

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Poverty and unemployment of young Europeans in intergenerational perspective

Wielislawa Warzywoda-Kruszyńska

Ewa Rokicka

Magdalena Rek

Institute of Sociology

University of Lodz

Youth Culture/s in Europe,
Loughborough 2007

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

„Elimination of poverty”

- in a course of next ten years was decided **a priority** for European Union at the summits in Lisbon and Nice in 2000

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

However, literature review in 8 countries shows, that

- the studies on the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities are scarce
- only very few publications in studied countries were explicitly addressing the topic of poverty/inequality transmission across generations

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Reasons behind this:

**Conviction
that social
classes are
'dead''**

**Poverty/inequality
reproduction
perceived as not
affecting the
mainstream of
society**

Political
correctness

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

There are manifold reasons for this:

- Conviction that social classes disappeared and that equal opportunity principle is in operation
- Perception of inequality reproduction as not important for mainstream society (as affecting particular individuals or small groups being on a margin of society)
- Prejudice against specific groups or ethnicities
- Implementing 'positive' point of view manner to tackle difficult social problems (equality instead of inequality, inclusion instead of exclusion, empowerment instead of discrimination etc.)
- Widespreading of neoliberalism considering inequality as an inevitable (and in some extent positive/functional) feature of market society.



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Conviction, that social classes are dead

- and play no longer an important role in determining life chances of the individual can partly explain the above-mentioned lack of research interest.
- A belief that equal opportunity principle is in operation and that societies more or less adhere to the principle of meritocracy could discourage researchers from looking into whether some categories or groups of people have difficulties with gaining the access to given social positions.



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

If it is assumed that

- it is only up to individual's efforts whether he or she is going to achieve high social status, it appears useless to devote researcher's time and money for identifying any structural (i.e. independent of given individual's will) reasons behind the lack of success.

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Open-to-all social positions

- by definition could not be inherited, so it makes no sense to research on their inheritance.



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Even if it is acknowledged

- that social inequalities exist and are transmitted to the next generation, it is perceived as affecting only small groups or individuals being on a margin of society. Thus,
- their importance is downplayed and their reproduction does not enter the focus of social research

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

In a course of 80. and 90.

- A shift in research focus has been observed. Instead of inequalities differences are stressed.
- The question of how to keep a social order that would allow for diversity instead of surpassing or annihilating it preoccupied many social thinkers and scientists and for some time became a predominant subject of academic debates.



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

While with no doubt

- such a change was positive, as it enabled previously marginalised and silenced groups to (re)gain their voice and bring their issues openly into the public debate, it had some negative side-effects, too. The focus on keeping differences obscured the problem of (still alive) inequalities. They have not received as much academic attention as they should have.



There are, however, some extra-scientific reasons

- for the scarcity of academic literature in the subject of the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities.
- In some countries there are prejudices directed against some (mainly ethnic) groups living there. Members of such groups usually occupy lower social positions; additionally, their problems are not perceived as legitimate or worth overcoming by either the mainstream society, or the public authorities, or both. This quite often results in a lack of funding for the research on problems of such groups.

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

But not only negative stereotypes and prejudices about certain groups

- may result in lacking interest in intergenerational inheritance of inequalities
- Using language of political correctness may also obscure the problem of inequality heredity. E.g. emphasising equality instead of inequality, inclusion instead of exclusion, empowerment instead of discrimination could lead to “overlooking” of Ilofi

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

There is also one purely ideological factor contributing to the scarcity of the literature on the Ilofl

- the rise of neoliberalism, with its conviction that the inequality is an inevitable (and to some extent positive/ functional) feature of the free-market society, is at least partially responsible for the lack of the research (and the literature) on the Ilofl.

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

If it is assumed, that the healthy economy requires no public intervention

- then it seems quite obvious that there is no sense in investigating into the ways how some market-produced inequalities could be overcome

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Although scarce, the existing scientific literature contributes

- to deepen our understanding of factors producing inequality hereditarily in particular countries

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Two types of studies are particularly useful:

- the studies concerned with the possible inheritance of a *risk* to become poor, low skilled and poorly educated;
- research into patterns of social mobility analysed in a long-term perspective.



