



Research on Social Integration
in Flanders

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This report focuses on groups referred to by a multitude of different names. They are the underprivileged, the vulnerable, the socially handicapped, the minority groups, the discriminated, disqualified, disadvantaged, marginalized, deprived, poor of this world. What these people have in common is their marginal position in society. They run the risk of ending up last in the queue, or anyway somewhere in the rear, when goods and services are distributed to the members of society. Usually, social exclusion is due to a lack of resources. It has to do with financial insecurity of existence and poverty. However, this is not always the case. Other factors/mechanisms can also cause social integration problems. Reference is made to certain individual characteristics such as handicap, age (elderly people), nationality and/or ethnicity, behaviour (deviancy) and so on. Whatever the cause, these people are liable to end up in a situation of multiple deprivation with regard to participation in 'mainstream society' and access to vital social systems (labour market, health services, housing and so forth). This report gives an overview of socio-economic research done in the Flemish Community regarding these groups and on mechanisms leading to social integration problems.

There are two types of scientific research about integration/exclusion. The first type describes the social situation of the people belonging to various excluded groups, their characteristics and the mechanisms through which they ended up in this situation. A second type of research describes, explains and evaluates socio-political measures to combat social exclusion and to promote integration into mainstream society. Both types will be reviewed.

The studies could be presented in different ways. One way is to classify the research projects according to the social groups concerned. Another possibility is to take social problems as a guiding principle: poverty, unemployment, racism, social inequality, ... Neither of these options has been chosen. Instead, the various dimensions of social integration are taken as a classification criterion: work, housing, income, education, health, family and community.

To manage the enormous body of research in this field, a few restrictions are necessary. Firstly, this report presents research units active in this field and the topics they are working on. Projects of single researchers are referred to occasionally. Secondly, only units with a certain research tradition on exclusion/integration will be mentioned. Thirdly, the overview is restricted to university-related institutes. Fourthly, there is a spatial and temporal restriction. The survey is limited to Flanders and covers only the last decade.

1. The disadvantaged on the labour market

The persistent high level of unemployment since the mid-seventies has led to a flood of studies on work and unemployment. This section does not cover all this research. We will only review studies on the employment situation of the most vulnerable groups. Most studies provide a description of the labour market situation of one or more types of vulnerable groups and/or an evaluation of the initiatives taken to improve their situation. The Resource Centre for Employment, Work and Training of the K.U.Leuven (SIU6) provides general information and support to the scientific community and practitioners in this field.

1.1. General studies

The scope of some studies is limited to one type of the disadvantaged, other studies take a broader view. The latter include descriptive overviews of the use of employment measures for disadvantaged groups, the analysis and development of co-ordination models for agencies dealing with these groups, their relationship to ordinary placement, training and employment services and so on. Furthermore, studies have been made of the employers' attitudes towards hiring employees with a very low level of schooling or members of disadvantaged groups. The outcome of training measures and recruitment subsidies, agreed upon by both sides of industry and aiming at several disadvantaged groups, has also been evaluated.

These days, most of the employment measures are co-financed by the European Social Fund. Recently, a large scale study has been undertaken to evaluate the employment results of all the training schemes co-financed by the ESF, as well as the effect of recruitment subsidies. This also provided the basis for an international study on 'Pitfalls and Dilemmas' in labour market programs for disad-

vantaged groups. Finally, the potential for economic survival and the organization of 'social workshops' for disadvantaged groups has been researched.

All the studies mentioned so far were carried out at the HIVA of the K.U.Leuven (SIU9), which occupies a prominent place in this field. We will now turn to studies on specific groups of disadvantaged people.

1.2. Young and long-term unemployed.

In the early eighties, the number of unemployed youngsters rose dramatically and several studies focused on this group. In the second half of that decade, the HIVA (SIU9) produced a summary study on youth unemployment. The same institute has done and is currently doing studies on the transition from school to work for graduates of technical and vocational schools. Some specific programs, mainly for young unemployed with a low level of schooling ('Link to Work Programs'), were evaluated.

In the second half of the eighties, following shifts in the composition of the unemployed population, the

attention turned to the long-term unemployed. The measures to combat long-term unemployment were often accompanied by research. One of the first was a cross-national comparative study of these types of measures by the HIVA (SIU9). The same institute carried out a number of evaluation studies on specific measures, such as the evaluation of the 'Back to Work' program in Flanders, and developed test instruments for specialized placement agencies for the long-term unemployed.

1.3. The poor and the labour market

Persons on social welfare have been included among the target group of measures for the unemployed, and specific programs for this group have been set up. The actions (training, counseling and placement) undertaken by the Public Centres for Social Welfare to get their clients back to work have been studied by the HIVA (SIU9) and by the Department of Social Intervention, Culture and Leisure Studies (SIU53). The latter also investigated the impact of interim work on the socio-professional integration of this group.



Source: VDAB

1.4. The disabled and the labour market

In the mid-eighties, a study on special wage subsidies towards employment of disabled persons was made. The organization of sheltered employment, the characteristics of the workforce and the problem of transition to the open labour market have been investigated for the Belgian sheltered workshops and compared to the situation in all the other Member States of the EU and several other European countries. Thirdly, the outcome of special training measures for the disabled has been evaluated with respect to placement on the open labour market. All these studies were carried out at the HIVA (SIU9).

