

superfluous to most non-academic readers anyhow, and the main results are made comprehensible by their presentation in simple two- or three-way cross-classifications. Additional figures and diagrams could have made the results even more appealing, though, and it is a pity, therefore, that the figures referred to in the chapter on poverty, unemployment, and psychological distress are missing. On the whole, the structure of the book, which is divided into six parts each consisting of a number of chapters, is transparent enough to allow the reader to find his way to the subjects even though there is no index. Nevertheless, a separate part on the consequences of poverty following the part on the causes might have been expected. To conclude, the book appears to be more accessible to a non-academic readership than most presentations of scientific results, but accessibility alone, of course, is not enough to reach such a readership: it should also be made aware of the existence of the book and be able to get it fairly easily.

To conclude, it should be noted that *Poverty and Policy in Ireland* has more to offer than its own explicit objectives would reveal. First, through the application of combined income and deprivation

criteria, the book makes a valuable contribution to poverty research in devising an instrument to measure Townsend's classic definition of poverty as people's exclusion from ordinary life in society because of lack of resources. Secondly, while originally poverty research was mainly focused on the relationships between poverty, the labour market, and the system of social protection, at a number of places in the book, the issue of poverty is considered to be subsumed under the heading of social inequality, and is linked to such topics as social class and educational differences, intergenerational mobility, and health inequalities. Thirdly, the book as a whole proves the value of academic research into policy-relevant issues based on socio-economic household surveys. As a blueprint for research into poverty, it gives a flavour of what could be expected for the European Union as a whole from the first wave of the European Community Household Panel which was launched in 1994.

Henk-Jan Dirven
Department of Social Security Studies,
Tilburg University, The Netherlands

Serge Paugam/Jean-Paul Zoyem/Jean-Michel Charbonnel: **Précarité et risque d'exclusion en France**, Paris: Documents du Centre D'Étude des Revenus et des Coûts no. 109, 1993. 169 pp.
 Serge Paugam: **La société française et ses pauvres, L'expérience du revenu minimum d'insertion**, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993. 317 pp.

After 'thirty glorious years' of economic growth under conservative government, in the early 1980s the French social democrats learned from bitter experience that in an open economy counter-cyclical government spending no longer stabilizes unemployment at a low level. In the late 1980s, the so-called law on minimum income for insertion (revenu minimum d'insertion, RMI) was adopted. These two studies depict the effects on unemployment in France of the Mitterrand experiments of the 1980s. They deserve more attention than that given by the international community of sociologists to the many studies on the conservative experiments undertaken in the 1980s by Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Reagan in the United States.

'I want a job and wish to marry', so said a student to a reporter in early 1994 in Paris during a demonstration. This sentence succinctly sums up the main hypotheses emerging from Paugam's studies. Unemployment hits the young, and therefore

unmarried, more frequently than the old, with unemployment leading to postponement of marriage. Remaining single in turn contributes to prolonged unemployment. In addition, when old people become redundant, those who are divorced have a higher chance of remaining unemployed than those who are married, while married unemployed people face higher chances of divorce than married and employed people. About a century after Durkheim's study on suicide, Paugam applies the ideas of this sociological classic about a person's degree of integration into society in an innovative way which yields new insights.

The main part of the first study under review is an analysis of a quantitative survey conducted in 1986/7 by the French statistical office among a sample of 13 000 households representative of the whole French population. With respect to the degree of precariousness of a person's job, in Chapter 1—as an improvement upon the traditional, static

employed–unemployed dichotomy—a dynamic variable comprising five ordered categories is developed: having a job and seeing no risk of losing it the next two years; being in a job for more than a year but feeling insecure; having changed job last year or found a job after unemployment; having been unemployed for less than two years; and having been unemployed for two years or more.

