attention has been paid to analysing the impact of children on young women's and men's unemployment experiences and employment prospects. Rubery and Fagans' (1999) model of maternal employment were used as a point of reference in interpreting the differences and similarities in the countries included in the study.

Labour Market Policy

There are many problems in exploring the potential of active labour market policies. First, the measurable outcomes are difficult to establish. Are we content with having wage labour as the critical hallmark of integration, or do we need more sophisticated measurements? Secondly, the labour market schemes vary both on a local, national and cross-national level when it comes to structures and approaches. Therefore, we are not sure if we compare like with like. Thirdly, in a comparative perspective the outcomes need to be contextualised into the different labour-market conditions in the various countries.

Employment measures aim generally at increasing labour-market flexibility and maintaining and strengthening the individual's working capacity with a view to improve his or her chances of finding employment. There is continuing debate on whether these activating programs do, in fact, have these effects. The schemes are frequently criticised for having less ambitious functions, such as cleaning up the statistics or just storing the workforce (cf Hyypä 1999). The debate, however, is seldom based on empirical facts, which is understandable given the fragmented body of knowledge in this field. An overview of previous studies on the effect of employment measures proves that the results are highly controversial and difficult to compare. Choices of control group, surveys, research design, methods and measurements vary. One might say that there is some unity in that it is difficult to prove beyond reasonable doubt the positive and negative effects of labour-market policies. In Sweden, labour market training schemes are well developed, while in Iceland there are very few such schemes. We have analysed the impact of different schemes upon the probability of re-entering education or employment across countries.

3. Main Objectives of the Study

The study focus on a number of different research questions which ultimately help to provide an explanation of the ways in which unemployment experiences may lead to social marginalisation or exclusion:

- * How are different levels of youth unemployment in different countries with different educational, labour market and social policies related to the marginalization processes and how do different career trajectories lead to the integration or social exclusion of young people ?

- * How are young people's trajectories related to the previously identified problems such as mental health problems and drug use?

- * What is the relationship between mental health, unemployment and social exclusion ?

- *How does educational policy influence the probability to return to education in different countries ?

- *How is the relationship between unemployment and political attitudes and participation ?

- * What is the impact of different level of unemployment insurance and job search behaviour in young people?

- * How do different active labour market measures in different countries influence the ways in which the long term unemployed cope with unemployment ?

4. Project Results and Methodology

4.1 Research Design

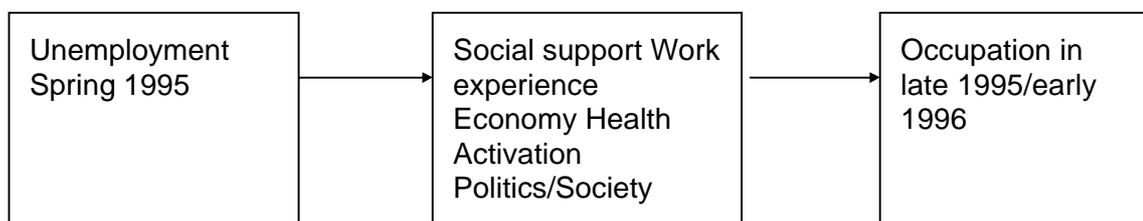
We used marginalisation as the leading concept. The main research question was to study to what degree position on the labour market correlates with other social circumstances in the life situation of young people.

Different aspects of marginalisation in relation to youth unemployment are highlighted and analysed in the study. We chose the following different dimensions of marginalisation and integration:

- employment
- family situation
- living conditions
- social network
- politics and society.

The study is cross-sectional. At one point of time, a group of young people who had been at least 3 months continuously unemployed during the first half of the year was selected as a sample. Thus, we chose to study a group, which, according to marginalisation theories, had a more problematic relationship with one central area: employment. The crucial question is, then, to what extent can this position be interpreted as problematic in relation to other domains as well? To what extent does this covary with access to other resources and with the individual capacity of the young people involved?

The research design can be illustrated as follows:



At the time when the samples were drawn, all of the young people in our study were unemployed. Approximately a 6-12 months after, when they were interviewed, the situation had changed. What factors could have had an influence on this outcome? We chose a certain number of variables to problematic this relationship, as follows:

- social support
- work experience
- unemployment experiences
- financial situation
- health situation
- experiences of labour-market schemes
- political attitudes.

From an analytical perspective, however, it is not self-evident how these variables should be regarded. Do they reflect circumstances that can be influenced by an outcome, or are they more permanently structured? To deal with the time dimension we included different time perspectives in our questions under the assumption that certain variables are stable enough to be regarded as being able to influence employment outcome.

We chose this research strategy in order to shed light on how different degrees of marginalisation, or rather different levels of integration into the labour market, may be related to other circumstances in the lives of the young people in our study. Our aim was also to be able to form an opinion on the processes of marginalisation in terms of the relationship between the outcome of unemployment and differences in the life situations of young people. In countries with different labour-market and educational policies, unemployed youth can end up in work, education, employment schemes or permanent unemployment. This research investigates the outcome of long-term unemployment among youth.

Surveys were carried out among representative samples of 2,000-4,000 young unemployed people in Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Scotland. The samples were drawn from national unemployment registers, and the respondents were young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who had been unemployed for a period of at least three months over the previous six months. The final sample consisted of 2,386 young unemployed people in Finland, 4,000 in Sweden, 2,000 in Iceland and Norway, and 1,500 in Denmark and 1500 in Scotland. The surveys were carried out in late 1996/1997, and were initially based on postal questionnaires, with additional telephone interviews carried out to minimise the bias caused by a skewed response rate.

The response rate in the surveys reached 73 per cent in Finland, 60 per cent in Iceland, 56 per cent in Norway, 63 per cent in Sweden, 55% in Scotland and 79 per cent in Denmark. The entire sample consists of 8600 unemployed young people, aged 18-24 years.

In Ireland, the researchers were denied access to the unemployment register. It was therefore impossible to use the same survey design. The Irish research team therefore used the ECHP (European Community Household Panel) data from Ireland and eight other European countries of unemployed youth in the same age group.

4.2 Collecting the Survey Data

The questionnaire was addressed to unemployed young people aged 18-24 years. We decided on the following criterion in our sample: *at least 3 months of continuous unemployment during the first half of 1995 in the five Nordic countries*. In Scotland, the sample included the same criteria, the first half year of 1997. This allowed us to focus on the group defined in the Nordic countries (with some exceptions) as long-term unemployed youth. It would have been both interesting and fruitful to include a randomly selected group of young people as a reference group to see if there were any marked differences between our chosen group and a randomly selected sample of the whole youth population. We counted on making comparisons on the basis of existing register data. Still, the primary reason for not including a control group was that we wanted to compare the unemployment situation in the countries at first hand. We did expect that, even within the group we had selected, a considerable number of young people would be employed at the time of the interviews, during, and this would guarantee variations in the group. We were thus able to focus on the question of what groups remained unemployed and what groups gained employment or re-entered education after the sample had been chosen.

4.2.1 Finland

Sample

The criteria for the sampling procedure were the same as in the research design. The statistical representativeness was controlled on the basis of region, unemployment level, unemployment duration, gender and education. The sample was drawn from national unemployment registers and included young people who were receiving either flat-rate benefits or unemployment insurance payments. The following criteria have to be fulfilled to be included in the register:

- 17-64 years of age
- capable of work
- job seeker at the employment office
- looking for full-time work.

Attrition analysis

The Finnish register material comprises information concerning the age, residence, education, employment and unemployment of the young people in the study, and also the municipal unemployment level. It also gives information on the unemployment and employment spells of the young people during 1992-1995.

The Finnish sample consisted of 2,386 persons. A total of 1,736 young people responded to the questionnaire, which gives a response rate of 73 per cent. Seven age classes were included, the oldest subjects being born in 1970 and thus 24 years old at the time of the sample. The youngest were born in 1976 and thus 18 years old at the time of the sample. The 19- and 20-year-olds were the groups with proportionally the highest response rate, nearly 80 per cent, while it was 70 per cent for the 18- and 23-year-olds. The response rate was lowest among the 24-year-olds, 62 per cent. Of the women 78 per cent responded, and 69 per cent of the men and women were thus somewhat over-represented in the material. Concerning variables such as education and unemployment duration, the analysis showed that there were no significant differences between the entire sample and the respondents. The attrition analysis on the local unemployment level showed that young people from average unemployment areas (17-22 per cent) were slightly under-represented, whereas those from high unemployment areas (>22 per cent) were slightly over-represented (cf. Julkunen & Malmberg-Heimonen 1998).

4.2.2 Iceland

Sample

The sample was selected from the same age groups as in the other Nordic countries but there were some different sampling procedures. The questionnaire was sent out to those who were registered as unemployed at the 20 different unemployment offices all over Iceland. The sample consisted of young unemployed people with at least 2 months of unemployment or longer during the first half of 1995. The total number of unemployed young people is relatively small in Iceland, particularly in comparison with the other Nordic countries (the population of Iceland is approximately 270,000, which corresponds to the population of Bergen). Due to the small numbers of unemployed and particularly long-term unemployed young people in Iceland, the research was carried out as a total study in which almost every person who was unemployed at the time of the sample was included. This created some problems in the statistical analysis, which assumes random sampling. The following rules are applicable for being registered as unemployed in Iceland:

- Wage-earner who has worked at least 425 hours during the previous 12 months before becoming unemployed (has also the right to receive compensation from the unemployment insurance fund).
- Looking for work, older than 16 years but younger than 70 years, and live in Iceland or in another EEC country.
- The unemployed are required to provide certification from an employment office that they have been unemployed for at least 3 whole days at the beginning of the period for which the unemployment compensation is applied.
- Private entrepreneurs have the same rights as wage-earners, provided that they fulfil all the basic criteria and can prove that their business has been closed down.