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

At-risk-of-poverty headcount, median poverty gap and income inequality for total population

At-risk-of poverty intensity	At-risk-of-poverty headcount		
	LOW	Medium	High
Low	DE, FI	BG	
Medium			UK
High			EE, IT, LT, PL

Own elaboration based on Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2007). Supporting Document, Annex 1C tab. 1b (SILC 2005), Income reference 2004



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Table **At-risk-of-poverty headcount, median poverty gap and income inequality for children aged 0-17**

At-risk-of poverty intensity	At-risk-of-poverty headcount		
	LOW	Medium	High
Low	DE, FI		UK
Medium			
High			BG, EE, IT, LT, PL

Own elaboration based on Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2007). Supporting Document, Annex 1C tab. 1b (SILC 2005), Income reference 2004

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Risk of poverty reproduction

seems to be unequally distributed
among countries in the study:

- Finland predicts the best
- Bulgaria and Italy predict the worst



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Finland

protects children against poverty very well by means of high levels of employment for parents and generous social transfers. In this country education seems to be an effective measure to equalize not only opportunities but also performance. According to the PISA 2004 report, Finland is the best performing country in mathematics, reading and science. The high level of student performance is unrelated to their socio-economic-cultural background and there are no between-school differences in student performance. **A risk of inequality transmission seems to be very low in this country and limited to individuals and small groups.**

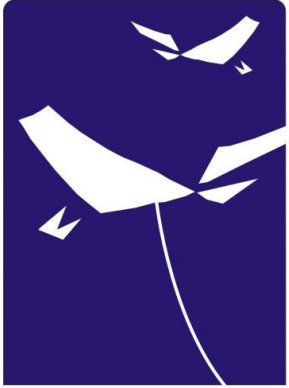
profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

In Germany

generous relative spending on children in connection with high employment seems to protect the majority of children from poverty. In this country the poverty risk for children is lower than the EU median level and the reduction in the poverty risk for children is better than EU average..



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

However, in Germany

- relatively many children are living in jobless households which may make them vulnerable to poverty;
- education is not effective enough to ensure equal opportunities because, according to the PISA report:
 - There are significant discrepancies between schools in student performance
 - Student performance is affected very much by socio-economic background
 - There are large discrepancies in performance between native and non-native students, even if they are born in Germany^[1]

• ^[1] Learning for Tomorrow's World – First Results from PISA 2003:
163



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Thought in Germany

- a risk of poverty/inequality inheritance seems to be low, the education system may contribute to the creation of “pockets” or larger social categories (like immigrant communities) that are more vulnerable.

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

In **United Kingdom**

- the risk of poverty for children remains higher than the EU median;
- however, reduction in this risk by social transfers is substantial.
- the percentage of early school-leavers decreased which may provide evidence that education has been a real priority for the government and that parents and pupils have recognised the value of education for improving an individual's life changes



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Italy and Bulgaria

- seem to be at serious risk of inequality transmission. In these countries, risk of poverty for children is high, spending on children is low and social transfers are not generous enough to reduce the risk of poverty among youngsters. Low employment does not protect children from low income families. The situation is worse because of the substantial proportion of early school leavers.

profit



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

In Estonia, Lithuania and Poland

- poverty among children is very high and, in the former, the efficiency of social transfers is also low. This may contribute to the transmission of poverty unless the proportion of social spending on families and children increases. Low employment in Poland and Lithuania should be perceived as factors impacting on the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities. Poland is not able to reduce youth unemployment substantially which, with 36.7% of all unemployed in the age cohort 16-24, remains the highest in the EU.



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Conclusions :

1. Countries in this study represent different patterns of poverty and social problems composition that can contribute to the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities.
2. Data show that the risk of llofl may differ between countries, with Finland predicted to be the best and Bulgaria, Poland, Italy, Lithuania and Estonia predicted to be the worst.
3. Statistical data provide evidence that the risk of llofl correlates with social welfare regimes, which produce different patterns of poverty.



Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245

Conclusions:

4. Risk of Ilofl has to be of particular concern in post-socialist countries which are poor and cannot offer sufficient support to families with children .
5. Though it is optimistic that early school leaving is relatively low in post-socialist countries (except in Bulgaria), educational activities (including leisure time activities) aimed at child development, like extra-curricular courses, are chargeable



Child well-being

Country	Average ranking position for all 6 dimensions	Material Well-being	Health and safety	Educational well-being	Family and peer relationships	Behaviours and risks	Subjective well-being
FI	7,5	3	3	4	17	7	11
DE	11,2	13	11	10	13	11	9
IT	10	14	5	20	1	10	10
PL	12,3	21	15	3	14	2	19
UK	18,5	18	12	17	21	21	20

Contract No:
CIT2-CT-2004-
506245