1.5. Migrants and the labour market

Studies on the labour market position of migrants were initiated during the seventies at the K.U.Leuven (SIU30). Recent studies relate to: ethnic stratification of the labour market in general, wage differentials between Belgians and (sub-groups of) migrants, access of migrants to employment in the public sector, closing down of coal mines and job opportunities for migrant mine workers after redundancy, tailor-made methods of placement for migrants, the situation of migrants on local labour markets, employers' attitudes and their differential treatment of migrants and the attitudes of the unions.

The Sector on Migration Studies of the HIVA (SIU9) publishes a directory of research into all the aspects of migration. It carried out studies on ethnic entrepreneurs in Brussel and on the labour market position of migrant women after vocational training.

Finally, the Institute for Labour Law of the K.U.Leuven (SIU49) made a comprehensive study of international labour migration and access to the labour market according to Belgian, international and European Community Law.

1.6. (Disadvantaged) Women and the labour market

The Resource Centre for Women's Studies (SIU34) deals with all aspects of the situation of women and produces overviews of research. Specific studies on the labour market situation of women with a low level of education have been carried out at the Research Group on Sociology (SIU44). The HIVA (SIU9) does research into gender segregation on the labour market and on positive actions for women.

2. Housing

A home provides shelter and locates people in relation to opportunities for employment, health and social services, education and other forms of participation. Consequently, housing has a strong impact on the process of integration/exclusion. We do not intend to give an overview of the research on housing and housing policy in general. Only projects about housing-related social problems and societal answers to these phenomena (public housing policy, urban renewal, ...) will be dealt with.

2.1. Housing and inequality

A first type of research on exclusion/integration related to housing is about (in)equality and the housing situation. Typical for this kind of research is that it cross-tabulates a multitude of housing characteristics (surface, comfort, quality, year of construction, type, ...) to variables related to the dwellers (occupation, owner/tenant, age, income, level of education, family size, ...). Based on the population census, the Research Group on Housing and Housing Policy (SIU19) analysed the housing situation of the lower income and professional groups.

2.2. Inequality and the city

Social inequality is not only manifested at the level of the individual's dwelling, it is also apparent at the level of the immediate and larger environment in which people live. In this context, research must be mentioned concerning the phenomenon of urban poverty. Flemish cities (Brussel, Antwerpen, Gent) have been the object of several global as well as partial studies on this problem. More specifically, one can refer to the computer atlases made by



the Institute for Social and Economic Geography (SIU25) and the Department of Human Geography (SIU51). All kinds of spatial, social, demographic, ... phenomena are plotted on maps and, as such, provide a visual picture of the distribution of (in)equality over the city. Other units have refined, replicated or enlarged these studies. Most of these projects were carried out in the context of the anti-poverty policy of the Flemish government. Through this policy, cities confronted with a cumulation of social problems (high rates of unemployment, a lot of subsistence income (see below) beneficiaries, a concentration of migrants) qualify for state subsidies. In order to obtain these subsidies, a report is needed about the socio-economic situation of the city. Some cities have contracted this job out to university departments (SIU9, SIU45, SIU56).

Whereas nearly all the above mentioned studies are based on official statistics, others have approached the topic of social inequality and the city with other research techniques. The team of the Institute for Social and Economic Geography (SIU25) carried out a project on the geographical aspects of the process of the dualization of society. The project was based on in-depth interviews and primarily analysed the survival strategies of the inhabitants in two deteriorated neighbourhoods in Brussel. The Department of Human Geography (SIU51) is also active in the domain of socio-spatial inequality.

2.3. Regional inequality

A third research theme is regional inequality. Studies in this field compare regional entities with each other on variables related to income, housing, employment, personal social services and health services, education, etc. The aim is to detect underdeveloped regions in need of extra impulses. Research of this type has been done by the HIVA (SIU9).

2.4. Special needs/ groups

Related to the already mentioned topics are studies on the housing situation/needs of specific groups. Concerning people with a handicap, studies have been done regarding housing facilities such as day care centres, homes for (non) working handicapped (SIU9), (semi-) residential services for mentally/sensory/physically handicapped (SIU28). A second category whose housing conditions call for special attention are the migrants. Their housing condition and distribution over the city, mainly Brussel, has been investigated by researchers at the K.U.Leuven (SIU25, SIU30), the Free University of Brussel (SIU51) and the University of Antwerpen - UFSIA (SIU19). The Royal Commissioner of Migrants Policy produced an almost exhaustive overview of the data on the housing situation/needs of the migrants. As a matter of fact, the reports published by and/or by order of this Commissioner contain an inventory of the research material on migrant workers in different societal domains, and not only housing.

The elderly comprise another group whose housing situation is well documented. Besides studies on their general living conditions and hence also on their housing situation, the homes for the aged in Flanders have been investigated. Active in this domain are: the Population and Family Study Centre (SIU8), the Centre for Sociology of Social Policy (SIU28) and the Research Group on Housing and Housing Policy (SIU19).

Homelessness is a topic studied by the Research Group on Culture and Welfare (SIU29). Who are the homeless, how do they live, how do they manage to survive, what experiences do they have with the social welfare services and so on?