The questionnaire was answered by altogether 1,290 persons, which gave a response rate of 60 per cent. The sample consisted of 53 per cent of men and 47 per cent of women, with 70 per cent of the women answering the questionnaire and 61 per cent of the men. Thus, women are slightly over-represented in the material.

4.2.3 Norway

Sample

A total of 97,934 young people aged 18-24 years were registered as unemployed at some time during the first half of 1995, and 19 per cent of these were long-term unemployed (>3 months). The sample was selected from among those who had been at least 3 months continuously unemployed during the period (1.1.-30.6.1995), and who were looking for a full-time job. The group consisted of 39,020 persons, of which 17,909 were unemployed at the time of the sample. From this population 2,000 people were selected. The sample seems representative of the population (39,020) in terms of key characteristics that can be controlled through the register. When it comes to age there was a slight over-representation of the older age groups in the sample.

Attrition analysis

Altogether 1,106 people answered the questionnaire, which gave a response rate of 56 per cent. The register data was coupled to the information of those young people in our study who had given their permission (85 per cent) (n=944). It is possible to use register information of the whole sample (n=2,000) to analyse eventual skewness which may affect the possibility of making generalisations from the sample.

In the attrition analysis we compared the sample with the respondents regarding very extensive register information. There were no differences between the sample and the respondents with regard to: proportion who had received benefits, the length of the unemployment period, total experience of unemployment, school dropout from compulsory school, previous work experience, proportion without any relevant work experience or education, or place of residence. The only difference was that 22.9 per cent in the sample had only compulsory school education or had no qualifications, compared with 16.1 per cent among the respondents. The difference is statistically significant ($z=4.47$). However, more among the respondents had only one or two years of vocational education compared to the sample where more had completed a full vocational education. There were no differences with regard to other educational categories. Contrary to expectations and despite a low response rate, the attrition can not be considered skewed.

4.2.4 Sweden

Sample

The criteria applied to the sample were the same as in the research as a whole. The sample was selected through the AMS (The Labour Market Board) who made a random sample among people registered as unemployed in HÄNDEL, the database on people actively seeking work. There are no formal limitations to being included in the register other than having gone to an employment office and reported to be looking for a job. The next phase comprised coding the different categories, e.g. student, working, unemployed. The sample therefore consisted of people registered as unemployed (which excludes full-time students and retired persons).

Attrition analysis

There was a total of 801,093 young people aged 18-24 in Sweden in 1995. During the first half of the year there were on average 82,000 unemployed people aged 16-24 per month (AKU). This gives a sample fraction of 1.2 per cent of the unemployed young people during the sample period.

The sample comprised 4,000 persons (two persons were excluded due to technical problems, and the net sample was therefore 3,998). There were altogether 1,853 women (46 per cent) and 2,147 men (54 per cent). The questionnaire was answered by 2,534 persons, 1,247 women and 1,287 men, which gives a response rate of 63 per cent. The questionnaire was answered by 49 per cent of women and 51 per cent men. The response rate among the women was 67 per cent and 60 per cent among the men.

The attrition consists of 1,084 persons. An attrition analysis was carried out on the basis of information from the register material. Due to technical problems, however, a comparison between the sample and the respondents could not be completed for all. Information on 191 respondents (97 women and 94 men) was not included in the attrition analysis.

The attrition analysis showed that there were no statistical differences when comparing citizenship, work handicap and place of residence. Men turned out to have been 22.8 weeks unemployed on average, compared with 20.9 weeks among the respondents. Unemployment among women was on the average 8.9 weeks in the attrition and 9.7 weeks among the respondents.

4.2.5 Denmark

Sample

The sample was randomly drawn from the Central Unemployment Register (CRAM) in which all unemployed are currently registered. Most unemployed people (about 85 per cent) and the main part of the labour force (about 80 per cent) are a member of an unemployment insurance fund. Both insured and non-insured are registered in the

Register. The non-insured unemployed are persons receiving social assistance from the local authorities. However, many persons receiving social assistance are not registered as unemployed in the Central Unemployment Register. This means that some non-insured young people without employment are not registered as unemployed in the register. Therefore, and because of the limited size of sample it was decided only to include insured young unemployed persons in the present study.

The population from which the Danish sample was drawn was defined in the following way:

- Insured persons in the age of 19-24 years (1.1.1995) with a total of less than 3 months in the second half-year of 1994, and with more than 13 weeks of unemployment in the last 26 weeks before week 1-26 in 1995.

Consequently, the population consists of young insured persons with more than 3 months of unemployment in the last 26 weeks before weeks 1-26 in the first half-year of 1995. Or put it more simply, the Danish population consists of young insured persons having been unemployed more than 3 months. From this population (about 12,000 persons) a simple random sample 1,500 persons was drawn. Of these, 19 persons had invalid person identification numbers. Consequently, the effective sample consisted of 1,481 persons to whom the questionnaire was sent. Those who did not answer were contacted by interviews (by telephone). The questionnaire was answered by 1,171 persons, which gave a response rate of 79 per cent.

Attrition analysis

The questionnaire was answered by 83 per cent of the women and 78 per cent of the men. This difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The response rate did not depend on age, but young people from the eastern part of Denmark (Copenhagen and the islands) answered generally to a smaller extent than young unemployed people in the western part of Denmark. There were no statistically significant differences with regard to the duration of previous unemployment.

As mentioned, the Danish sample only includes insured persons. In general, it is to be expected that the insured unemployed category comprise of “stronger groups” than non-insured. However, there exists no recent nation-wide studies on the composition of insured and non-insured unemployed people and the mobility between these groups. There exists a clear need of research and statistics in this area in Denmark.

4.2.6 Scotland

The sample

The sample was selected from the same age groups as in the Nordic countries, but there were different sampling procedures. In the Nordic countries, the sample was collected

through the unemployment registers, while in Scotland interviewers were placed in a representative range of unemployment benefit offices throughout the country. All the young people had been unemployed for a minimum of three months at time of first contact. Postal questionnaires were completed six months after sampling at which time some young people had found jobs, entered schemes or returned to education, while others remained unemployed or were experiencing a further spell of unemployment. The questionnaire was completed by 817 respondents, which gave a response rate of 56%. The sample consisted of 65% males and 35% females, which reflects the actual proportions of males and females unemployed in this age group in Scotland.

Attrition Analysis

The attrition consisted of 629 individuals. The attrition analysis could only be based upon gender, area of residence (rural or urban) and length of unemployment, as we did not have access to unemployment register data. There were slightly more males who failed to respond than females, although not statistically significant. The length of unemployment did not affect response rates, but there were more non-respondents living in poorer urban areas than in rural areas although this was not statistically significant.

4.2.7 Conclusions about the Sample and Attrition in the Countries

With the exception of Iceland the sample was based on a criterion of at least 3 months of continuous unemployment during the period 1.1-30.6.1995. Iceland used 2 months as a criterion. There were several reasons for this. The number of young unemployed people would have been too small with the requirement of 3 months. Furthermore, it was thought to be advantageous to have 2 months as the limit, and then to conduct a total study on all the unemployed young people in Iceland.

The Danish sample did not include non-insured young people. It can be assumed that the non-insured young unemployed people differ with regard to experiences of both unemployment and employment, financial resources, living and family conditions, and political and social attitudes. If differences between the countries involved in the study are to be found, the question arises as to whether they are due to the divergent sampling frame, or to real differences in the unemployment situation between the countries. One way to examine the importance of a divergent sample is to try to compare the national samples to see if there would have been differences if the non-insured were excluded. Another way is to compare the insured in the respective countries and analyse differences and similarities within these groups. Statistically this can be controlled for in multivariate analyses.

The time variations in the realisation of the survey also create some problems. We are aware of these problems and therefore we have been cautious in analyses that concern time aspects. The data material was coded in a way that enables tendency analysis of response differences between the postal questionnaire rounds and the telephone interviews. Information is available on 6,006 individuals (77 per cent of the respondents, Denmark is not included) in terms of whether they responded directly, to

the first, second or third reminder or through the telephone interview. Certain tendencies were observed in the responses of those who responded directly and those who responded after the reminders:

- Women responded to a greater extent to the first mailing.
- The 20-22 year-olds responded to a greater extent to the first mailing.
- People in Finland responded best to the first mailing, followed by those in Norway, Sweden and Iceland.
- Those with less experience of unemployment responded to a greater extent to the first mailing.
- Those with higher education responded to a greater extent to the first mailing.
- Those who did not feel that people looked down on the unemployed responded to a greater extent to the first mailing.
- Those who did not feel isolated or unhealthy, and who had not lost confidence responded to a greater extent to the first mailing.
- Those who experienced more mental problems, as anxiety, feelings of hopelessness and nervousness, responded to a greater extent to the first mailing and the telephone interview.
- Those who reported being more to the political left responded to a greater extent to the first mailing.

According to one hypothesis the tendency of the attrition follows the tendency of the reminders. If this is the case, it seems that the questionnaire was less likely to reach the young people with longer experience of unemployment, with a lower educational background and those who felt more isolated. The differences were small, however, but taken together they point to a tendency in the material. This is not surprising. The opposite would be sensational. However, there is evidence from previous research of a process of gradual passivity and coping. What is interesting in our study, is the implication that there was a group of people who were worried about their situation, some of whom responded rapidly and some after several reminders. This could indicate that people who worry about their situation want to tell others about their experiences, and at the same time, reminders reach groups that have become more passive during the process of unemployment.

It is obvious that there are various methodological problems in comparative research. However, the attrition analyses conducted for the countries involved showed that, all in all, the material is well balanced and that there is no need to correct skewness.

4.3 Results

Unemployment has increased dramatically among young people in the Nordic countries during the 1990s. However, it reached very different levels in each of these countries. In 1993, at its peak, it reached 6 per cent in Iceland and 36 per cent in Finland. In 1995, the youth unemployment rate was 29.9 per cent in Finland, 15.3 per cent in Sweden, 11.8 per cent in Norway, 9.7 per cent in Denmark, 11 per cent in Iceland and 12 per cent in Scotland.

