The Struggle against Social Exclusion at the Local Level

Diversity and Convergence in European Cities

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Abstract

This article is based on the results of the European comparative research project ESOPO (*Evaluation of Social Policies at the Local Urban Level: Income Support for the Able-Bodied*) directed by Chiara Saraceno (Saraceno, 2002)[1]. The research explored the configuration and impact of income support programmes in favour of able-bodied individuals in 13 cities of 6 European countries.[2]

In the face of rising unemployment and for a growing section of the population the difficulty of finding a steady job, most European countries have adopted anti-poverty strategies. Minimum income benefit in various forms constitutes a central element of income support for disadvantaged populations. Although its stated objective is often the same – to combat exclusion – there is a fairly large degree of heterogeneity in the way this policy is organized at local level, even in strongly centralized countries. Beyond simply revealing institutional differences, the comparative study of local experiences gives us a closer understanding of the rationale according to which each city – with its own mode of development, political and social history, culture, associative or community resources and, more broadly, the characteristics of its civil society – structures its anti-poverty strategies. Comparative analysis of local situations has the advantage of highlighting the different complexity of the processes at work, as well as of the local configurations which result from them. These may involve arrangements and relationships between public institutions, intermediate organizations, the Church, family networks and local community. Moreover, such an approach allows us to discern both the diversified forms and levels of intervention of these various actors and the principles involved by looking at the interaction between people and institutions.

In drawing on this research which is focused on a comparative study of the models of anti-poverty social policies, we will discuss some important issues. First, we will argue that poverty cannot be separated from the social conditions which generate it and from the social structures in which it is embedded. Second, we will demonstrate that the comparative study of anti-poverty models enables us to define more precisely the systems that mobilize resources other than those implemented on the basis of well known and formalized criteria. In fact they are sometimes very localized and based on particular arrangements between the public sphere and the civil society. Finally, we will show how these local systems that implement anti-poverty social policies are not necessarily leading to strong institutionalization and public regulation through a linear process of modernization. Although the challenge of social integration is driving all countries towards greater intervention, it is also obliging them to introduce new and more flexible forms of regulations.

A local comparative approach

A substantial proportion of research on poverty in Europe relates to evaluating its features, extent and development over time. A part of the literature is interested in the lived experiences of the most excluded people while another elaborates reports on institutional anti-poverty strategies. Research conducted at the local level most often consists of presenting the details and specific nature of programmes in different countries. Analyses therefore tend to be centred closely on a yardstick or a strategy, and less on the local social context in which provision is developed and established.

Other types of research have been more interested in the way in which different societies construct their stance towards poverty and define its contours (Paugam, 1999). Here, anti-poverty strategies are defined as "modes of regulation" of poverty and, more broadly, of the social bond. This kind of research ties in with the study on types of welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990; 1999); it presents national models of poverty regulation, defined with reference to a limited number of characteristics that are supposed to be sufficiently structuring and specific to distinguish between the different types and to create national models from them. Thus, the nub of such analyses is the idea that these systems form a nationally coherent whole (see Figure 1, level 1). Our approach is different. Starting from analysis of the local contexts (Figure 1, level 2), it consists of trying to understand the concrete organization of programmes and actions connected with establishing the minimum income benefit, depending on the type of welfare regulation, the institutions and the actors. In order to grasp the varied structure of local systems, they have to be viewed in the framework of the national models, focusing particularly on how the latter took shape at the level of each particular city: within its specific social, economic and cultural configuration. From this perspective, it is important to take into account the various urban traditions in terms of economic and productive history, sets of relevant actors over time, patterns of development and organization of civil society, as well as of their demographic history and spatial distribution of the different social groups. It is in the interplay between all these factors that the diverse vocations and commitments to welfare and the specific ways in which the attitude towards the poor and the division between the "deserving" and the "undeserving" develop. Local systems must be evaluated in terms of a varied mix of institutional and individual actors where diversity and complexity play an increasingly important role within the development of active policies, based on partnership implementation and on shared responsibility between providers and recipients.

From this standpoint, local welfare systems are conceived as dynamic processes in which the specific local social and cultural contexts give rise both to diversified mixes of actors underlying the strategies for implementing social policies and to diverse profiles of needy or assisted populations. At this level of analysis, the major methodological difficulty is to go beyond mere description and find parameters of interpretation for a meaningful comparison and interpretation of the local regimes of poverty regulation.

The local construction of welfare systems

We will focus mainly on the way in which income support measures of social assistance become structured between the public sphere, the third sector (intermediate

organizations and the church) and private responsibilities. Local configurations of anti-poverty strategies reflect modes of economic development, political systems and cultures which bring into play concepts of integration, citizenship, public action and local community that are broadly redefined at a local level. The structure of the local fabric broadly influences the 'efficiency' of an anti-poverty strategy or, at least, constitutes an essential element to take into account in interpreting local situations.

The local characteristics of poverty and of welfare strategies vary considerably according to whether we are looking at a city hard hit by deindustrialisation, with high unemployment and/or a large section of the population insecurely employed, or at a city dominated by the tertiary sector and public services and less affected by the employment transition. But the local features of poverty and social assistance strategies are highly influenced by socio-demographic processes which are not inherently connected with the employment crisis, particularly the fragilization of the family system generating vulnerable forms of households (socially isolated single persons, single parents, etc.) and new waves of immigration with consequent serious social insertion difficulties (as in the case of asylum seekers or illegal immigrants).

Figure 2 makes it easier to grasp the heart of our approach and the way in which we present each local context. It also acts as a reminder that, as far as the treatment of poverty through welfare is concerned, it is important not only to grasp state-market-civil society interrelations but also to go beyond them and define the forms and the dynamics of each of these three dimensions. As far as concerns the state, we need to discuss public and institutional regulation and to explain its local roots, how it is organized, its extent and its modes of intervention (linking these with the other two dimensions). Although the ESOPO research did not deal in detail with the second dimension, the market, we should note that it is constructed differently from one locality to another, and that its capacity for social integration also varies a great deal. For instance, multiple resources may be integrated or harnessed by the logic of the local economy. As a result, the capacity of the market to produce poverty also depends on the way in which the economy is organized in a given cultural and social context.