2.5. Social policy and housing

Sometimes integrated in the above-mentioned studies, and sometimes set up separately, are projects concerning (social) housing policy. They can be grouped into three categories: process-, product- and performance studies.

To the first category, the process studies, belong studies aimed at understanding how the relationships and interactions between the various political, governmental and other organized collectivities in a society affect policy formulating. Interesting in this respect are the activities of the Research Group on Housing and Housing Policy (SIU19). This group has paid special attention to the social, economical and political determinants of (the history of) social housing policy.

The analytical focus of the product studies regards issues of choice: what is the form and substance of the choices that make up the policy design? Which options did these choices foreclose? Which values, theories and assumptions support these choices? Exemplary are the numerous studies on the (history of) legal and institutional frame of social housing policy by the Research Group on Social Law (SIU48) and the above-mentioned research unit.

Performance studies are concerned with the description and evaluation of the programmatic outcomes of policy choices. From this perspective, investigators ask, among other things, how well the program is being carried out. Programs are monitored to see what they consist of, whether they are reaching their target population, how much they cost and so on. This type of research is very typical for the Centre for Social Policy (SIU7). A number of times before, studies have been published providing answers to questions such as: Who are the groups which make use of the social housing policy measures? Who takes up the public housing allowances? Are

they a help for the lower-income categories or are they rather an additional advantage for people who anyway (with or without these allowances) would become homeowners?

3. A minimum standard of living - poverty and social security

Social integration and income is a wide-ranging theme which is studied from several perspectives by a multitude of research units. Before presenting the research on this theme in Flanders, it is worth mentioning that - recently - two Resource Centres have been founded in this field. The task of such a centre is to give logistic support to all the operating research groups and to coordinate their activities. There is a Resource Centre on Poverty, Income Distribution and Social Security, which is attached to the Centre for Social Policy (SIU7) and a Resource Centre on Social Security, which is incorporated into the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs.

Broadly speaking, there are two clusters of research pertaining to the theme of this section. The first is about the various aspects of inequality and poverty (sections 3.1. to 3.3.). Sections 3.4. up to 3.6. deal with the societal answer given to these problems: the system of social security.

3.1. General studies

A main theme in this research field is the prevalence of poverty and/or - what is seen as a less severe condition - subsistence insecurity. This is combined with a general interest in the distribution of income and wealth in society.

Most empirical research on this theme is performed by the Centre for Social Policy (SIU7). Since 1976, this centre continually monitors and updates a time-series of social indicators reflecting the social and economic well-being of Belgian house-

holds. Since 1985, the original cross-sectional design has been replaced by a panel research method. This important modification permits one to yield new insights: knowledge about the proportion of the population which is subsistence insecure at a given moment is complemented by information about the significantly larger proportion which, at least temporarily, becomes subsistence insecure and the much smaller proportion which remains in this deprived situation during a longer period.

The research activities in this field have not been limited to the Flemish or even to the Belgian level. The Centre for Social Policy (SIU7) has also probed the prevalence of poverty and subsistence insecurity in European cross-national comparative research. Recently, another team (SIU45) has initiated a European panel study about the income and living conditions of households.

3.2. Poverty

The identification of the more vulnerable categories of the population by means of general surveys is complemented by in-depth research on the living conditions of households in economic distress. At the same time, these projects aim at a better understanding of the mechanisms which cause subsistence insecurity or poverty, as well as the mechanisms which lead to an eventual persistence of this situation. This type of work is carried out at the Centre for Social Policy (SIU7), the Research Group on Poverty and Social Exclusion (SIU56) and the Research Group on Culture and Welfare (SIU29).

Poverty and subsistence insecurity can be seen as general risks with regard to the standard of living which confront the different categories of society in varying degrees. However, for some parts of the population, poverty presents itself as a structural persistent multi-dimensional problem (material deprivation, social exclusion, lack of opportunities, ...)

which overlaps generations. This structural poverty can be analysed from a multitude of perspectives. First, there are projects trying, at the macro level, to disclose those societal structures, institutions and processes which lead to structural poverty (SIU56). Research on a meso-level includes those studies which analyse the geographical aspect of poverty. Mention of this particular type of research is presented in section 2.2. Finally, much research exists which studies structural poverty at the micro-level. Studies done by the Population and Family Study Centre (SIU8) as well as by the Research Group on Poverty and Social Exclusion (SIU56) aim at reconstructing the structures of daily life of the poor by means of life histories. The Research Group on Poverty and Social Exclusion also pursues several other objectives in this micro-research field: qualitative research of factors and processes laying at the base of intra as well as inter-generational persistence of structural poverty, analysis of networks and their function in the production and reproduction of structural poverty, inquiries into the poor populations' self-perception and evaluation of their situation.

Besides its research activities, the Research Group on Poverty and Social Exclusion (SIU56) created and updates a database on poverty and social exclusion, which is based on information already available from scientific and official sources and which results in the annual publication of the "Yearbook on Poverty and Social Exclusion".

3.3. Social solidarity and income

Social solidarity with regard to income refers to those solidarity structures which sustain the legitimization of social policy initiatives as well as those solidarity chains which enable private actions such as charity and inter-generational transfers.