Youth unemployment is today considered a serious political problem in all the Nordic countries. Many critical voices have been raised over the seriousness of the problem. On the other hand, long-term unemployment has turned out to be a more serious problem among middle-aged people than among young people. Even though youth unemployment tends to be of short duration, it is characterised by the fact that youth have several short periods of unemployment behind them. Surveys have also proved that middle-aged people have been affected more seriously by unemployment, while young people have shown fewer signs of negative sociopsychological consequences. The reason for this is partly to be found in the strength of the social network. Thanks to family and friends, the negative effects on young people have been cushioned.

These surveys are based on the assumption that there is a connection between young people's position vis-à-vis the labour market and their social situation. The central question of this research is to what extent a person's position on the labour market as young and unemployed can be connected to what could be defined analytically as marginalisation processes. Marginalisation is interpreted in this survey in terms of various aspects of participation:

- participation in various domains (labour market, economics, culture, and politics)
- resources for achieving participation (economic, social and cultural capital)
- willingness and desire to participate

Information on the different aspects of participation, or lack thereof, can provide systematised information about youth unemployment in the countries. Compared to other European countries, there is a remarkable similarity among the Scandinavian countries in the basic structure of the welfare state, and in the way their citizens view the state and the society in a deeper meaning, making the relationship between them different from that in other European countries. As far as developing social policy and constructing the welfare state are concerned, there still is a certain degree of variety between the Nordic countries. One could perhaps say that Finland and Iceland form the peripheral poles, while Sweden, Norway and Denmark constitute a group in between. By comparing countries with different unemployment histories (experience of unemployment and unemployment level), it is possible to analyse their differences and similarities. On the other hand, Scotland and Ireland represent a more liberal welfare state model, with less generous welfare provision.

4.3.1 Exit from Youth Unemployment in Europe

Our study of young people's transitions from unemployment to work in nine European countries has revealed a number of findings that could not be deduced from cross-sectional or single country studies. Using the European Community Household Panel Study (ECHP), we examined the respondents' labour market situation over a period of two years across countries. This way, it is possible to capture some of the instability in young people's activity status that is missed by static measures of unemployment. The activity diaries of young people show that unemployment is a more common experience than youth unemployment rates would lead us to believe. Unemployment affected at least three in every ten young people at some time between January 1993 and December 1994 in each country studied. In Italy and Spain the numbers concerned rose to three in every five.

The cross-national comparisons show that not only do the patterns of transitions vary very substantially across countries but so do the factors that influence the transition. International differences in the rate and speed of the exit from unemployment to work are clearly structured by levels of demand in the national labour markets. The transition is most prolonged in Italy, Greece and Spain, where youth unemployment rates are very high and strict labour market regulation inhibits hiring. Transitions into employment are most rapid in Denmark, France, the UK and Portugal.

At the individual level, the type of human capital in which the unemployed person needs to invest to improve his or her chances of finding a job varies between countries. Investment in educational credentials is most beneficial in Belgium, Ireland, France and Germany. In the UK and the Southern European countries accumulating work experience has a much stronger positive effect on employment probabilities than education. This is not to say that educational level will not effect the type of job eventually found in these countries. It seems likely that these results for education and work experience are linked to the structure of national educational and training systems. Further research is needed to shed light on this link.

Our comparison between countries shows that differences in labour demand cannot explain the cross-national variation in the relationship between transition rates and the personal characteristics of the unemployed. For example, our analysis of duration dependency showed that the national differences in the gap between the employment probabilities of the long and short-term unemployed could not be explained by aggregate growth rates or unemployment rates. Institutional factors, namely the level of employment regulation and spending on active labour market policies were found to be more important in explaining national differences. Regulation reduced differences by equalising everybody's employment probabilities at a low level, while active labour market spending worked by improving the chances of the most disadvantaged. Therefore, at the country level the latter appears to be the more sensible policy option.

4.3.2 Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion

We set out to analyse the links between labour market exclusion and patterns of economic and social exclusion. Given the extremely high levels of youth unemployment in Finland compared to the other countries, we had expected to find correspondingly high levels of economic and social exclusion. This was not the case, it was Scotland (where overall levels of youth unemployment are not especially high) in which young people appeared to suffer most from the experience of unemployment. Indeed, while unemployment can lead to social exclusion, its impact can be mediated by a number of different factors. First, it is not overall levels of unemployment which we should focus on, but long-term unemployment and particularly history dependence. In this context we noted that rates of youth unemployment are higher in Finland than Scotland, but that in Scotland routes out of unemployment are much more constrained. Second, material factors provide an important mediating link and where benefit levels are high, the subjective experience of unemployment tends not to be so negative. While generous benefit levels have sometimes been regarded by politicians as something which may lower the commitment to finding paid work, we suggest that inadequate benefits can be counterproductive in that they may reinforce social exclusion. Third, social activity can also provide some protection against social exclusion. While the ability to participate in a wide range of social activities is often affected by economic factors (especially benefit levels), this is not always the case: the increase in sociability among excluded Danish females and the decrease among males being a good example. In sum, the ability to maintain high levels of life satisfaction despite enduring prolonged unemployment would seem to be dependent on an equilibrium between the different dimensions of the unemployment experience. High levels of labour market exclusion may be tolerable subjectively if, for example, adequate recompense is provided or if the range of opportunities available mean that unemployment is not perceived as a dead-end street. Conversely, high levels of labour market exclusion combined with inadequate income and low levels of social activity mean that the experience of unemployment is likely to lead to despondency and a sense of no future: factors which are central to the process of social exclusion.

4.3.3 The Impact of Unemployment Benefits

We have analysed the impact of receiving unemployment benefits upon the probability of re-entering employment. The level of support (compensation level) varies a lot across countries. We found that to receive unemployment benefits reduced the probability of re-employment in all countries. There was also a significant interaction effect that implied lower job chances in Denmark, with its high compensation level (90%), compared to Norway (60%) or Sweden. Danish unemployed had also lower work commitment and lower job seeking activity than the other countries. However, the observed proportion that actually returned to employment, was not lower in Denmark than in the other countries with the same unemployment rate.

Previous research from this Nordic study has also documented that Danish unemployed have better mental health, feel less isolated and cope better with unemployment than in the other Nordic countries. A better economic situation implies a better life situation, even if those who received benefits had a lower probability of re-employment. However, a very low compensation level of benefits, such as in Iceland, was also related to decreased probability of re-employment. Furthermore, to receive social assistance or report economic deprivation reduced job chances in the same way as a high compensation level.

The results provide good documentation of how the negative effects of a high compensation level have been overestimated in unemployment research as well as in public and political discussion. The invented image of lazy, unemployed youth who get everything for nothing, and are a burden for society, seems to be deeply rooted in people's minds. It supports the strong ideology of work commitment, which in turn leads to a neglect of poverty among unemployed youth. Young people in the age group between 18 and 24 years old, who are the target sample of this study, are in a life phase which involves economic problems. Setting up their own household, small children, and lower wages are obviously related to financial hardship. Especially among unemployed youth, where a majority belongs to the working class and probably has less financial support from parent and relatives, low education, and often jobs interspersed with periods of unemployment (Hammer 1997). On the other hand, to receive unemployment benefits did have a negative impact upon the probability of re-employment in all countries. This effect could be interpreted as a disincentive effect. Unfortunately, our data does not give any good measurement of the reservation wage, the wage at which the individual is indifferent between accepting a job and continuing search (Barr and Whyne 1993). According to job search theory, the reservation wage would be determined by the compensation level, and such analysis would have given a better understanding of the disincentive effect. However, in a review of the literature Barr (1992) concludes: «Despite continuing controversy, the general conclusion is that though the duration of unemployment is likely to be slightly longer at higher replacement rates, the magnitude of the effect is not large» (Barr, 1992, p762).

Cross-sectional data imply that it is not possible to draw any definite conclusions about the causal relationship between economic problems and job chances. However, economic problems still remain significant when controlling for duration of unemployment. Furthermore, to receive social assistance is also an indication of economic problems and this effect was just as strong as the negative effect of receiving unemployment benefits.

The negative effect of economic problems does not correlate with economic theory. We would have expected that economic problems would have increased the incentives for job seeking and therefore increased job chances and not the other way around. The strong negative effect of economic problems upon job chances, calls for future research. Several hypotheses are possible. Research has documented that in countries with low unemployment levels, there are strong selection effects linked to unemployment (Mastekaasa 1996). However, educational level or unemployment in the

family did not influence job chances, and economic problems remained significant also when controlling for such background variables. Nonetheless, those with economic problems may also have even other characteristics not controlled for in the analyses.

Alternatively, economic problems may be related to mental health problems such as depression among unemployed youth, which in turn might influence job chances (Whelan 1994, Hammer 1998). It is also possible that mental health problems influence job search and thereby job chances.

In any case, the results have some interesting and significant implications for labour market policy. Our findings show that there are differences between countries with a high or low compensation level of unemployment benefits. However, in Denmark, with a very high compensation level, the observed job chances relative to the unemployment level was rather high. Moreover, a low compensation level may in fact aggravate economic problems and reduce the probability of re-entering the labour market even more.