The third dimension relates to the actual content and internal arrangements of the third sector and of private responsibilities. This dimension as a whole rests on various different elements: associations and, more generally, intermediate organizations with a minimum of institutional visibility; the church and religious structures in the broad sense; the family and its networks of protection and mutual responsibility; and the local community and its integration networks. Our presentation of the different local contexts, therefore, aims both to give a precise account of the social framework within which the strategies operate and to bring out the complexity and diversity of local configurations related to dealing with poverty.

The local construction of poverty

There are two main economic factors that are important in explaining the local differences beyond the purely descriptive level and an interpretation that makes everything fit into national models of welfare and poverty regimes. The first factor is the localization of the city in different regional contexts and the second is the industrial history of the city.

The regional factor is highly significant in the case of the German and Italian cities but also in that of the Spanish cities in so far they belong to two different "Autonomous Communities". It is less so for the French cities. As regards Lisbon and Porto, their different regional locations play a relatively minor role, even if Porto is at the centre of a region characterised by especially dynamic, small and medium-sized agricultural activities and traditional industries that have been more open towards the recent wave of industrial decentralisation. The Swedish cities, both in the same coastal region in the south-west, are the only ones totally unaffected by regional differences.

The industrial history factor focuses on the specificities emerging from the models of social divisions and heterogeneity that developed during the periods of industrialisation and de-industrialisation. Three different models emerge. The model of Rennes, where a high level of homogeneity persists over time. Though in different situations, Halle and Porto show a model with the same characteristics as Rennes. The model of Turin and Saint-Étienne, where divisions and forms of spatial segregation activated by industrial development are persistent and aggravated by de-industrialization; similar features are found in Bremen and Vitoria. Milan represents a model of heterogeneity built up in a complex way over a long period where spatial segregation is not particularly accentuated. In their own fashion, Barcelona and Lisbon are close to this last model. In Cosenza, on the other hand, a certain degree of social homogeneity is the result of economic marginality and weak industrial development. The Swedish cities constitute mixed cases in that they started out from a strong social and cultural homogeneity, which was sustained during industrialisation by the development of universalistic welfare but is now complicated by the impact of third world immigration.

Within the social homogeneity/heterogeneity dimension three distinct elements play an important role: the demographic composition of the population in terms of age and household structure, the distribution of occupational and educational groups and the percentage and characteristics of the immigrant population. All three elements are crucial in defining rates and patterns of vulnerability to poverty as well as in shaping collective ideas concerning who the poor are.

Demographic and market transitions have contributed to create different typologies of the highly vulnerable able-bodied – the long-term unemployed, precarious workers, marginalised immigrants, discriminated minorities, socially isolated individuals and single mothers. They are not evenly distributed among the cities examined. There is above all a large fissure between the cities in northern and Central Europe and those in southern Europe. In the former, the crucial questions are those relating to third world or eastern European immigrants (or, in France, their naturalised progeny), families becoming more fragile and the social isolation of a growing number of individuals[3]. In the South, the impact of immigration and nuclear family fragilisation is less pronounced: immigration from less developed countries is more recent and counts little percentage wise, and rates of divorce and births out of wedlock are rising slowly from very low levels; but the employment crisis is having a noticeable effect on the living standards of many nuclear families (above all the many supported by a single income) and on the chances of insertion in work for an increasing number of the young and of women.

Milan and Turin, although they belong to a southern country, lie close to the middle point between the two syndromes. Both cities register a higher presence of immigrants and a more fragile family structure compared to the southern European average. Particularly in the case of Milan, where joblessness has never reached worrying levels and precarious and informal work is not widespread, poverty syndromes affect mainly immigrants and, as far as the local population is concerned, they are largely connected with the social isolation of the elderly but also of young and middle age adults who have broken their family ties and are isolated from relevant social networks.

Another important division is that between cities with a strong industrial tradition, an established working class and a trade unionist culture and cities that have never been mainly locations for big fordist industry but rather administrative, financial or commercial centres. This division is found between the cities selected in four of the six countries in the study in a more or less marked way, the exceptions being Sweden, where both Gothenburg and Helsinborg have a similar tradition as harbour towns[4], and Germany, where both Bremen and Halle are industrial cities with a fordist tradition. Saint-Étienne, Turin, Vitoria and Porto are more markedly characterised by a manufacturing tradition than Rennes, Milan, Barcelona and Lisbon, which are also administrative, financial and commercial centres with a more diversified employment structure and culture.

Within this classification the case of Cosenza stands apart, being comparable to cities in the less developed regions of Spain and Portugal. In this city the employment crisis is decidedly more pronounced since the indirect effects of de-industrialisation (the end to emigration) come on top of a long-standing deruralisation that has not led to opportunities for the growth of local industry.

The more markedly manufacturing complexion of some of the cities plays a dual role in terms of both specific processes of change in the production and incidence of economic and social vulnerability, and the local culture and mix of actors involved in welfare provision. The manufacturing, port or mining centres with a fordist tradition have been more severely hit by industrial restructuring and the decrease in job opportunities. Rates of unemployment are relatively higher than the regional average and, above all, reinsertion in work is difficult for subjects with poor vocational skills or chequered biographies. All this is taking place in contexts that up to thirty years ago attracted a considerable number of new workers, foreign immigrants or migrants from less developed regions; thus, it is radically altering the conditions in which local welfare operates. In the space of a generation, it has gone from specialising in problems connected with the social (rather than occupational) integration of newcomers in a dynamic local context to tackling the persistent work insertion difficulties of subjects made redundant or of the children of immigrants (foreigners or naturalised citizens in the north, natives from less developed regions and the rural areas in the south), especially the poorly educated, while facing new waves of immigrants with even greater problems of integration than their predecessors. Moreover, in some of these cities, such as Bremen, Gothenburg and Helsingborg, the strong influx of asylum seekers and immigrants from Eastern Europe and former Yugoslavia has altered the traditional balances of local social assistance[5].