The size, the content and the condition of 'solidarity' is bound to a multitude of norms and values which are subject to change. Research with regard to the attitudes people have towards the equity of the income distribution and the criteria they use in their judgement has been performed by scholars belonging to the Centre for Economics and Ethics (SIU40), the Centre for Psychology of Labour and Organization (SIU26) and the Research Group on Economy and Government (SIU47). Value changes with regard to solidarity have empirically been investigated by the Centre for Sociology (SIU55).

A concept which is closely related to 'solidarity' is the notion of 'cooperative behaviour' which is used in theoretical economics. By means of an axiomatic theory of cooperative decisions, the Research Group on Economy and Government (SIU47) is trying to explain the cultural differences concerning common rules with regard to the solution of distributional problems pertaining to gifts, obligations or heritages. At the same time, and in cooperation with LUCAS (SIU27), this unit studied the transformation of solidarity into charity, i.e. the voluntary supply of public goods.

This same research unit has also done research about inter-generational solidarity networks. This was performed by means of economic simulation models (in which the generations are linked through investments in human capital in heritages). The Research Group on Social Planning (SIU45) investigated this topic by means of survey research.

3.4. Social security: paradigms and blueprints

This section and the following two describe research activities concerning social policy initiatives with regard to income.

In some studies, the social security institution in its totality is under debate. The present crisis of the welfare state offers a fertile breeding

ground for all encompassing blueprints for change. Recently, the multidisciplinary scientific cooperation between Flemish research institutes (under the coordination of the Institute for Social Law, SIU42) has led to the blueprint called 'Sociura'. Its most interesting proposal is the integration of social assistance protection and the basic protection offered by traditional social insurance arrangements by means of a so-called 'basic social allowance'. This innovation guarantees, without a preceding assessment of an individual's financial means, a substitute income to categories which are normally not eligible for social insurance benefits - e.g. unemployed persons with no previous work record. But at the same time, the conditionality of benefit eligibility with respect to the willingness to perform paid labour is maintained.

Conversely, in more radical research projects, the paradigmatic link between benefit eligibility and the upholding of work ethics has been cut through. In two institutions, research efforts are dedicated towards an analysis of the so-called basic income proposal (SIU24, SIU55).

3.5. Analysis of concrete aspects of social security

Most studies about social security policy concentrate on a particular topic: policy towards one target group (e.g. the unemployed), a particular transfer scheme (pension insurance), a technical problem, the implementation of a new planning instrument, etc.

A first category of research concerns the public assistance policy, both from a legal point of view (SIU42) and from a sociological perspective (SIU28). The Centre for Sociology of Social Policy has more specifically studied the development of the subsistence income scheme and the way it is implemented by the Public Centres for Social Welfare, responsible for the provision of this and other benefits. This scheme is one

of the so-called 'residual' social security benefits. It completes the traditional social security benefits and functions as a kind of 'safety net' for persons who are not able to acquire a minimal income through labour, personal property or entitlement to social security benefits.

Supplementary private or occupational social insurance - in particular, occupational pension schemes - is a special topic of interest in several legal research institutes (SIU42, SIU48).

The policy proposal in the Sociura blueprint regarding the creation of a new transfer scheme, the so-called 'basic social allowance', is of primary relevance to unemployment insurance. Additional research - both from an economic and a legal perspective - concerning unemployment insurance led to particular insights concerning the organization of the unemployment insurance system (SIU9, SIU42). The Centre for Social Policy (SIU7) compared the Belgian and the Dutch unemployment insurance system in order to provide an answer to the question of the best policy alternative for long-term unemployed persons: an unlimited period of eligibility for (rather) meager unemployment benefits according to the present system, or a limited period of eligibility for more generous unemployment benefits and afterwards eligibility for improved (but considered stigmatizing) social assistance benefits?

The elderly and their pension insurance schemes is also a well-examined topic. The pension insurance has been investigated by centres connected with law faculties (SIU42, SIU48). Possible scenarios for a flexible retirement age in old age pension insurance are investigated by the Research Group on Sociology (SIU22). The Population and Family Study Centre (SIU8) has analysed the impact of demographic changes on the future needs and problems - e.g. financing - of pension insurance. The potential need for an additional insurance scheme

concerning the elderly, insuring long-lasting - and very expensive - dependency of the very aged, including the problem of the best way to organize and finance such a new scheme, is receiving a lot of attention (SIU9, SIU42).

Only recently, the planning and evaluation of social policy initiatives has undergone a fundamental transformation due to the introduction of simulation techniques. The "Planbureau" (government agency responsible for forecasting the economic situation and for planning social and economic policy) applies two simulation models: MALTESE (Model for Analysis of Long Term Evolution of Social Expenditures) and PENSION, which is a software reconstruction of the complicated pension insurance scheme for employees. The Centre for Social Policy (SIU7) applies a micro simulation model - a software reconstruction of the basic regulation of the Belgian social security arrangements - which allows the evaluation of the impact of policy changes on the income situation.

The construction of simulation models is not the only way in which the analysis of social (security) policy is computerized. Additional research focuses on opportunities offered by computers evaluating social security policy and supplying legal advice (SIU42).

Another specific topic of investigation concerns the process of European integration and the problems/opportunities this implies for social security. Among the multitude of projects of this type (not all are equally relevant to the social integration theme), the studies performed by the Institute for Social Law (SIU42) regarding the possibility of the (partial) alignment of minimum benefit levels in European Member States in order to guarantee a common minimum level of protection for every European citizen are certainly worth mentioning.