4.3.4 Mental Health and Social Integration

No clear relationship was found between the level of unemployment in a country and reported mental health problems. Both Iceland and Denmark had low levels of unemployment, but youth in Iceland reported more mental health problems and in Denmark fewer mental health problems than in the other countries. Comparing different measures of social integration, Iceland had higher social integration than the other countries, and social support had a stronger moderating effect upon mental health problems. However, Icelandic youth were found to report more mental health problems, even when social integration was controlled for. On the other hand, unemployed youth in Denmark had fewer mental health problems, were less isolated, had a better financial situation and coped better with unemployment than was the case in the other countries. The results must indicate cultural differences among the countries studied. In Iceland, youth unemployment is a new phenomenon; and to be unemployed carries more of a stigma than in Denmark, where unemployment has remained high for the past 20 years. Furthermore, financial problems were found to have a strong association to mental health problems. In Iceland, the compensation level of unemployment benefits is about 50%, against 90% in Denmark, indicating a greater degree of economic deprivation in Iceland than in Denmark (Hammer 1999). Interestingly, the inter-country differences in mental health changed when social integration, coping with unemployment, duration of unemployment and economic deprivation were controlled for. Icelandic youth still reported significantly more problems than Finland, but so did jobless Danish young people as well. In other words, better mental health among the Danish unemployed emerged as related to a better financial situation, better coping and better social integration. When these factors were controlled for, Danish unemployed were not found to report fewer mental health problems than young people in the other countries.

Economic deprivation emerged as the single factor with the strongest association to mental health problems. However, cross-sectional data cannot give any evidence of a causal relationship. It is possible that financial problems influence the risk of continued

unemployment, which in turn increases mental health problems – or it may be the other way around. Be this as it may, the relationship between financial problems, social isolation and unemployment should be explored further. The results reported here indicate processes of social disqualification where unemployment, social isolation and economic deprivation are associated with mental health problems. Both economic deprivation and social isolation have a strong relationship to mental health problems, and there is also a very weak but significant interaction effect implying a multiplier effect upon mental health. These results are in accordance with earlier studies (Whelan 1993).

On the whole, we have found evidence of an accumulation of disadvantages, with strong correlations between continued unemployment, financial problems, mental health problems and social isolation in every country. Social integration may moderate mental health problems, but it is not related to increased probability of re-employment or return to education. However, mental health problems were found to be associated with increased risk of continued unemployment.

It is difficult to offer any causal explanations. Mental health problems may influence the individual's feelings of social isolation and the experience of social support, and not the other way around. On the other hand, it seems unlikely that mental health problems should influence economic deprivation, since the level of reported financial problems is so clearly related to the level and coverage of unemployment benefits in the countries studied (Hammer 1999). It is therefore reasonable to assume that economic deprivation acts to increase mental health problems. Unemployed youth in Denmark had a much better situation than in the other countries, yet the same proportion had been re-employed as in the other countries with the same unemployment rate. The results indicate that when a country provides a generous social insurance policy, this enable the unemployed to cope better with unemployment, which in turn means a lower level of mental health problems.

We found no evidence of social exclusion among unemployed youth. Respondents had close contact with family and friends, and only 14% reported social isolation. However, our results do indicate a relationship between mental health problems, economic deprivation and social isolation which probably leads to social disadvantage – not among the majority, but among a minor group of unemployed youth in the Nordic countries.

4.3.5 Mental Health and Social Support

We have examined the role of social support in mitigating psychological distress among currently and recently unemployed youth in several different countries. We found the Danish respondents to be significantly less distressed than the sample as a whole, while the Icelandic respondents were on average more distressed than their counterparts in other countries.

Denmark and Iceland may in some respects be considered to be at the opposite ends of a continuum of societal strains exerted on the unemployed. It has been pointed out in countries with high unemployment rate for a long period the public acceptance of

unemployment (Schaufeli, 1997). Coupled with relatively generous unemployment benefits and a trend towards increased youth employment, the Danish respondents may in fact feel less social and economic pressure, and have reasons to be more optimistic about their future prospects of becoming and remaining employed.

In the hierarchical model, controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, employment status and support from parents, the national differences in levels of psychological distress remained largely unchanged. Once differences in economic deprivation and perceived attitudes of others towards the unemployed are controlled for, however, most of these differences became non-significant. Only the Icelandic respondents remain somewhat more distressed than the Danes. The Finnish respondents in fact turn out to be less distressed, once all factors in the model have been accounted for. Finally, we found significant national differences in the full model across different labour market outcomes. The complex differences by country, gender and labour market outcomes that emerge are somewhat beyond the scope of the present study, but warrants further investigation.

The effects of age on psychological distress vary significantly by labour market outcomes. Age has no main effect on psychological distress in the full model. However, older age is on one hand related to less distress among the permanently employed and those who have returned to school. On the other hand, older males that have remained unemployed or only have a temporary job are more distressed than others in that same situation. It could be argued that net of length of unemployment, biological age increasingly becomes a stressor among the unemployed and the temporarily employed, in particular among males that may feel the added weight of traditional gender expectations on their shoulders. Conversely, the feeling of progress through becoming permanently employed or returning to school may have greater psychological benefits for the older unemployed youth. Indeed, prior research suggests that the adaptation problems and social pressures associated with unemployment become more serious with age (Winefield et al., 1993)

We found that currently and recently unemployed youth who live alone or with friends are worse off than those living with their parents. Furthermore, those who have a child that lives with them appear to be somewhat better off. However, analysing the data by labour market outcomes reveals several important caveats. Thus, those living alone with friends are only worse off than those living with their parents if they are continuously unemployed males, this is in line with older research (Hammer, 1994). Having a child in the household similarly only decreases psychological distress among those who have become full-time homemakers. Thus, the effect of living arrangements on psychological distress appears to be strongly dependent on labour market outcomes.

We found that emotional support from parents is associated with less psychological distress among females, regardless of labour market outcomes. Among males, emotional support from parents is associated with less psychological distress among the unemployed, the temporarily employed, and among students. Interestingly, parental emotional support is unrelated to psychological distress in the most traditional category of permanently employed males and in the most non-traditional category of males who are homemakers.

Other types of parental support are found to be unrelated to psychological distress or to be associated with higher levels of such distress. Continuously unemployed males and females that receive instrumental support from their parents are found to be more distressed than others in that situation, although the underlying causal mechanism is not entirely clear. In particular, greater parental instrumental support may be a reaction to severe psychological distress and fewer resources to deal with it among unemployed adolescents.

The overall conclusion of this is that economic deprivation is the greatest determinant of psychological distress among currently and recently unemployed youth. Becoming permanently employed or going back to school is associated with less distress, while temporary employment or becoming a homemaker does not. Emotional support by parents is an important resource for this group, but once such support has been taken into account, parental advice may be experienced as an interference that further increases psychological distress.

4.3.6 Gender Differences among Unemployed Youth

All in all, the results show that young women have high work involvement, and experience unemployment as negatively as men do. On the other hand, they have lower search activities and poorer employment prospects. Only in Sweden did the women show higher search activity and as good employment prospects as the men. Recent studies have found positive correlations between the right to parental leave and childcare on the one hand and the rate of employment for women with children on the other (Almqvist & Boje 1999). According to the results of our study, the key factor does not seem to be good day-care arrangements, since women's labour-market prospects are the same in countries as different as Finland and Scotland. Is it the case that young women today really have the opportunity to stay at home, and that this is more a reflection of their own choices? This seems to be the so in Denmark, where young women have alternative occupations, staying at home or taking a sabbatical leave. Nevertheless, reconciling work and family is not an easy task, a fact which could well be seen in the financial deprivation among the women, but also among the men. The only exception to this was Finland, where financial deprivation was no higher among the women.

Obviously, there is no simple relationship between motherhood and labour-market involvement. The interface between motherhood and women's labour-market behaviour is extremely complex and difficult to interpret. Many different dimensions intervene. Scandinavian countries are generally seen as representing the most generous welfare model and the starting point for childcare policies has been to make it possible for both women and men to combine paid employment with family responsibilities. According to the results of our study, the Scandinavian countries do not form a coherent whole and both labour-market experiences and employment prospects vary. According to Bergqvist (1999) Norway and Iceland have not linked childcare to gender equality and women's employment as explicitly as the other Nordic countries. Our findings show that Norway seemed to reflect the most traditional male-breadwinner model. In Iceland, and Scotland, the effect of short maternity leave and poor day-care arrangements seems to be hidden

unemployment (cf Thorisdottir 1998). The full-time work culture in Finland, on the other hand, seems to discourage single mothers in particular from entering the labour market. Our analysis revealed positive correlations between motherhood and work only in Sweden. This poses the question whether it is merely the combination of a flexible labour market (part-time work), day-care arrangements, good salaries and generous family policies that is needed to make it possible for women to reconcile work and family. At least in Sweden, the employment conditions for part-time workers are usually similar to those for full-time working women in terms of social rights and employment protection (Almqvist & Boje 1999). These policies appear to encourage women with children to enter the labour market.

4.3.7 Labour Market Training Schemes

It was found that after completing a training scheme the chance of finding a job was highly dependent on the unemployment history of the young person concerned. A shorter period of unemployment significantly improved the odds of becoming employed again. Logically enough, previous work experience also affected the probability of finding work. Those who had no experience stood a significantly worse chance of finding a job than those who had more working experience. Women in Denmark were less likely to find employment than men did. Other background factors did not seem to significantly affect the probability of finding employment, even though education can be said to have a positive effect: the higher the level of education, the more likely the person was to be employed within three months.

Labour-market schemes appeared to have a positive short-term effect in all the countries except in Finland, as labour-market training, job training and employment projects compared to employment measures showed a higher probability of finding employment. However, the results were only significant for Norway, where participation in labour-market training and job practice clearly improved the chances of finding work. It is plausible that this was because the young people who had participated in these programs had better starting points. Our study cannot verify whether there is some selectivity, since we do not know for certain what the subjects' qualifications were before they participated in the programs. Studies in Norway (Torp 1992) have, however, proved that recruitment may be distorted, especially for labour-market training. Another interesting feature is that, repeated participation in labour market schemes seems to produce a slightly worse chance of finding work than one-off participation. This was true for all the countries, but especially for Norway.

We were also concerned to find out whether participation could be seen as a generally determining feature of future employment. We chose to limit this analysis to comparisons within the workforce, i.e. those who were studying, at home, or in the army at that time, were excluded. The explanatory variables were gender, age, education, place of residence, working experience, and duration of unemployment. We also considered non-participation in programs in this analysis.