As to welfare culture, the fordist industrial tradition leads to a relatively greater focus (compared to the typical welfare model in the country in question) on work insertion

measures. In addition, secular and trade union associations have supplanted the traditional charity traditions to a greater extent than in other, more diversified, cities. This is particularly evident in the case of Turin when compared to Milan: In the former, although a long-standing tradition exists of religious institutions working with the less privileged groups,[6] there is a widely shared consensus that the municipality and the public sector must take the lead in social assistance and in developing social integration measures; in the latter, at least since the seventies, the municipality has taken a residual role in social assistance, leaving more room to institutions such as Caritas and San Vincenzo. The predominant trade union culture, in turn, tends to bolster the universalistic orientation of local welfare programmes. For example, in southern Europe (where there is a wide divergence between the programmes of the various cities) those cities with an industrial tradition show more generous welfare intervention than in the richer but traditionally more heterogeneous cities. This is the case of Victoria and Turin compared with Barcelona and Milan.

The metropolitan versus medium-sized city dimension, which certainly plays a crucial role in the overall shaping of local social formations as well as in the concentration of specific vulnerabilities, does not seem in this study to play a special role in shaping local welfare systems. This may be due to the fact that the three metropolitan cities in the sample – Milan, Barcelona and Lisbon – are all located in southern Europe, where there is the highest intra-country diversity in local welfare systems. This does not allow us to fully test the role of this specific dimension across countries as well as inside them.

The impact of socio-economic and socio-demographic factors

The interweaving between the areas of tension (see table 1) shapes modalities of urban typologies that are, at least in part, different from the ones from which we started out. In certain respects, Halle and Cosenza are alike even if the first is an industrial centre and the second the least industrialised city in the entire sample. Both cities are characterised by serious employment problems which affect almost exclusively the local population. In both local welfare is weak, though for different reasons. In Halle, the combination of the only recently imported welfare system – still little used by citizens – and generous work insertion programmes keeps down the number of social assistance interventions to support incomes. In Cosenza, what we have is rather the scarcity of resources and employment opportunities in contrast to a widespread need. In the first case, the local welfare balance is the result of a contingent shock, reunification, whereas in the second the situation is dictated by a long history of deruralisation without industrial development and by adaptation to chronic forms of economic difficulty that emerged after the end of out migration and expansion in manufacturing. In Halle, however, extended and prolonged family support is very weak within a highly individualised context, while in Cosenza family/kin and informal support is quite strong. This in turn results in heightened forms of "familiarisation of poverty" (Sgritta, 1993), as the conditions of life of the full nuclear family and often of non-cohabiting relatives are drown into poverty by the necessity to support members in difficult economic situations (particularly long-term unemployed).

An analogy can be seen in the two cases in which employment problems are relatively contained: Milan and Rennes. Both cities have recorded a strong de-industrialisation,

balanced by innovative developments of the advanced tertiary sector. In the two cities, immigrants and minorities are not at the centre of the local processes of poverty production, even though they are becoming increasingly important in Milan. Neither are these two cities very different in terms of the fragilisation of family support, which is significant but certainly does not reach the high levels of Scandinavian and English-speaking countries. However, in a certain sense, the social policy institutional responses are at opposite poles: Rennes is one of the pilot French cities in the development of new social policies, whereas in Milan local government is neither generous nor innovative. Innovation in welfare is left to the initiative of the third sector. Here, too, it is clear that strong similarities in the local construction of poverty are not automatically reflected in the local welfare set-up.

Table 1

CITIES	UNEMPLOYMENT/ BAD JOBS	IMMIGRATION/ MINORITIES	FAMILY FRAGILISATION versus RESPONSIBILITY
BARCELONA	Intermediate	Low	Intermediate vs. High
BREMEN	High	Very High	High vs. Intermediate
COSENZA	Very High	Low	Very Low vs. High
GÖTEBORG	Intermediate	High	Very High vs. Very Low
HALLE	High	Very Low	High vs. Intermediate
HELSINBORG	Intermediate	High	Very High vs. Very Low
LISBON	Low	Low	Very Low vs. High
MILAN	Very Low	Intermediate	High vs. Intermediate
PORTO	Low	Low	Very Low vs. High
RENNES	Very Low	Low	Intermediate vs. Intermediate
SAINT-ÉTIENNE	High	High	High vs. Intermediate
TURIN	High	Intermediate	High vs. Intermediate
VITORIA	High	Low	Intermediate vs. High

We then have four cases – Bremen, Saint-Étienne and the Swedish cities – in which the question of the vulnerability of immigrants and minorities is decidedly a priority.[7] They combine problems in work insertion and social integration, notwithstanding the strong support offered by families and communities of most immigrant groups maintain a strong solidarity role. These are, then, four industrial cities where the transformations of the occupational structure have been deep-reaching. In Bremen, and to a lesser extent in the Swedish cities, the immigrant-specific dimension of poverty has been further heightened by new arrivals, especially of asylum seekers.

The case of Turin is similar to that of the four cities above in so far the issue of immigration – once from the South of the country and more recently from the third world and eastern Europe – has been a standing feature both of the specific demography of poverty and of the issues facing its social assistance policies. Possibly, this explicit need to deal with social integration (not only poverty) issues may explain

not only the relatively integrated approach to social assistance in this city, but also its relative propensity for innovation.

Immigration (mostly from North Africa) plays an important role also in St. Étienne, but in a way which renders this city unique in our sample. The associations of Maghreb immigrants are partners with a number of local institutions, but they do not play an important role in management decisions and strategic orientations of social policies.