3.6. Analysis of the impact of social security

This section covers both performance studies (effectiveness research) concerning the description and evaluation of the programmatic outcomes of policy choices, and research regarding the unintended consequences (external effects) of social policy.

The Centre for Social Policy (SIU7) is the Flemish expert on the subject of the effectiveness of social security benefits. The activities of this centre include: studies measuring the adequacy of social security in terms of alleviating poverty and subsistence insecurity, both by comparative cross-national and longitudinal analysis; in-depth analysis of the population living temporarily or permanently below a social subsistence level, in order to identify the failure of social security; research into the horizontal and vertical redistribution effects of family policy measures in the realm of social security; comparative cross-national and longitudinal research identifying the conditions and mechanisms which determine the effectiveness of social security in terms of ensuring a minimum standard of living. This includes the assessment of the impact of social, demographic and economic developments, and of policy changes on social policy effectiveness.

An important theme in effectiveness research is the so-called non-take up phenomenon in social security, i.e. the failure of the poor to exercise their rights to benefits and assistance as a result of stigma, administrative complexity, lack of knowledge, etc. Research in this field is particularly concentrated on non-take up in social assistance (SIU27, SIU48).

Research into the external effects of social security covers various themes. One theme concerns the combined effect of the structure of social security arrangements - e.g. the predominance of residual or institutional arrangements - and the

structure of solidarity chains which are necessary to sustain these arrangements (SIU28). Secondly, there are comparative cross-national studies of the impact of the social security system on labour market participation, especially with regard to women (SIU7). Thirdly, research has been carried out regarding the impact of the structure of unemployment benefits and social assistance benefits on the work ethics of the unemployed or the poor entitled to these benefits.

4. Education

The relationship between education and social integration is two-fold. Education is an institution which integrates and excludes. It excludes people by creating inequality among certain categories of the (younger) population. It integrates people in general, and the more vulnerable categories in particular, by providing them with the necessary competencies in order to function in society. A brief overview of research situated at the intersection of integration and education will be given. For a more extended survey, the reader is referred to the report "Educational Research in Flanders".

Research regarding the relationship between inequality and education relates to different groups of pupils and students (sexes, socio-economic categories/social classes, ethnic groups, ...) on different educational levels (primary, secondary, higher) and concerning different educational career aspects (participation, choice of curriculum, learning difficulties school fatigue, ...).

Flanders has a long tradition of studies dealing with class-differentiated educational participation. Various teams are active in this domain (SIU7, SIU9, SIU23, SIU28, SIU54). Secondary school youngsters from the lower socio-professional levels usually choose a curriculum which restricts their opportunities for higher education and quite often their chances of finding



a job as well. Higher professional groups are more than proportionally represented in general secondary education, whereas children belonging to the working class are more than proportionally represented in technical, vocational and special secondary education. This process continues at the higher educational levels (university and non-university). The lower the social class, the higher the under-representation of students, the higher the ratio of failing, the lower the participation in postgraduate training, and so on. Not only participation, but also school fatigue and motivational problems, factors determining school results and future life opportunities, are class-related. Projects carried out by the HIVA (SIU9) have analysed the dropout rates of children with a lower class background in vocational schools. The same institute checked the effectiveness of initiatives which try to reduce educational inequalities. Other teams have studied the impact of implementing educational priority areas on learning disadvantages and the increase of social integration (SIU50). Poverty is, of course, very much related to this topic. Children of people living in poverty are confronted with extra problems in their relationship with the educational institution. Projects stressing the need for an alternative educational policy for this category (SIU52), the necessity for a multidimensional and integrated problem-solving approach (SIU9) and the possibilities offered by some parts of the curriculum (e.g. physical education) as a means of integration (SIU57) have been carried out.

Gender- as well as ethnic-related differences and education are also relevant topics of the social integration theme. Lack of space and the fact that both of these topics have already been described in "Educational Research in Flanders", are two reasons for referring the reader to that document.

In order to counter these inequalities, a whole series of social policy initiatives have been taken, including study grants. Evaluative research with respect to the grants awarded to secondary and higher level students has been performed by the HIVA (SIU9).

Research on integration/exclusion and education also contains studies about the specific problems that threaten some categories of pupils/students in their social integration. Pupils with a handicap comprise a first category in this respect. Several studies concentrate on the special educational facilities for these children and on their integration in normal classrooms. A great deal of research develops, implements and evaluates modern technological equipment facilitating their integration. Active in this domain are the various Centres for Special Education of the K.U.Leuven, the Free University of Brussel and the University of Gent (SIU4, SIU12, SIU21). Youth delinquency is another theme situated at the intersection of integration and education. School experiences of youngsters seem to be of great importance for the other aspects of their situation. Studies carried out by the Research

Unit on Juvenile Criminology (SIU57) have emphasized the link between delinquency and school fatigue. A third theme: what are the educational achievements of immigrant children? How well does educational policy succeed in solving the problems in this domain? For more information concerning research on these themes, the reader is referred to the paper on "Educational Research in Flanders".

5. Health

This section does not cover pure medical research but socio-medical research, which is not only done by medical scientists but also, and even more, by sociologists, economists, etc. A distinction can be made between research on health services and research on the health status of the population.