The results of the analysis indicate that it was mainly the structural factors - unemployment and working experience - that most affected the probability of becoming re-employed. This was true for all the Nordic countries, but particularly accentuated in Iceland and Denmark, where the young people had significantly more work experience and stood a better chance of becoming integrated into the labour market. The level of education was also significant in all the countries except Finland, but even though the results were not significant for Finland, level of education still seemed to be a positive factor in finding a job. These results are, thus, concordant with a study of Korpi (1994), who found that moving from unemployment to employment depends largely on the educational level of the person and the duration of the unemployment.

The effect of the different labour-market programs was not significant except in Sweden, where job training was of significant importance. Those who had participated in job training thus stood a better chance of becoming employed. Those who had participated in labour-market training had on the contrary a slightly worse chance of finding work. However, those who had participated in labour-market training had a better chance of getting into education.

Repeated participation seemed to affect negatively the probability of finding work. The results were significant only in Sweden, however, where those who had been activated only once stood a better chance of becoming employed than those who had repeatedly been activated. The probability of finding employment seems therefore to diminish the more the person has participated in different programs.

The results were somewhat different when the effect of labour-market measures were related to the probability of re-entering education. Women stood a better chance in this area than men in Finland and Sweden. The Icelandic women stood a worse chance, which was probably connected with the fact that a large number of them had children. Background factors such as level of education and place of residence were significantly important in all the Nordic countries, except Norway. The chances of being accepted for further education diminished in sparsely populated areas; and the higher the level of education, the better the chance of being accepted for education. Work experience affected negatively further education possibilities - those who had no work experience stood a better chance of taking up education in Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Interestingly enough, participation in labour-market schemes had a slight positive effect in all the Nordic countries except Norway. Job training, however, was of significance only in Finland and Sweden.

Unemployment and work experience as such were decisive in determining employment prospects. This result is crucial in relation to how society itself explains and handles misfortunes. According to Therborn (1995) the culture of the policy-makers is deeply ambivalent about the value of (un)employment. To governments unemployment is seen as a failure, but on the other hand economic policy success is defined in complete disregard of employment. National economic institutions, ideologies and policies have according lost their significance and the impact of international markets has increased. Although also risks have increased and become more global, it is a paradox that they have become more individualised. The individualisation of modern society means in some

way or other that situations – in this case unemployment - which would once have led to a call for political action are now interpreted as something that can be solved on an individual level through personal action.

Does policy matter? Therborn (1991) has come to a general conclusion that institutional differences between different kinds of welfare states are the main explanation of differences in unemployment. It is especially an institutional commitment to full employment that matters, and not so much anti-inflation or growth policy. Comparative research from the 90s (Esping-Andersen 1996) has, however, stressed that it is not only the aim of full employment, but moreover social investments all in all in employment, which seem to count. Where there differences as to the relation to the different labour market context? Did countries with a more stressed activation policy have more positive employment prospects and did labour market programs make a difference?

Labour-market programs appeared to be influenced by the national context, in that schemes have different effect in different countries. Generally employment schemes seemed to have positive effects in active countries such as Sweden. In Norway the positive effect could be seen only when it came to the short-term effect. A confusing result regarding Norway was that surprisingly many ended up in unemployment. Norway, however, differs from Sweden in one essential way: the country has a longer unemployment history and a higher number of long-term unemployed. This points to the different selection mechanisms in the inflow and outflow from unemployment. In Norway the unemployed seem to form a more exposed group and have thus difficulties in finding employment. Unemployment history seems then to offer one explanation to the difference for Norway. However, this is not the case for Denmark, as less young people ended up in unemployment. Young people in Denmark did however, to a much higher degree find alternative routes. One explanation to this phenomenon could be found in the more family-friendly policy, as mostly young women had found alternative occupation. Iceland and Finland seem to form the extremes of Scandinavia. Iceland has a short unemployment history, low unemployment level and a favourable labour market, and there young people had found an employment to a much higher degree than compared to the other countries. The opposite trend could be found in Finland, the country with the highest unemployment level, and a rather passive policy, as there was a higher selection in who exits from unemployment and very few entered the labour market.

When it comes to the different programs the study revealed that job training had positive effects on the chances of gaining an employment. Job training seemed then to offer not only relevant work experience, but also connections with potential employers. These results are in accordance with Raffe (1987), who argues that the training content of the schemes is less important than the context in which the training was provided. Could this also explain why employment measures in the public sector appear to produce less good results? Labour market training did not effect employment chances, but appeared to affect positively the chances of return to education. It appears to enhance motivation to learn in all countries no matter if the country has active or passive policies or have low or high unemployment. One could then argue that activation works as a “qualitative push” and that schemes may in fact strengthen the competence of young

people. Still, we cannot say for certain that after a completed education that they will end up in work.

Circulation in labour market schemes had negative effects in all countries, but particularly in Sweden (long-term effect) and in Norway (short-term effect), which point towards the unintended effects of activation policies. These may be related to employers' recruitment practices, and the group might be more vulnerable. The negative effect raises several questions. First, is labour market policy the right answer to this "problem"? For this group other solutions might be more appropriate than just labour market policies. An alternative could be more family-friendly policy; support to families, day care services (also for the unemployed), social policy, housing policy and social work. There are dangerous trends in the introduction of a market environment in the social sector. Because of the pressure for some kind of "success rate" with regard to employment, there is a risk that the most vulnerable groups might not only be expelled from the labour market, but also from professional counselling processes. However, as much as there is danger in not looking for alternative tools, there is a danger that this endeavour is totalitarian: in that we try to integrate young unemployed people in some way or other. This leads us to the second question: should employment be stressed as the only ultimate end result? Generally the aims of activation is to integrate unemployed people into the labour market, but many programs strive also to enhance personal development, some more and some less. Still, the programs are mostly evaluated only by the mechanic criteria of employment, and personal gain and personal development are seldom highlighted. The positive experiences of labour-market programs, which also this study reports on, indicate that programs have also other values than just employment. An enhanced self-esteem, which particularly was found in the Finnish young people, strengthens the personal competence and may as well be an important trigger to labour-market integration in the future. These social aims should also be more stressed in times of recession. Young people may also find alternative routes, which seems to be the case particularly in Denmark. But should there, as Carstens (1998) has questioned, also be a limit to how long people can circulate in activation if activation does not lead to a higher quality of life?

The success of labour-market programs seems to be embedded in the national context, but on different levels; on a national level (the labour market), on a practical level (policy and institutions) and on an individual level. We can learn from other countries, but in order to understand their function we need to thoroughly analyse them, in accordance with Therborn (1995), from two opposing sides: that of the policy-makers (employers) and that of the policy-takers (the unemployed). In this study the viewpoints of policy-takers have been analysed and the results of this study indicate that activation can make a difference, but it seems to need a strong activation as in the case of Sweden or broader social investments as in the case of Denmark. Still, not all schemes are successful in reaching employment aims. There is a risk of marginalisation inherent in repeated activation. Alternative tools and real choices must be stressed. But do we know the views of policy-takers? It seems that too little research attention has been drawn to the viewpoints of the employers or the public officials when it comes to labour-market

programs. An essential question remains, in what way do we enhance labour market flexibility through labour market programs?

4.3.8 Re-entering Education among Unemployed Youth

Upper secondary education is less developed in Scotland and Iceland compared to Scandinavia. However, we found that it is not only the availability of post compulsory education in a country which determine the probability of re-entering education among unemployed youth. When controlling for the level of education, which was low in both countries, unemployed males from Iceland had the highest probability of entering education, and Scotland the lowest.

The educational level among the unemployed in Iceland and Scotland were much lower than in the other countries. These countries may therefore have a lot to gain by increasing the availability of education to combat youth unemployment. However, this is not easy because those with low educational credentials, and poor adjustment in previous schools, have a lower probability of re-entering education in all countries. It is possible that apprenticeship training could be a better option than school based education. The Danish dual educational system, based on apprenticeship, could be a model. Danish unemployed youth had definitely the highest level of education compared to the other countries.

Social capital, such as family background, influenced the return to employment. Parental emotional and instrumental support had a much stronger impact on entering employment than post compulsory education, while fathers educational level only had an impact on re-entering education. Parental support is probably a good operationalisation of social capital, which involve social competence as well as information channels about the labour market, important for young unemployed people who try to find work.. Such support from the family may express social capital such as expectations, norms and attitudes which create social competence important in the labour market in order to get and keep a job, but is of less importance regarding entering education.

Norms and attitudes as well as relevant information channels, could constitute a youth culture which devalue work, or devalue school and the value of education. Paul Willies' analyses of the male school culture in his book "Learning to Labour" (Willies 1979) shows an anti-school culture which is highly appropriate regarding their future prospects in the labour market. We do not know if such norms and values still dominate much of the youth culture among young working class boys: "the macho culture" which regards intellectual work as feminine, and which reject educational attainment and school as representative for middle class values. However, it would certainly give a relevant explanation to why young unemployed males have a much lower probability of returning to the educational system compared to females. Furthermore, previous research has found that unemployment seems to strengthen traditional gender roles. The male role as provider imply that income through employment is probably more important for young males than females. Further education may therefore be less attractive for males than females. However, traditional gender roles does not explain why

so few among unemployed youth in Scotland returned to education compared to the other countries. From educational statistics as well as from the results presented here, it seems clear that young people in Scotland have a lower level of education in the general population, and among those unemployed half of the sample left education after compulsory school. The motivation for further education is probably lower in Scotland than in the Scandinavian countries both in the general population and among unemployed youth.

However, the most interesting result was the higher probability of re-entering education among young unemployed women compared with young unemployed men. Most European countries increase the number of places in post compulsory education in order to combat youth unemployment. The results here show that it is primarily young women who use this option. This has some political implications which should focus on how re-entering education could be a more attractive option also for young unemployed men.