Immigrants and minorities do not constitute a significant problem in the Spanish and Portuguese cities, where vulnerability due to unemployment affects mainly the local population, as in Halle and Cosenza. Differently from Halle, however, social welfare in these cities is still heavily dependent on both family-kin solidarity and a network of, mostly religious, charities. And unlike in Cosenza, social policies in favour of low income groups combine more easily formal with informal employment opportunities; at the time of the research the Spanish cities had already developed some kind of universal, last resort minimum income scheme, which integrated both family support and the traditional charitable measures. Hence the phenomenon of "familisation of poverty" due to overburdening is to some degree reduced. As for the Portuguese cities, which at the time of the research might have seemed more similar to many Italian cities with their lack of a universal minimum income policy, they were already moving towards the introduction of a minimum income scheme inspired, like the Spanish one, by the French RMI, although at a much lower level.

Towards a comparative interpretation of differences in local welfare systems

As we would have expected, the local level of analysis is more difficult to interpret in terms of welfare and poverty models than the national one. Certainly, common trends both in the processes of impoverishment with which policies are confronted across countries and across cities and in the policies themselves may be detected, namely a higher focus on activating measures and a stress on social partnership and welfare mixes. Yet, the social and cultural specificity of each city remains the main factor shaping these same trends.[8] Moreover, since a large part of the success of these common trends depends on local resources and actors, they may further enlarge cross-city differences within the same country, while possibly reducing in some cases differences between cities located in different countries, but otherwise similar in social and economic profile and range of actors.

The two-dimensional diagram in fig. 3 indicates the position from where the cities in the sample experience those "common" trends. The horizontal axis represents the degree to which public policies and measures imply an institutionally defined social right, the vertical axis the degree to which individualisation and market expansion have produced individual autonomy or, on the contrary, persistent dependence on the informal protection of various agencies (particularly the nuclear family but also kin, charities, non-profit or volunteer agencies). They are the two dimensions which, albeit in different ways, underlie most welfare state research. Within a given country, each local welfare system combines these two lines differently according to local resources, as well as to the local understanding of poverty and rights.

Bottom left lie cases in which the local welfare state draws on limited resources (institutional, financial and human capital) and has therefore not developed comprehensive intervention to help the poor. This is usually complemented by the wide-ranging and heterogeneous assistance provided by non-governmental institutions (traditional and more recent secular and religious organisations) as well as by family and kin solidarity. The autonomy from family and traditional agencies is consequently low. In this position we find first of all those cities in countries with no nationally regulated minimum income scheme and with different kinds of local measures in favour of particular social categories, which may be more or less generous depending both on city policy and on the category. This arrangement leads to a relatively high degree of discretion. In this context, the role of local government is crucial not only in adapting policies to the local situations and encouraging social innovation, but also in defining entitlements.

Top right, we find a high level of institutionalisation with centralised control of a relatively high quota of resources (financial and human capital) reflected in comprehensive intervention in favour of beneficiaries taking into account their specific personal needs. This combination leaves relatively little (or subsidiary) room for family and community intervention. The level of individualisation is high but also protected by universalistic state intervention, contrary to what would happen in more market-oriented contexts (which would be located in the top left quadrant). It tends to reduce or strongly institutionalise co-operation with non-profit and volunteer organisations, and also limits the degree of social workers' discretion. At the same time, it can encourage a bureaucratic approach to social assistance with little flexibility and space for innovation, particularly if local governments have limited scope for defining and implementing policies.

The single cases are distributed on an ellipse around the diagonal linking the two poles because the run of the two variables is, at least partly, correlated in the historical development of local welfare systems. As can be seen, the more state welfare intervention has moved in the direction of developing a universalistic capacity to meet the needs of individuals in difficulty (going towards the top right pole), the more it has withdrawn responsibility from family, kin, private charity associations and informal relationships (possibly absorbing them in a subaltern role subject to the organisational and informational rationale of state intervention)[9]. Where state intervention has remained subsidiary, resources and responsibility for support have, on the contrary, been left to an unevenly structured world of family and informal intervention. In the first case, the development of welfare is mainly characterised by the centralisation of resources and responsibility for support in the public system; in the second, a central role is played by the subsidiarity of limited public assistance in relation to private responsibility. At the diagram's centre lie mixed cases,[10] in which there exists an established and universal public support system, but private institutions have kept a share of resources and responsibilities. The mixed situation is well illustrated by the case of the German cities. With respect to Swedish cities, they are less citizenship-based since, at least in theory, public support for individuals is subordinated to family members' incapacity to provide; private charity institutions also maintain an important role. The latter, however, is much less important and connected to informal practices than in the southern European cities, which are closer to the bottom left corner of the diagram.

The degree of institutionalisation of support also has an impact on the selection of users. Whereas in cases close to the top right pole also individuals in temporary difficulty (inability to pay the rent for a few months or find the money for a private vocational training course) make use of public assistance, the cases at bottom left select only individuals and families in very serious difficulty, in persistent economic hardship and in marked social and/or family marginalisation. The mixed cases, located at the centre, are more generous than those of southern European cities but are often selective, also by virtue of the stigma connected with dependence on public welfare.

The diagonal is not strictly based on an evolutionary approach and does not automatically reflect the economic strength of the local community. For example, though its per capita income is among the highest in our sample, Milan is located towards the bottom left end of the diagonal. Conversely, Halle, a city with a low per capita income due to serious economic difficulties, lies at the centre of the diagonal.