5.1. The health status of the population

Unlike many other developed countries, Belgium does not have a national general health survey. The last and only survey of this kind dates from the nineteen-seventies. Also nonexistent are any related projects, such as disability surveys. Therefore, research on the health status of the population can only be based on administrative health statistics and on information obtained in studies with a more limited scope.



One of the principal research topics concerns social inequality and health, i.e. social factors such as class and income, working and living conditions, unemployment, psycho-social factors etc. which explain differential morbidity and mortality. The relationship between health and adverse socio-economic conditions works both ways: bad socio-economic conditions have an influence on the health situation but the health situation is also the origin of bad socio-economic conditions. The main centres where studies on this topic are carried out are the Department of Public Health (SIU15) and the Research Group on Home Medicine and Primary Health Care (SIU13). Recently, all the available evidence about social inequality and health has been gathered together by the Department of Public Health (SIU15). Some research on topics besides health (e.g. poverty, see other sections) also looks into the relationship of these topics towards health.

The relationship between the working environment and health is studied by the Research Group on Social Medicine (SIU10) and by the Department of Occupational and Insurance Medicine (SIU31).

Some research focuses on specific categories of the population. There are studies on the health conceptions, health behaviour and medical consumption of migrants from Turkey and Morocco (SIU33). Other studies look into the health situation of the elderly (SIU10, SIU15) or of special problem-groups among the elderly, such as psycho-geriatric patients (SIU1). General studies regarding the living conditions of the elderly usually also include health as a specific topic (SIU8).

Other studies are concerned with suicide (SIU39), drug-abuse and alcohol-problems (SIU15, SIU33) or aids (SIU10, SIU17, SIU33).

Finally, the Department of Public Health (SIU15) studies aspects of health in the framework of Quality of Life Indicators.

5.2. Health services

Instruments for the management and quality improvement of hospitals and other health services are developed at the Centre for Hospital and Nursing Sciences (SIU38).

The Belgian health statistics have been analysed at the Centre for the Sociology of Law (SIU46). Another team at the University of Antwerpen - UFSIA (SIU11) is studying the economic aspects of the health services. Health economics and its relationship to the welfare state is also a research topic at the K.U.Leuven (SIU9) and the University of Gent (SIU43).

The organization of mental health care services is investigated by the Research Group on the Sociology of Welfare and Management of Non-Profit Organizations (SIU3). The organization of primary health care, and more specifically the development of neighbourhood centres, is the main interest of the Research Group on Home Medicine and Primary Health Care (SIU13). The University of Gent also evaluates health education programs (SIU10). Specific programs to involve migrants in the health services have been evaluated at the Free University of Brussel (SIU15).

Studies on formal and informal care for the elderly often examine the relationship between social and medical care (SIU3, SIU8, SIU29).

Self-help groups in the medical and social field are studied at the K.U.Leuven, where there is also a Clearing House on Self-help (SIU32).

Finally, the K.U.Leuven has set up a research centre to look into the ethical and legal questions of new developments in medicine and biology (SIU41).

6. Family and community - the personal social services

This section is about integration in the immediate social environment people are living in: the family and the community. As in the other chapters, the research on the problems people are confronted with will be described first. It is followed by a description of the studies about the personal social services.

6.1. Integration in the social environment

Integration in the immediate social environment forms a problem for a great number of people. How handicapped people experience this has been described by scholars of the HIVA (SIU9) and the Centres for Special Education at the universities of Gent (SIU4) and Leuven (SIU21). Illustrative for the centre in Gent is the research regarding the psychological and sociological variables which influence the behaviour of deaf adults in society. One of the projects of the centre in Leuven claims that in the more remote areas of the country, many mentally handicapped people stay at home and have little or no contact with the social services. Other studies look into the problems of elderly parents who have a disabled son or daughter living at home. Recently, at the Centre for Sociology of Social Policy (SIU28), a study was done on the attitudes of the general public in a local community towards the integration of mentally disabled persons.

Poverty and integration in the surrounding social environment has been a research theme for the HIVA (SIU9), the Research Group on Poverty and Social Exclusion (SIU56) and the Research Group on Culture and Welfare (SIU29). A team of the HIVA investigated the lives of men and women living on subsistence income and the extent to which they establish social contacts and participate in the social and cultural life of their community. The second team did research about the so-called 'generation poverty', the structure of the daily life of the poor, the way they experience their situation and

their social networks. Local social networks and poverty has also been a research topic of the latter group.

For a long time already, the Research Unit on Juvenile Criminology (SIU57) is active in the domain of juveniles and social vulnerability. Research was done on unemployment and delinquency among the young, on school experiences and juvenile delinquency, and action research was carried out in order to develop an adequate methodology of social prevention in the field of juvenile deviancy. Cooperation between school and welfare agencies with a view to prevention, the role of the self-perception in the process towards persistent delinquency in boys vulnerable in society, urbanization as a problem for young people, the phenomenon of the megadancehalls in Belgium, ... are titles of projects which illustrate the activities of this group. A lot of these topics have also been investigated by the Research Group on Drug Policy, Criminal Policy and International Crime (SIU14). Specific for this unit, however, is its very outspoken interest for the drugs phenomenon: prevalence, description of users and addicts, relationship between poverty, use of illicit drugs and certain types of criminality. At the Free University of Brussel (SIU18), research is done about the procedures, both judicial and extra-judicial, dealing with juvenile delinquency. Particular attention is paid to the judicial position of minors. At the same time, international legislation is being studied, focusing on the fundamental principles for the protection of rights in criminal law as applied to juveniles. Vulnerability and children is a theme investigated by the Children's Rights Centre (SIU52) and by the various units of pediatry, relating to a centre for child abuse and neglect, of the various Flemish universities.