4.3.9 Youth Unemployment and Political Activity

The total time spent as unemployed does effect young people's actual participation in political actions. The participation rate decreases in all types of political actions, except for participation in extra ordinary political actions (unofficial strike and occupy factories etc). This is in accordance with previous results which show that the reluctance to participate in politics increases with time spent in unemployment.

Except for Denmark and Sweden, close to 50 percent of the young unemployed in our study places themselves in the middle of the left-right scale. For those who re-entered education (except for Scotland and Finland), close to 30 percent feel themselves being in the middle of the left-right scale. This means that to be unemployed also comes together with not taking a clear stand on the left-right scale compared to those in education.

Unemployed young people have less interest in politics. This result sticks both if we compare the unemployed sample in our study across countries, and if we compare young unemployed people with young people in the general population. There are differences between the countries. Unemployed young people are less interested in politics in Finland and Scotland compared to Sweden and Denmark. Males are in general more interested in politics than women.

Those who live in Sweden and Scotland seem to be less reluctant to participate in both "softer" and "harder" public oriented actions. At the same time, the young people in these countries are also more reluctant to participate in political meetings, and in Scotland to take part in elections. The Danish young people are not at all that eager to take part in politics actions (except for voting in elections).

Those who were unemployed at the time of the interview had the lowest degree of political participation in political actions. The most active as well as those who are least reluctant to participate in political actions are the young people who live in Scotland and

Sweden. Experience of unemployment is related to less participation in political actions and a higher reluctance to participate, except for types of more “harder” and extra parliamentary actions.

The reluctance to participate in politics increased with time spent in unemployment. This means that total time spent as unemployed does have an impact on the reluctance to participate in politics. This impact has two different directions, the impact seems to be negative with regard to parliamentary oriented actions, and positive towards the more extra parliamentary type of political actions.

There seems to be less reluctance to participate in both “softer” and “harder” public oriented action among those who live in Sweden and Scotland. At the same time, young people in these countries are also more reluctant to participate in political meetings, and for Scotland as well to take part in elections. Compared to the other countries the Danish young people are not that eager to take part in politics actions except for voting in elections.

The lowest degree of political participation in political actions we find among those who were unemployed both at time of drawing the sample as well as six to twelve months later at the time of the interview. The most active as well as those who are least reluctant to participate in political actions are the young people who live in Scotland and Sweden. They are also the young people who place themselves clearly to the left or right politically.

5. Conclusions and Policy Implications

Which overall picture emerges from a study of approximately 8500 young unemployed people in the six northern European countries? Are there certain typical patterns or special features? Is it possible to discern variations in their experiences of unemployment and perhaps connect them to the different unemployment situations in the countries? What features are typical of each country?

We summarise our results in terms of the following three issues:

What characterises the situation of the young unemployed people in these countries?

Which factors are related to the risk of marginalisation?

What is the probability of escaping unemployment and entering the labour market?

When looking at the social situation of young people, we find similarities, as well as differences, between the countries. In Scotland, Finland and Iceland, unemployment is more of a teenage problem than in the other countries. This is largely due to the educational system and the later investments in activating policies directed towards the young unemployed, especially those under 20, than in the other countries.

Generally speaking young people move out from their parental home relatively early due to an improved housing situation. Looking at the young people in our research group, we find that in Scotland, Iceland, Norway and Finland young people live at home with their parents more often than in Sweden or Denmark. The same goes for the young people in their establishing phase (22-24 year-olds): approximately one fourth of them still lived at home, compared to just one tenth in Sweden and Denmark. Another milestone in entering adulthood is parenthood. Again, there are interesting differences within the countries. Iceland, in particular, but also Norway differs from the other countries in that a considerably larger percentage of young people have children. It is obvious that both economical and cultural factors influence the social situation of the young. In Iceland women traditionally have had their first child at a young age, and the proportion continues to be higher among the interviewed young women than for young women in general .

Taking the social background into consideration, the young people in Scotland and Iceland differ from those in the other countries in that most of them have only attended compulsory school. There is a wider variety in the basic education in the other countries. It is obvious that the unemployment level of a country affects the composition of the unemployed group. The lower the level of overall unemployment, the more the unemployed tend to form a socially and culturally selective group. On the other hand, the

degrees of long-term unemployment and unemployment in the family are higher in countries with a higher overall unemployment level. This is seen clearly in Finland and Scotland with a considerably higher degree of long-term unemployment and unemployment in the family than in the other countries. There is a great variety of unemployment burden and working experience in the countries. A small group can be characterised as being marginalised from the labour market (5 per cent), defined here as having been mainly unemployed between 1993 and 1995 (five out of six semi-annual periods) in Scandinavia, but this group was much larger in Scotland. A larger group, close to one fourth, have experienced unemployment but have not seen it as their main activity during any of these six periods. There is generally less unemployment among women than men, although women have less working experience. The only exception was Denmark where unemployment among women was higher than among men. Despite different unemployment levels among women and men, the level of activation, i.e. the proportion participating in various labour-market schemes, is higher among women than men in all the countries.

Young people generally have reported favourable experiences with labour-market schemes. The study shows that most of the young people feel that they have learned something new, they appreciate having something to do, that the atmosphere at work is good, and that they take an interest in their jobs, all this despite the fact that there are considerable variations in labour-market schemes between the countries. This shows the importance of labour-market schemes as a means of social function. In Finland, where the unemployment level is the highest, the attitude towards such schemes is the most positive. There is, however, a strong tendency among young people in all the countries to consider the demands of the schemes too low; in particular, the traditional labour-market schemes are being criticised. This indicates a certain discrepancy between the demands of the labour-market programmes and the resources and wishes of young people.

5.1 Which Factors Are Related to the Risk of Marginalisation?

Age has an independent significance for the unemployment burden. The younger a person was when becoming unemployed for the first time, the greater the unemployment burden. This, of course, is clearly related to education. Young people with only elementary school education have a greater unemployment burden. Education itself may not be the only factor that affects the risk of marginalisation. Young people with lower levels of education often have parents whose level of education is low, and they are not encouraged to further studies by their parents. Another important factor is the way in which teenagers experience school. Maladjustment at school clearly correlates with high unemployment burden. These results indicate that unemployment is linked to a life situation, which is dependent upon the availability of a certain type of social and cultural capital.

In all countries except in Norway and Denmark there were statistically significant correlations between bad health (physical, mental and general state of health) and unemployment. The longer a person had been unemployed, the less healthy the person was. Unemployed young people and those in activation were least healthy. Conversely, young people working or studying, thus having the shortest unemployment experience, were most healthy. There were also certain significant correlations between the length of the unemployment period and use of alcohol for Scottish, Finnish, Icelandic and Danish men, as well as for Scottish and Swedish women. No correlation was established between using drugs and unemployment, perhaps due to the relatively high internal loss.

Social support can influence the young person's ability to cope with unemployment, but it is important to differentiate between different dimensions of support: support from parents or friends, moral support, counsel, practical assistance and financial support. The results show that support is spread unevenly. Those unemployed at the time of the interview had experienced less social support than those who were employed, but had received more instrumental support. This reflects the ambivalent social situation for young unemployed persons.

Financial problems are also clearly related to unemployment. Young people are at a stage in life where their financial situation often can get strained. Setting up one's own home, getting established on the labour market, having small children and low income are clearly related to financial problems. There is a correlation between financial problems and unemployment in all the countries, except in Denmark where the young unemployed have less financial problems even after comparing those who are insured and receiving unemployment benefits. The financial problems are in general greater in Scotland and among those who have received social assistance, mainly in Norway and Finland. Young people who received social assistance felt more stigmatised than other unemployed young people in the Nordic countries. They also reported more problems related to anxiety and depression.

One could expect differences in attitudes towards society and the future between the countries and between the different groups within each country. However, there seems to be a strong similarity in the attitudes towards society between men and women, between the countries and between different employment statuses. There are no clear indications that the studied group had any clear tendencies towards alternative lifestyles based on radically differing views on society. There are, however, several indications that actual political participation and willingness to exert political influence differ within the groups. Almost half of the young people are politically uninterested. Political activity is highest in Iceland and Sweden, and lowest in Finland. In Finland there is a higher potential for more expressive and more demonstrative political activity, and women are more active than men. When comparing the different employment groups the results indicate that the unemployed are less active politically and have a different political profile from those studying, working, participating in labour-market programmes, or living with their parents. It also seems that with more unemployment experience the acceptance of and participation in more demanding actions increases, whereas the opposite applies for participation in election processes. This could indicate that unem-

ployment is connected to a certain frustration with traditional and official political channels.

In summary, it can be concluded that the unemployed express that unemployment involves sociopsychological problems. They feel less healthy, they experience problems with their social support, they experience more financial problems, they are less involved politically, and they support radical political opinions to a greater extent. Still, there is no proof that any particular clear-cut societal view is related to unemployment.

5.2 What Is the Probability of Re-entering the Labour Market?

Our central research question was to study processes and strategies in connection with youth unemployment. The study is based on national representative samples of young people who all of them had been unemployed for at least three months. At the time of the interview – 6 to 12 months after the sampling had taken place – they were either within or outside the labour market. Some of them had succeeded in finding a job, had started studying, were participating in an employment scheme, or they were still unemployed. Are there different patterns to be found in the different countries?

Of the young unemployed youth at the time of the interview, 41 per cent in Finland were still unemployed, 42 per cent in Scotland, 19 per cent in Iceland, 27 per cent in Norway, 29 per cent in Sweden, and 29 per cent in Denmark. The proportion of those employed was highest in Denmark and Iceland, and lowest in Finland and Scotland. However, In Scotland, 40% were re-employed compared with 20% in Finland. The high proportion of those still unemployed in Scotland could be explained by the fact that only 3% of the unemployed had returned to education compared with nearly 20% of young unemployed in Finland. It is also important to stress that even if the unemployment level was much higher in Finland (30%) than Scotland (12%), the proportion of long-term unemployed (longer than 12 months) was much higher in Scotland than Finland. In other words, the proportion of unemployed and employed reflects the national unemployment level to a certain extent, except for Scotland and partly Norway.