The diagram is also indicative of various "auxiliary" factors alongside the two main variables, such as the greater or lesser bureaucratic rigour or the degree of discretion in welfare practices and the more or less subordinate role assumed by private care associations. What is however essential to underline is that diverse positions on the diagram indicate on the whole different rationales behind public income support programmes and, consequently, different parameters for assessing the effectiveness of, or dependence on public welfare. In the cases near the bottom left pole,[11] the general rationale behind intervention is a limited one, centring on familial subsidiarity and complementarity to private and informal contributions. It can thus be assumed that public intervention on its own never resolves the problems, that its duration is almost always a function of the access rules and that its continuation does not automatically indicate dependence or ineffectiveness. In the cases near the top right pole, which involve historically relatively homogeneous social situations and strong, compact and long-lasting political coalitions (Esping-Andersen, 1990),[12] public intervention is understood as independent of the subject's family and social situation and as comprehensive. It should therefore resolve on its own (or, better, together with other non-monetary public welfare programmes) the problems faced by individuals in economic difficulty in the shortest time possible, because continuing dependence points to a programme's ineffectiveness. The mixed cases located at the diagram's centre are more complicated, as intervention does not disregard the family and social situation of the individuals in difficulty; so its effective success depends on the correlation between the modes of intervention and the specific typologies of users, a correlation that varies considerably from city to city.[13]

The third sector and its varied impact on social policies

In order to understand how local welfare programmes work at present and with a view to future developments, we need to consider at least two aspects that are not shown in the diagram. They are the relationship between income support and social insertion activities and the role played in the diverse local contexts by third sector institutions, paying particular attention to the ones that are expanding their range of intervention in the face of a growing heterogeneity of needs.

Except for the elderly and the disabled (and partly lone mothers, at least in some countries, such as the UK or the Netherlands) income support in the golden age of welfare state development was seen as a temporary measure to enable survival between two jobs or in a period of employment slackening. For this reason, the ways in which welfare developed did not address the issue of insertion and of welfare recipients' responsibilities. Yet, everywhere today we are moving towards situations where the social conditions are increasingly heterogeneous and unstable. It is under these conditions that insertion (and exclusion) are becoming important in local welfare practices and so is the recourse to third sector actors as insertion-mediating agencies and as acknowledged social partners in public policies.

This dual development – concern for social integration and involvement of social partners in general and third sector actors in particular – has been given explicit form in France through the introduction of the RMI, and subsequently in Spain and in Portugal. The RMI now being tried out in Italy follows the same logic. Further, these two dimensions have become part of the official European Commission's social policy discourse and are at the basis of the action plan against social exclusion launched at the Lisbon Summit in March 2000.

The challenge of social integration is forcing all cities towards comprehensive public intervention, but also towards setting up new relationships and balances between the institutionalised and bureaucratic forms of public action and the more flexible and informal ways of regulating social bonds. This diagnosis of the situation is not without effect on the way we perceive poverty and exclusion and the responses to them in the different European contexts, but also on how we assess their dynamics of change and the consequences for the populations in question. It also makes us very careful in our use of the "classic" typologies of the welfare state or of the mode of poverty regulation, which are generally built around the formal and institutional characteristics of regional or national systems. More specifically, limiting the analysis to only the interplay between the two axes shown in the diagram – degree of citizenship entitlement and degree of de-familisation – since this is the prevalent mode in comparative welfare state research, does not account for the actual working of welfare states at either the national or, even more so, local level.

To be sure, simply factoring in the third sector is not sufficient. Under this label, in fact, lie the most diverse actors and institutions. Even after separating out families and kin as well as informal networks, one is left with a heterogeneity which does not allow easy simplifications. The intermediary structures involved in the local systems across the 13 cities in the study, for instance, are extremely diverse, ranging from large-scale national institutions – such as Caritas or La Misericordia – to small volunteer groups. Moreover, there is the whole world of social co-operatives and the like which are assimilated to the third sector and NGOs only because they are not supposed to make profit from their activities, but which are in the market – often the public market. And in certain cases an association may be fully integrated into the institutional public apparatus and thereby equivalent to a semi-public institution (this is particularly so in Germany, given the prevalence of the principle of subsidiarity [Schultheis, 1996b]). Others, in contrast, are still highly autonomous and act essentially outside the local public domain and according to a rationale of assistance based on filling the gaps left by public intervention (for example, in Milan). One also finds a great diversity in ethnic representation and the importance of ethnic groups

and associations in social integration activities: A role which seems limited in France, but much greater in Germany and Sweden also due to active public support.[14]

A more precise analysis also allows us to see in a less mechanistic light the links between, for example, the central role of the family, integration in the local community and a strong presence of the church and religious institutions in the field of social assistance. A mechanical approach would make a clear distinction between traditional modes of solidarity and ways of fighting poverty and more modern forms. Our analysis, on the contrary, shows that tradition and modernity come together to produce original arrangements that cannot be reduced to rigid models. The same is true with regard to religious institutions and networks, given that the relations between state and church varies considerably from country to country. Depending on the local context, religious institutions may intervene only in urgent cases of extreme exclusion or become a full partner of the local institutional apparatus (Bremen, Milan, Lisbon). They may confine themselves to traditional-style actions and charity work on behalf of “the poor” (Lisbon), or act almost like a social service with professional staff and a proper financial and organisational structure (Bremen and Milan).

These elements bring us, therefore, to see in less linear and homogeneous terms the lines along which the different local configurations are evolving, and it is by no means certain that we will witness a generalised strengthening of the process of institutionalisation. Original re-compositions involving either the third sector or other kinds of local resources could make their appearance.

The present innovations in the relationship between public intervention and third sector institutions are thus encompassed by three different modalities that have characterised the incorporation of the latter within the process of modernising welfare intervention systems. In the cases of France and Sweden, this incorporation has gradually led to the marginalisation of traditional private organisations for charitable intervention. But the centralised French approach is more rigid than the decentralised one in Sweden. Hence, in the latter case it is easier to set up new local third sector organisations to act as intermediaries between the needs of immigrants and various ethnic groups and the local state welfare apparatus. In the case of Germany, incorporation has made private organisations subordinate to public intervention but kept for them an important complementary role together with substantial public financing.[15] In the cases in southern Europe, third sector institutions have maintained a wide margin of operational autonomy even when they obtain public funds. The three modalities are thus expressed differently in the local contexts and impact differently with the current changes.