Violence is very often linked to integration/exclusion, not only for children but for other social groups as well. During the last years, violence against women has been the

topic of the Research Group on Medical Sociology (SIU5). The empirical basis of its work rests on a national survey concerning the prevalence of this phenomenon, its different forms, the victims and the offenders, etc. The relationship of battered women towards welfare services has also been investigated.

The social integration of immigrants is a research topic of the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the K.U.Leuven. At the centre of its interest are comparative studies of the ethnic majority - minority relations and intercultural behaviour in Belgium and in other countries. More specifically, this department is doing research on tradition and modernization, on socialization and education of second-generation immigrants and their integration into the mainstream lifestyle of the country of immigration. The attitudes of Belgians towards immigrants are investigated at the Research Centre for Data Collection and Analysis (SIU2) and at the HIVA (SIU9). The integration of ethnic minorities is also a topic of study at the Free University of Brussel (SIU55, SIU58).

Integration of the elderly and of the more vulnerable groups among them is a main theme of research at the Population and Family Study Centre (SIU8). This centre has done several surveys on the living conditions of the elderly in Flanders and on the different subcategories of this group (80-years and older, elderly women, ...). Social integration and the elderly is also a topic of the Research Group on Culture and Welfare (SIU29). Elderly abuse is a research topic of the Department of Social Gerontology (SIU37).

6.2. The personal social services - general studies

A second range of studies in the field of integration in the immediate social environment concerns services to help people to integrate, the so-called personal social services.

A first type of research about these services consists of studies providing a global overview of the field. Twice already, the Centre for Sociology of Social Policy (SIU28) has made a complete inventory of the social welfare domain in Flanders. Belonging to this domain are: the general social services (Public Cen-



tres for Social Welfare, different kinds of private centres for general social welfare); services for children and families; the care for elderly people; the care for the handicapped; the initiatives to combat poverty and social exclusion; social welfare services for youth assistance; services for migrants and refugees; commu-



Source: "Kind en Gezin"

nity development, the informal welfare sector (care by the family/neighbours, volunteers, self-help groups). These global studies contain information about the evolution of the legal framework within which each of these social services oper-

ate, the morphology (types, distribution, ...) of the services, the characteristics of their clients and personnel. Also included is a description of the main problems and trends in social welfare policy.

Research institutes related to the law faculties study the social welfare sector as a specialized legal system. They compare welfare legislation to other forms of legislation, develop computerized advice systems in welfare law, investigate the feasibility of new systems pertaining to old age insurance, define new legal positions for the persons involved in home care, volunteers and so on. Illustrative for this are the activities of the Institute for Social Law (SIU42).

Thirdly, with respect to the sector as a whole, there are studies concerning the opportunities offered by information-technology for the management of human services. These services have a number of characteristics which makes this type of management highly specific. How information can enlarge the management-capacity of these services is one of the questions studied by the Research Group on Social Planning (SIU45). The same group performed a comparative study of the diverse systems social services use for the registration of clients.

In addition, transversing the entire personal social services sector are studies on (state) expenditures. During recent years, the HIVA (SIU9) was active in this field. For the moment (1995), a study is set up in which researchers of the Centre for the Sociology of Welfare and Management of Non-Profit Organizations (SIU3) are developing a planning model for the personal social services in Flanders.

Studies on employees in the welfare sector have been performed by LUCAS (SIU27). A first study, executed together with the Centre for Psychology of Labour and Organization (SIU26), is about the assessment and the improvement of the quality of professional work in social profit organizations. A self-ad-

ministered assessment instrument to measure the job experience (stress, motivation, satisfaction) of professional workers in social profit organizations (social welfare, guidance, care for the elderly, care for the disabled) was developed. On the basis of results, sets of interventions in order to improve the performance of the professional workers were developed. A second research project concerns the wage and labour conditions of the personal social services. This study provides an inventory of the official wages and working conditions and investigates the theme of equal pay for equal work. Do people with the same characteristics, doing the same job but working in different social services receive the same wage?

6.3. The personal social services - specific studies

Many centres study not only the personal social services in general, but also specific types of social services.

Firstly, the general social services. Several themes have been studied, one of them being the allocation of time and workers in general social work agencies. This project, based on a time study, analyses the use of the main productive factor in social work, the social workers themselves. How and where do they work, what kind of activities do they undertake and how much time is spent on the different tasks? Also investigated by the Centre for the Sociology of Welfare and Management of Non-Profit Organizations (SIU3) is the relationship between the general personal social services and overlapping services. A third theme, studied by LUCAS (SIU27), focuses on the demand for and the supply of help provided by the general personal social services. On the one hand, there are questions such as: Which factors are responsible for asking help?; Why do people select a certain social service?; How is their relationship with the professional helpers? On the other hand, this research project handles questions such as:

Do services select certain clients?; What are their characteristics?; Which kind of help is offered for which problems? and so on. These questions also constitute the core of a project carried out by the Research Group on Culture and Welfare (SIU29). They are applied to the category of the poor: What makes poor people contact the welfare services?; What are the conditions for a successful helping relationship?; What is the impact of their culture on the relationship they have with professional helpers? Furthermore, LUCAS (SIU27) performs research on a new methodology for working with the poor. Participation, integral approach and working with the environment constitute the main characteristics.