Generally speaking, women have a better chance of securing employment than men, except in Denmark where women are clearly less likely to find a job. Women also had a much higher probability of re-entering education than men in all countries except Iceland.

The results clearly indicate that structural factors, such as working experience and the duration of unemployment, have a significant effect on the probability of finding employment. The tendency was the same in all the countries. The less working experience the young people had and the longer they have been unemployed, the more difficult it is for them to become established in the labour market. This proves the importance of preventing unemployment by giving the young increased possibilities to obtain working experience, i.e. through various labour-market measures.

When studying the significance of labour-market policy programmes, it appeared that labour-market programmes affected the chances of employment; however, this positive effect was only significant in Sweden. When taking a closer look at which labour-market programme had been effective, the findings show that primarily work-creation measures have had significantly better results. Those having participated in labour-market training had a slightly smaller chance of getting a job, nevertheless labour-market training improved the probability of obtaining further education. Repeated participation in employment schemes had a negative effect on the chances of being employed. This trend is, however, only significant in Sweden where those having participated in schemes only once have a clearly better chance of being employed than those having participated repeatedly.

Another important aspect of labour market policy across countries, is the level of unemployment benefits. The compensation level of benefits varies between countries. The results showed that in countries with a high compensation level (especially Denmark), we found lower job search activity and consequently lower probability of re-employment compared to countries with a low compensation level. On the other hand, the Danish unemployed reported less financial problems, better mental health and better coping with unemployment than in the other countries, which implied a higher probability of re-employment.

This was probably the reason why the same proportion of unemployed youth had returned to employment as in other countries with the same unemployment level.

Informal support has an impact on the probability of getting employed in all the Nordic countries. Parental support is important for the young especially in Finland, Denmark and Iceland. Advice on financial and unemployment matters has a negative effect on the probability of escaping unemployment. In a way these results indicate that the social network has become weaker. Family and friends can have a positive influence on the situation unemployed young people find themselves in, but, on the other hand, unemployment can put a strain on the social networks.

However, the majority of unemployed youth in the Nordic countries were well socially integrated. A rather small proportion (14%) reported social isolation related to their experience of unemployment.

Financial problems were stronger related to mental health problems than social isolation. However, the results also indicate a selection to unemployment among young unemployed with mental health problems.

Social assistance clients had a more difficult life situation in all countries, with more mental health problems, more financial problems and a longer duration of unemployment compared to other unemployed youth in all countries. They also had a lower probability of re-employment in all countries, especially young unemployed women with children in Iceland.

Youth unemployment is primarily an expression of structural changes in society. Youth unemployment as a phenomenon in society can hardly be interpreted in any other way than as an expression of the fact that the young are treated unfairly in their efforts to

integrate into society. Difficulties in securing a position on the labour market causes difficulties in other aspects of normal life as well. This does not mean that the young unemployed people in this study would differ markedly from other young people. But it means that their experiences of unemployment form a slightly different participation. Whether this way of life is seen as marginalisation or not is another question. Still, one cannot deny the fact that there are differences in working-life experiences, and that these differences conflict with the norms of full citizenship. In this sense the data in the survey show that youth unemployment provides clear evidence of marginalisation among unemployed youth in the six northern European countries.

5.3 Youth Unemployment in Ireland

The nature of youth unemployment in Ireland must be viewed in the context of the major changes that have occurred in the economy and the youth labour market over recent years. Since the mid 1980s Ireland has shifted from having one of the highest rates of youth and adult unemployment in Europe to having the highest rate of employment growth. Not only has the overall demand for labour increased dramatically there have also been significant changes in the type of labour required. Changes in the occupational structure and sectorised shifts have increased the demand for service sector workers, part-time workers and skilled workers while reducing the demand for unskilled manual workers. These changes mean that while the employment prospects for most have improved substantially others have found their prospects deteriorating despite the economic boom. This is particularly true of young people with few qualifications. The significant expansion in the Irish educational system means that fewer and fewer young people leave school without qualifications, but members of this dwindling group are becoming more disadvantaged in the labour market. One group which appears to have benefited from sectorised changes in the labour market are young women, women's over-representation in the expanding service sector is likely to contribute to the sex differences in youth unemployment rates outlined above.

The increasing prosperity and wealth in Ireland may also increase the feelings of disadvantage and exclusion among the young unemployed. There is little evidence that the young unemployed in Ireland form sub-cultural groups where employment is devalued and non-work identities are emphasised. While a certain amount of social segregation is evident from the reported levels of unemployment in the networks of the young unemployed, the high level of psychological distress experienced by unemployed youth highlights the continuing importance of having a job for young people's self-worth and well-being. The low levels of benefit entitlement among the unemployed aged under 20 coupled with the high rates of joblessness in their households suggests that few unemployed young people have the economic resources to form an acceptable lifestyle outside employment. Financial constraints may also account for the lower levels of sociability among unemployed school leavers. The willingness of the young unemployed to accept either part-time or full-time employment further suggests a flexibility that is inconsistent with a lack of employment commitment and an acceptance of unemployment. However, this result may be biased by our focus on the ILO unemployed, which excludes those who are not involved in active job search. Further research on the job search behaviour and attitudes of the young unemployed is needed to establish the levels of work commitment among this group.

Due to demographic changes, there is a very real possibility of labour shortages in the near future. A shortage of labour may mean employment opportunities will filter down to young people with lower educational qualifications and increase the need for employers to provide training for their recruits. However, as the unemployment rate falls the stock of skills among the unemployed is likely to drop as the more highly skilled are hired first, and considerable effort will be needed to place the residual group of unskilled

unemployed youth into jobs. The discussion of labour market programmes suggests that current practices are not sufficient to integrate the most marginalised unemployed.

5.4 Implications for Policy

The study of unemployed youth in northern Europe does not provide any evidence of social exclusion among the majority of unemployed youth. They are well integrated with close contact to family and friends. However, their political participation and activity are lower, they are more passive, and they sympathise with traditional left wing policy. They also report more mental health problems than young people in employment and in some countries seem to have a higher consumption of drugs and alcohol. However, they spend their leisure time in the same way as other young people, and are not very different from the general population of youth in northern Europe. There is no evidence that they form their own subculture group, where employment is devaluated. It is, however, important to stress that both sociability, participation in leisure activities and mental health problems are strongly related to their experience of financial problems. Actually, their financial situation seems to be more important even than the duration of unemployment.

The results give clear evidence of the importance of the financial situation among unemployed youth.

This is of course dependent upon benefit entitlement, which is very different across countries. Denmark and to some extent Sweden have very generous welfare provision, Norway and Finland are in the middle, while Iceland, Ireland and Scotland have very low benefits, especially for those under 20. In especially Ireland and Scotland some of these young people have a very difficult situation, where there are high rates of unemployment in the household .

The political discussion about benefit entitlement has been heavily related to research evidence of the disincentive effects of generous benefits especially regarding unemployed youth. However, review of the research literature shows very ambiguous results. In this study we have evaluated the disincentive effects in countries with very different compensation levels. The results showed that in countries with a high compensation level (especially Denmark), we found lower work motivation, lower job search activity and consequently lower probability of unemployment compared to countries with a low compensation level. On the other hand, the Danish unemployed reported a much better life situation with less financial problems, better mental health and better coping with unemployment than in the other countries, which implied a higher probability of re-employment.

This was probably the reason why the same proportion of unemployed youth in Denmark had returned to employment as in other countries with the same unemployment level.

Another important feature of labour market policy is the effects of training schemes for unemployed young people.

Qualifying measures, i.e. training (education), apprenticeships and job training in the private sector, as opposed to more traditional public activation, seem to produce more positive effects (Schröder 1991; Try 1994; Aho et al. 1996; Calmfors 1996; Mikkonen 1996). The duration of the activation program also seems to affect the end result, since short as opposed to long educational courses have been found to produce less beneficial results (Torp 1992; Madsen 1994; see also Korpi 1994). If the measures are part of a long-term strategy or development plan, then the probability of success increases (Sehlstedt & Schröder 1989). Positive results are produced not only through relevant education, but also because of the fact that job training offers connections with potential employers (Rosdahl 1996). Experience in Sweden has shown that results depend highly on whether the initiative is part of a concrete and individual action plan (cf. Madsen 1994; Schröder 1994). Even though the aims of labour-market initiatives are integrative, there are still many side effects, and also the risk of marginalization. Research (Edin & Holmlund 1991; Furlong 1993; Hammer 1996; Spies 1996) has shown that the measures per se might form employment traps. Those who participate in programs constantly circulate between initiatives and unemployment. The probability of finding employment has also been shown to diminish the more the person has participated in different programs (Korpi 1994). A contributing reason for this is that activation qualifies the unemployed for a renewed period of benefits. This kind of circulation is especially common in Sweden (Björkman & Harkman 1995).

Evaluation of different schemes for unemployed people has mainly been undertaken in a national context. We lack thus comparative knowledge of how schemes function in different settings. It is also important to evaluate schemes not only as labour market measures but as a social policy measure, which may help young people to cope with problems related to unemployment. Furthermore, increased educational motivation and return to education is also an important outcome.

When studying the significance of labour-market policy programmes, we found that labour-market programmes affected the chances of employment; this effect was especially significant in Sweden. When taking a closer look at which labour-market programmes had been effective, the findings show that primarily work-creation measures have had significantly better results. Those having participated in labour-market training had a slightly smaller chance of getting a job, nevertheless labour-market training improved the probability of obtaining further education. Repeated participation in employment schemes had a negative effect on the chances of being employed. This trend was, however, only significant in Sweden where those having participated in schemes only once had a clearly better chance of being employed than those having participated repeatedly.

A lot of young unemployed are not entitled to benefits because they lack work experience. Many of them will therefore be dependent of their family and/or social assistance.