By way of tabular analysis, in (Chapter 2 the relationships between these categories and family life are explored. Persons under the age of 25 years with more job security are more likely to live as part of a couple and are less likely to be with parents or friends. Independent of age, people who have experienced divorce during their life have a higher degree of job insecurity now. People who once divorced and now have less job security are less likely to have remarried than those who divorced and now have more job security. A logit analysis in Chapter 3 makes clear that—after controlled for age, education, and last occupation—the factors of job precariousness and marriage history (including the categories of married, remarried, never married, and divorced but not remarried) make for an equalized household income below a certain (low) level. Chapter 4 is about financial difficulties, consumer durables, and housing sanitation, and yields similar results. Chapter 5 makes clear that job insecurity, independent of age and occupation, makes for weaker contacts with the extended family, less possible support from others, and lower membership of voluntary associations. In Chapter 6 a synthetic view of the data is presented. It consists of a correspondence analysis yielding two dimensions and three types of people. An estimate is made of the probability of very strong economic disqualification and social disintegration for those having a stable or threatened job (3 per cent), for those with unstable employment or those unemployed for less than two years (10 per cent), and for those who have been unemployed for more than two years (23 per cent).

The second study under review may be read as providing a background for and following up on the first. It consists of three parts. The first two deal with the RMI law itself, the last one with the question of how types of unemployed people fared under it. Part one commences with the question of why France adopted a law on minimum income in the 1980s, later than other European countries. In a historical analysis Paugam develops the hypothesis that this law was a collective response to what was perceived as a threat emanating from weakened social cohesion: an increase in long-term unemployment, more divorce, and the exhaustion of the labour movement, Part two addresses the question of what

was new about the RMI law (the assumptions that there are no disreputable poor people, and that people have a right to economic and social participation), and the question of how the somewhat vague notion of 'insertion' was put into practice by the local authorities. Authorities and the unemployed signed a contract, the content of which—argues Paugam—was not imposed but negotiated.

The final part of this second study reports a panel study conducted in three waves in 1990 and 1991 in nine departments of France among 2000 RMI persons. A correspondence analysis makes clear that in this sample economic disqualification and social disintegration coincide less than in the sample drawn from the whole French population. Again three types of people are distinguished; unemployed people who place a high value on the labour market and have weak social ties; people who place a limited value on the labour market and have strong social ties; and people who place extremely low value on the labour market and have very weak social ties. In the final wave, 19 per cent of type 1 people were employed and 18 per cent were in apprenticeships. 11 per cent of type 2 people were employed and 12 per cent were in apprenticeships. Of type 3 people, 7 per cent were employed and 24 per cent in apprenticeships.

During the period studied, type 1 people developed into two-subtypes: some strengthened their social ties and found employment, usually without the intervention of the RMI-authorities. The health of the others deteriorated, making them less valuable on the labour market. The situation of type 2 people hardly changed on the two axes of economic qualification and social integration. Compared with types 1 and 3, relatively few upgraded their value in the labour market. According to Paugam, RMI and the measures accompanying it did improve the situation of type 3 people. A relatively high proportion were in apprenticeships, a relatively high proportion strengthened their social ties, and their ownership of consumer durables increased. However, the housing situation of type 3 people hardly improved: whereas at the beginning of the period under study 21 per cent lived in marginal housing, at the end 18 per cent did. This quantitative analysis is enlivened by quotes from in-depth interviews with the people receiving RMI and their social workers.

The most interesting pages of these two studies for this reviewer were those presenting quantitative data. French sociologists apparently have rich data-sets available to them. However, the analysis of these data-sets sometimes leaves much to be desired. When analysing tables, Paugam struggles with the familiar difficulty of distinguishing changes due to floor and

ceiling effects: type 3 people displayed a higher proportion (26 per cent) of people who increased the strength of family ties than type 1 people (12 per cent). This finding is not very enlightening since 65 per cent of type 1 people had strong family ties before the survey whereas only 16 per cent of type 3 people did. In addition, some tables do not bring out changes at the individual level, but only gross changes. Thus, for the three types of people distinguished, the proportion living in marginal housing during the first wave is presented; later the proportion doing so during the last wave is also shown, but without a table cross-classifying first and last housing situation. Despite the aim of performing 'dynamic' analyses, it is clear that the collection and

analysis of data is not up to the standards set by the dynamic research on mobility from one job to another carried out during the 1980s in Germany by Karl Ulrich Mayer and Hans Peter Blossfeld. What is needed are data-sets with full work histories and full family histories, and an analysis of these data by way of event-history techniques. Yet Paugam's work should be counted among the most worthwhile—both from a theoretical and from an empirical point of view—yet undertaken on this particular problem in Europe.

Wout Ultee
University of Nijmegen