Related to this theme, but clearly broader in scope, are the activities of the European Observatory on National Family Policies (SIU16). An annual report is published on the situation of families in the Member States and on the policy measures with regard to families. Family policy and all subjects related to this institution (divorce, reconstituted families, family and employment, single parent families, the changing role of older generations) have been investigated by the Centre for Sociology of the Family, Population and Health Care (SIU17) and by the Research Group on Culture and Welfare (SIU29).

In Flanders, a special place in the general personal social services is reserved for the Public Centres for Social Welfare (PCSW). They have been the object of thorough investigation. A team of the Centre for Sociology of Social Policy (SIU28) has investigated the criteria used to decide who gets which kind of help, for how long and under which conditions. The same study contains a detailed description of the people who receive financial support. At the same centre, one of the categories of the financially supported, those who are entitled to subsistence income, has been studied. The Population and Family Study Centre

(SIU8) is continuously studying all the different types of characteristics of people who turn to the PCSW for financial aid. Both of the just-mentioned research groups have also studied the help given by these centres. Worth mentioning in this context is the action research project of the HIVA (SIU9), concerning the way in which help given by the PCSW can be customized to fit the particular individual situations of the clients.

The PCSW, together with the local authorities, also plays an important role in the anti-poverty programs initiated by the Flemish Community in the beginning of the nineties (for more information, please see section 2.2). Parallel with these policy initiatives, various research teams, e.g. LUCAS (SIU27), the Institute for Quality Care of the University of Gent (a group constituted of the Department of Social Intervention, Culture and Leisure Studies [SIU53], the Research Group on Comparative Cultural Sciences [SIU36], the Research Group on Home Medicine and Primary Health Care [SIU13] and the Research Group on Social Medicine [SIU10]) and the Research Group on Poverty and Social Exclusion (SIU56), have carried out evaluation studies regarding the anti-poverty projects active in different Flemish cities.

Part of the general social services are the centres helping victims and crime offenders. The Research Group on Victimology and Penology (SIU35) as well as the Research Group on Criminology (SIU20) have made a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the victims of violent thefts, burglary and robbery. They have been looking at the experiences of these victims and the help they get from the mental health centres. Other objectives of their studies have been and continue to be: the development and promotion of diagnostic and treatment skills among the professionals of these centres, the development of a victim-assistance network and the evaluation of the referral practices of the social ser-

vices involved. The relationship between the social welfare services and the exclusion mechanisms caused by the application of the penal law is also a topic of interest of the Department of Social Intervention, Culture and Leisure Studies (SIU53).

Various research centres are active in the care for the elderly. The Population and Family Study Centre (SIU8) carried out projects concerning the help and support elderly receive from their children and from the services that were set up for them: the homes for the aged, the service flats, the home-help services, ... How much it costs to stay at such homes and how the residents are treated was a theme investigated by the Department of Social Gerontology (SIU37). Research on inter-generational helping relationships has also been done by the Research Group on Culture and Welfare (SIU29). Needs and demands of the elderly on the one hand and the care given by informal carers, the market and the non-profit agencies on the other hand is a theme investigated by the Centre for the Sociology of Welfare and Management of

Non-Profit Organizations (SIU3). Projects specifically pertaining to the elderly with senile dementia are carried out by LUCAS (SIU27). The relation between the different lifestyles and the use of the health care and social service system by these people is examined.

Under section 6.1., research was mentioned regarding youngsters and social exclusion. Mainly two units carry out activities on this theme. These two groups are also active in the domain of social services for this category and as such have worked on projects concerning prevention, youth assistance, juvenile courts and so on. They share this interest with the Department of Social Intervention, Culture and Leisure Studies (SIU53) and the Centre for Special Remedial Education (SIU21). Evaluation of the quality of residential and day care facilities for socially handicapped children and the functioning of ambulatory services for socially handicapped adolescents are a few of the topics of interest of the latter centre.



During the last five years, most socio-economic research on the structure and functioning of the social services for handicapped people has been done by the HIVA (SIU9): an instrument was developed for the assessment of the care/help needs of disabled people. The characteristics of the people in all the housing facilities and in the day care centre were also investigated. The people in the (semi-) residential facilities for handicapped children as well as in the schools for special education has been described by the Population and Family Study Centre (SIU8). Also worth mentioning is the work done by the Centre for Special Remedial Education (SIU21) on the evaluation of quality care in residential facilities for mentally retarded adults.

Some ten years ago, at the Department of Sociology of the K.U.Leuven, a Clearing House on Self-help (SIU32) was set up. As part of the activities, research projects were executed pertaining to the functioning, the structure and the functions of the self-help groups in Flanders, about the evolution of the self-help phenomenon, the characteristics of the members of these groups, the societal changes conducive to self-help, the relationship between self-help groups and professional helpers, and so on.