The different ways in which the third sector is involved in anti-poverty social policies signal a newly consolidated situation in the labour market and, more broadly, in the economic system, a situation that is altering radically the overall framework of the “war against poverty” and the very idea of inclusion. The crisis of the male breadwinner society and of its model of integration and social mobility is weakening the social programs against poverty due to more unstable occupations on the labour market. These new forms of involvement cause public institutions to come to terms with other institutions (areas of intervention) as well as to contrive new ways of inclusion. This process is also evident in the heterogeneity of social needs, which represents a challenge for bureaucratic models. In other words, the more the

occupations on the labour market are unable to ensure social integration for all, the more it is necessary for the local systems to seek new paths and areas of intervention. In order to do so, they have to mobilize both new private resources that must leave aside family and kinship solidarity and new public resources that go beyond the usual standard procedures of centralized bureaucratic apparatuses. In this respect, all of the local systems are encountering difficulty in adapting. Therefore, it is precisely such adaptability that lies at the core of the challenge that social exclusion issues to local governance, characterized by the procedural rigidity of "dual assistance", fragmentation and the weak control and regulation of familial and informal systems.

Notes

[1] This article is a revised version of an unpublished paper presented at the International Conference “Social Inequality, Redistributive Justice and the City” organised by the ISA Research Committee on Urban and Regional Development in Amsterdam on June 15-17, 2001. Some of the arguments and figures of this article appear also in a different form in the second chapter of *Social Assistance Dynamics in Europe: National and Local Poverty Regimes* edited by Chiara Saraceno (2002).

[2] The research took place in 1996-98 and involved the following cities: Rennes and Saint Etienne in France; Bremen and Halle in Germany; Cosenza, Milan and Turin in Italy; Lisbon and Porto in Portugal; Barcelona and Vitoria in Spain; Gothenburg and Helsingborg in Sweden. The cities were chosen by each national team according to two main criteria. The first, and more important, was the accumulation and availability of data and knowledge, particularly the possibility to use longitudinal archives on social assistance in the chosen cities. Then, when possible, the team selected a more innovative city on social assistance and welfare practices, and a more ‘normal’ case. Obviously this way of selecting cases can by no means be considered representative of the high and increasing level of diversity at the local level typical of the present European situation.
The research methodology included vignettes on the formal and effective organization of assistance per categories of able-bodied recipients (migrants/minorities; single parents; single persons; families with children); interviews in depth with recipients and social workers; and, where possible, a longitudinal analysis of spells in assistance with quantitative data taken from social assistance archives of the cities.

[3] Halle is an exception as the percentage of the foreign-born population in the city is low and few of them are welfare recipients. If we take into account also the new wave of asylum seekers, the French cities seem less affected by the phenomenon compared to Bremen and the Swedish cities.

[4] But Gothenburg is much larger and has a strong shipbuilding and car assembly tradition, whereas Helsingborg combines its role as the main ferry link to Denmark with an important specialisation in chemicals.

[5] In Germany, in 1993, financial support for asylum seekers was transferred from “social assistance” to a special separate system (Leisering and Leibfried, 1999, p.190).

[6] Mention should be made at least of the institutions created by Don Bosco and the Salesian order in the field of training the young at the end of the nineteenth century, which lasted all through the next, together with a number of, often nationally and internationally, known institutions created by religiously inspired individuals and groups who work in different areas of vulnerability and social exclusion: the handicapped, drug-addicts, prostitutes, AIDS sufferers and so forth .

[7] In Bremen, for instance, already in 1989 the proportion of new immigrants among the beneficiaries of social assistance represented almost half of all recipients (Leisering and Leibfried, 1999).

[8] As Dahrendorf maintains (1995), “reactions to globalisation will differ in spite of the fact that the global market requires the same positive qualities from everyone.”

[9] This picture derives from the fact that in our research we do not include cases where the processes of individual autonomisation and responsibility are left predominantly to market forces. The position of Lisbon and Porto refers to the period prior to the generalisation of RMG. They would now probably be located higher up along the institutional support axis, though remaining low in the degree of de-familisation and independence from charities and informal networks.

[10] The concept of mixed cases has been used for the TSER European research on unemployment and social exclusion co-ordinated by Gallie and Paugam (2000) with reference to France and Germany in particular, but also including the UK.

[11] These cases, which all belong to the southern European welfare model (see Ferrera, 1993; Paci, 1989; Mingione, 2001), are characterised by a high level of fragmentation, heterogeneity and particularism. Fragmentation can be understood in a double perspective: on the one side fragmentation in the policies and in the target groups policies are aimed at; on the other, geographical fragmentation of social policies, which leads to important differences in social citizenship (and consequently to heterogeneity) according to the different context.