Social assistance clients had a more difficult life situation in all countries, with more men mental health problems, more financial problems and a longer duration of unemployment compared to other unemployed youth in all countries. They also had a

lower probability of re-employment in all countries, especially young unemployed women with children in Iceland.

In northern Europe the demographic changes with a significant drop in the birth rate since 1986 will create a high demand for young people in the labour market, which will especially affect new entrants. The decline in the age group 15-24 year old is significant.

It is therefore of great importance to implement strategies to qualify unemployed youth in accordance with the demands of the labour market. This can be done by motivating unemployed youth for further education in the formal educational system and allow them to keep their benefits while in education, or by creating attractive training schemes related to special demands in different employment sectors.

The study has evaluated the probability of return to post compulsory education among unemployed youth in the different countries. The countries have different educational policy. In Scandinavia, the majority of young people take upper secondary education, while in Ireland, Scotland and Iceland more young people leave school with only compulsory education. In these countries especially vocational education is less developed.

The results showed that it was not the access of educational places which in itself influenced the probability of return to education. The probability was highest among males in Iceland and lowest for both males and females in Scotland, in both countries further education is less developed compared to the other countries.

Furthermore, the higher the initial level of education among the respondents, the higher was the probability of re-entering education. In other words, it was not those with the lowest level of education or school drop outs who tried to catch up with their comparable age group.

Danish unemployed youth had the highest level of education compared to the other countries, probably because of the dual education system in this country, where education is strongly based on apprenticeship training.

However, the most interesting result presented here is the higher probability of re-entering education among young unemployed women compared with young unemployed men. Most European countries increase the number of places in post compulsory education in order to combat youth unemployment. The results here show that it is primarily young women who use this option. This has some political implications which should focus on how re-entering education could be a more attractive option also for young unemployed men.

6. Dissemination

In each of the countries, the researchers have disseminated findings widely among practitioners and within the academic community. Academic articles have been produced relating to key discoveries and two books have already been produced by the partners.

The researchers in the group have produced and presented a lot of different papers in different international conferences. The list of working papers in the publication list gives an impression of this activity. The researchers have also presented main results from the project to different media and as speakers in conferences.

The last report including comparative analysis of all the seven countries involved will be published this year. . A first draft is available as working papers. Furlong, A and Hammer, T (Ed) Youth unemployment and marginalisation in Northern Europe. A comparative study.

We have created a web site for the project:

<http://www.isaf.no/nova/fou/Hammer/Unemployment.htm>

One conference was arranged by the research group in 1998, presenting results from the five Nordic countries to politician and practitioners. Another international conference will be organised in year 2001 to present the results of the study to social scientist in the field.

Future Plans

The next year, the research group will continue to publish the different working papers as articles in international journals based on the data set from the six countries.

The project has also been extended by a new contract with the Commission for the project: Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion in Europe. This project also include further data collection in Germany, Spain, Italy and France, using the same questionnaire and research design.

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8 Annexes

8.1 Appendix 1: Publications from the Project

Publications In English:

Carle, J & Julkunen, I (eds) Young and unemployed in Scandinavia - a Nordic comparative study". The Nordic Council of Ministeries. Copenhagen : *Nord* 1998:14

Hammer, T :The influence of different compensation level of unemployment benefit upon job chances among unemployed youth. A comparative study of the Nordic countries.

Acta Sociologica , 2, 123-134, 1999.

Hammer, T: Mental Health and Social Exclusion among Unemployed Youth in Scandinavia. A Comparative Study. *International J of Social Welfare* ,9, 53-63, 2000.

Hammarström Anne, Janlert Urban. Does early unemployment and health status among young men and women affect their possibility of later employment? In press In press *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health* 1999.

Cartmel, F : The experiences of young unemployed people in Scotland. In press *Youth and Policy* 1999.

Helen Russell and Philip. J. O'Connell "The Youth Labour Market and Youth Unemployment in Ireland" Report ESRI, Dublin 1998.

Julkunen, I & Malmberg, I: *The encounter of high unemployment among young people in the Nordic countries.* report NR 188/1998, Tyoministerio (Ministry of Labour) Helsinki.

Julkunen, I (2000) A leap forward or a ride on a carousel ? in press

Young. Nordic journal of Youth Research

Stavik, T and Hammer, T (2000) Unemployed Youth in a Segmented Labour Marke ? A study of Unemployed Youth in Norway. NOVA Report in press. Oslo: NOVA, Norwegian Social Research.

Working papers:

Furlong, A and Hammer, T (Ed) (2000) Youth unemployment and marginalisation in Northern Europe. A comparative study.

Thorisdottir, Rannveig and Sigurdardottir, Thordis (1999). How Icelandic youth see their own unemployment .Working paper

Sigurdardottir, Thordis (1999). Social support and health among Icelandic unemployed youth. Working paper

Sigurdardottir, Thordis and Bjarnason, Thoroddur (1999). What kind of support is relevant for youth that are unemployed? Working paper

Julkunen, I: "Youth unemployment and processes of marginalisation - aspects of activation" presented in the international seminar "Contemporary Marginalisation among Youth- Whose Reality Counts?" in Turku 17.4.1998

Novo M, Hammarström A, Janlert U. Changes of alcohol consumption among unemployed young people during different states of the labour market. Paper presented at International Conference on Drugs and Young People, Melbourne 22-24 November 1998.

Julkunen,I Youth unemployment and financial marginalisation in the Nordic countries. Paper presented on the conference of unemployment in the Nordic countries. June, Oslo 1998.

Hammer, T Return to education among unemployed youth. A comparative study of six countries in northern Europe. Paper to be presented at the European Sociological Association (ESA) in Amsterdam 18-22 August 1999

Russel,H and O'Connel,P : "Getting a job in Europe: The Transition from Unemployment to Employment among Young people in nine European Countries". Paper to be presented, TIY, Oslo workshop: 2-5 September 1999

Furlong, A and Cartmel, F:"Does long-term youth unemployment lead to social and economic exclusion ? Evidence from six European countries " Paper to be presented, TIY, Oslo workshop: 2-5 September 1999

Cartmel, F (1999) 'Young People Unemployment and Health' paper presented at Glasgow Health Promotion Conference Glasgow, Scotland 31st March 1999

Cartmel, F (1999) 'Young People Unemployed in Urban and Rural Settings' paper presented at meeting with Rural Research Unit London England 18th June 1999

Cartmel, F (1999) 'Young People Unemployed in Urban and Rural Settings' paper presented at meeting with Rural Development Agency York England 25th June 1999

Cartmel, F and Furlong, A (1999) Inclusion and Exclusion in Rural Labour Markets. Paper presented at European Society for Rural Sociology XVIII Congress Lund, Sweden, 24-28 August 1999

Furlong, A and Cartmel, F (1999) Does long-term youth unemployment lead to social and economic exclusion? Evidence from six European countries. Paper

presented at 'Transitions in Youth' conference Oslo, Norway September 3-5 1999.

Malmberg-Heimonen, I: Young women's and men's labour market experience based on their family situation in six northern European countries. Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. Helsinki 1999.

Ilse Julkunen: Lecture " Something to do? - young unemployed experiences of labour market programs". The article will be published in a forthcoming conference report by the Nordic Council of Ministers

Ilse Julkunen: Workshop paper "Cumulative Disadvantages and Poverty among unemployed youth - a Northern European Perspective". International conference in Helsinki "Building Expertise in Welfare" 13-15.6.1999

Malmberg-Heimonen Ira, Julkunen Ilse (2000): ' Gender, family status and labour market participation in Northern Europe'. Manuscript to be published in NOVA report

'Youth unemployment and processes of marginalisation - aspects of activation' Paper presented in the international seminar "Contemporary Marginalisation among Youth - Whose reality Counts? in Turku 17.4.1998

'Youth unemployment and financial marginalization in the Nordic countries' Paper presented on the conference " Unemployment in the Nordic countries' in Oslo June 1998

'Cumulative Disadvantages and Poverty among Unemployed Youth - a Northern European Perspective' Paper presented at the ICSW international conference ' Building Expertise in Welfare' in Helsinki 14.6.1999

Novo M, Hammarström A, Janlert U. Youth unemployment and ill-health – a comparison between times of prosperity and recession. In: Conference Abstracts. International Research Conference Health Hazards and Challenges in the New Working Life, Stockholm, 11-13 January, 1999:6.

Publications In Scandinavian languages:

Carle & Julkunen (ed) Arbetslösheten vilkår (in Swedish) (Youth unemployment in the Nordic countries) The Nordic Council of Ministers. Copenhagen : *Nord* : 1997:19 .

Carle, J (1999): "Arbetslösheten – ett hot mot demokratin? Om förhållandet mellan arbetslöshet, ungdomars samhällsintresse och engagemang i ett nordiskt perspektiv" (in Swedish).("Unemployment and the problems of democracy – Participation among young unemployed people"). *Demokratiutredningen*. Stockholm.

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8.2 Appendix 2: Conferences organised by the research group:

Conference 14-15 May 1998, Helsinki.

The Nordic research team arranged a conference in Helsinki in order to present the results from our Nordic report to practitioners and politicians in the Nordic countries. The Nordic Council of Ministers financed the conference..

Conference 2-5 September, 1999, Oslo. "Transition in Youth"

The co-ordinator was chair of a European conference which took place in Oslo 2-5 September called "Transitions and mobility in the Youth Labour Market". The conference included 50 researchers in this field in Europe. Our project was presented by three different papers in this conference.

Conference April 2001. We have received grants from European Science Foundation (the Euresco programme) to an international research conference: Labour Market Change, Unemployment and Citizenship in Europe. The coordinator is chair of the conference.

Academic organising committee: Duncan Gallie, Knut Halvorsen, Serge Paugham, Ilse Julkunen, Torild Hammer. The project will here be presented by several speakers in the research group.