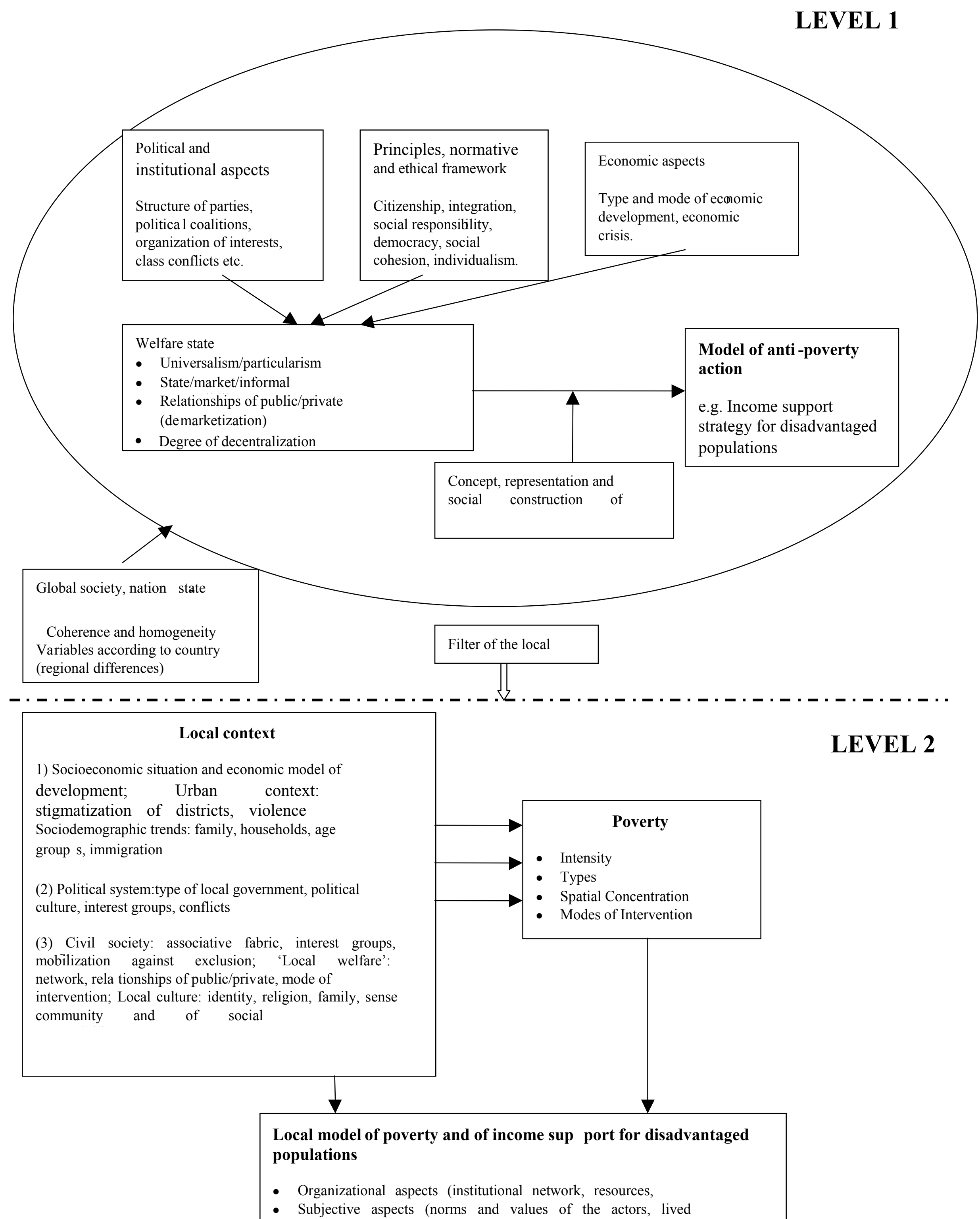
[12] The particular combinations experienced by Scandinavian countries (and cities) were possible since the population was quite homogeneous in terms of culture and expectations. With the presence of new immigrants the level of homogeneity is decreasing and expectations are becoming more diversified.

[13] In this sense, the diagram shows three different kinds of development which refer mainly to the Scandinavian; southern European and Continental patterns. If the UK had been included, we would have also seen another pattern, mainly characterised by a level of institutionalisation lower than both the Swedish and German cities, but higher than the southern ones, and high (higher than the German cities) levels of individual autonomy and responsibility connected with competition in the labour market – cases still located in the top right quadrant of the diagram, although more towards the left of the diagonal. Only US cities would be located in the top left quadrant.

[14] Strategies including ethnic minorities can be very different according to the different institutional framework. For instance, in France the question of representation of ethnic minorities has never been put on the political agenda. Formally speaking French citizens, they have not been represented as ethnic minorities. Conversely, in the United Kingdom, ethnic minorities have been included in an active policy of favouring specific ethnic minority interests within a context of racial discrimination and recognition of cultural differences (Bulpitt, 1986; Weil, 1991). The other central-northern European countries have followed the UK example rather than the French "republican state culture" model.

[15] In Germany, for example, the conference of all churches produced a unitary document on welfare intervention, which facilitated public co-ordination of the sector in different areas and explains how it has been possible to revitalise rapidly the religious organisations in the East German *Länder*.

Figure 1



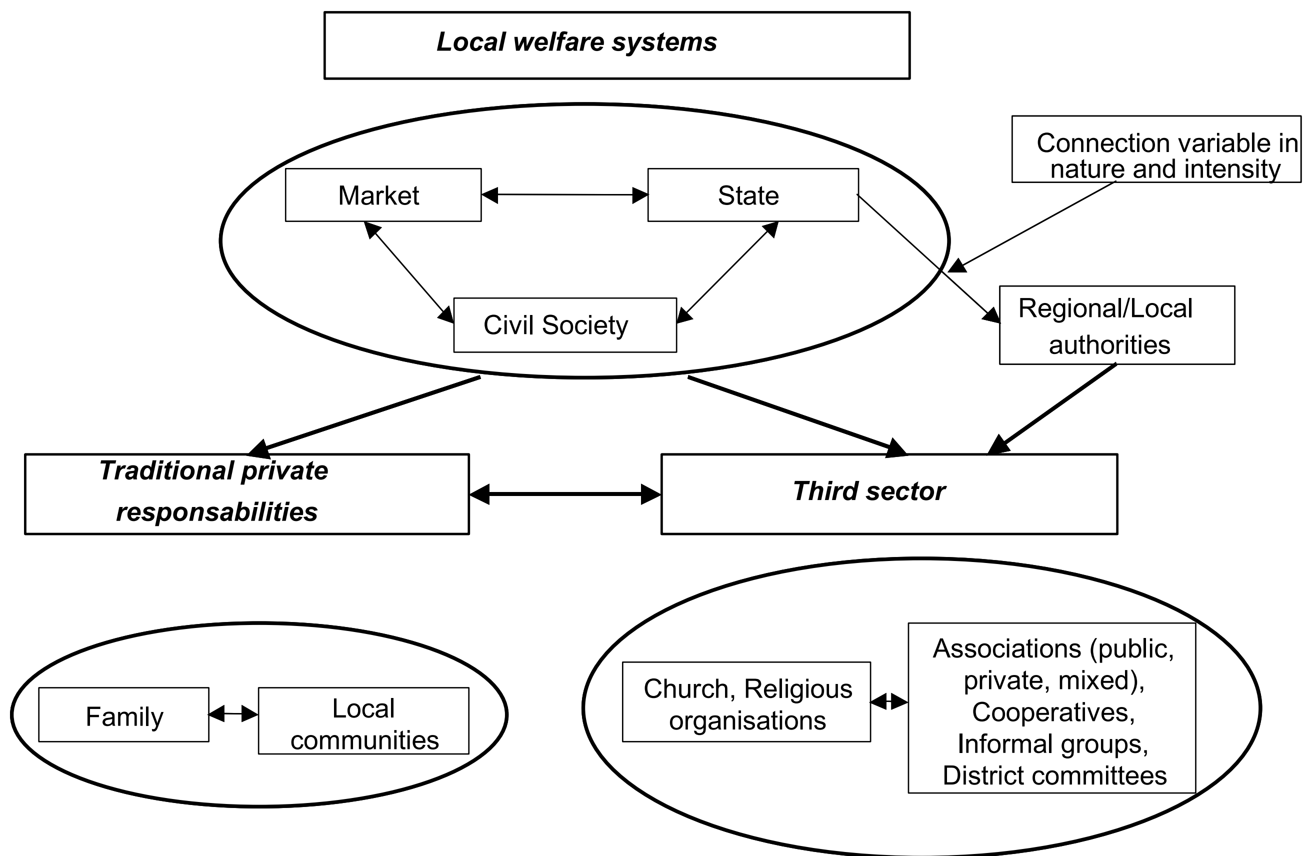


Figure 2. Diagram of the structure of local welfare systems

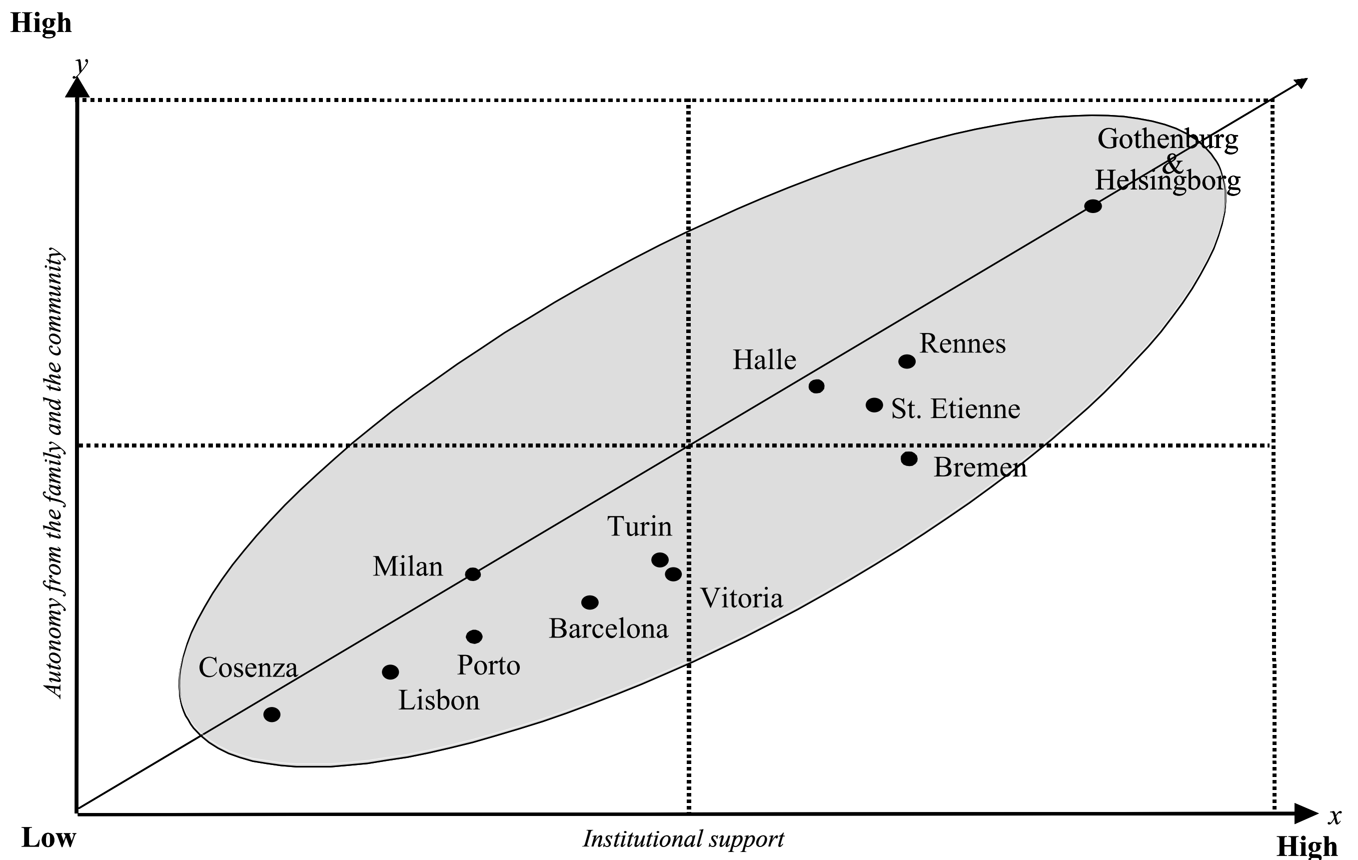


Figure 3[1]. Distribution of Esopo cities according to their level of institutional support and the degree of autonomy from family and community support

[1] The position of cities on the diagram are approximately calculated from the results of the empirical research instruments such as interviews with recipients and social workers and vignettes comparing the legal structure of the income support programme with its effective implementation. The more welfare support is an individual right (not dependent on informal support and the obligations of relatives and family members and tailored to the complex needs of recipients, independently of budgetary restrictions) the more the city lies close to the top right of the diagram.

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