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**Leisure, Poverty and Social Exclusion: An Analysis of
Leisure Card Schemes in Great Britain**

Volume I

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Glossary

AC	Audit Commission
ADC	Association of District Councils
BHPS	British Household Panel Survey
BV	Best Value
CCC	Cardiff City Council
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
CPAG	Child Poverty Action Group
DCMS	Department of Culture, Media and Sport
DHSS	Department of Health and Social Services. Now DSS
DNH	Department of National Heritage
DoE	Department of the Environment
DSO	Direct Service Operator
DSS	Department of Social Services
DSS	Department of Social Security
FES	Family Expenditure Survey
GHS	General Household Survey
HBAI	Households Below (half) Average Income
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IS	Income Support
KWS	Keynesian Welfare State
LCC	Leicester City Council
LCS	Leisure Card Schemes
LGAPU	Local Government Anti-Poverty Unit
LGMB	Local Government Management Board
MBA	Modest But Adequate Family Budget
MUD	Moral Underclass Discourse
NPM	New Public Management
OCC	Oxford City Council
ONS	Office of National Statistics
OPCS	Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys. Now ONS
RED	Redistribution Discourse
RT	Regulation Theory
SEDEC	Social Exclusion and Development of Euro Citizenship
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SID	Social Integrationist Discourse
SWS	Schumpeterian Workfare State

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. What is a Leisure Card Scheme?

The focus of this study is on Leisure Card Schemes operated by local authorities in Great Britain. Leisure Card Schemes aim to provide discounts at public, and sometimes private, leisure (and other) venues. Leisure Cards have all the features of a membership scheme—having to apply according to rules of eligibility; wastage turnover and recruitment; and consequently matters of publicity marketing and administration. Leisure Cards were introduced in the early/mid 1980s and have developed in many different ways, varying by local authority. However, they have been classified below into three broad types based on eligibility criteria (LGAPU, 1996).

- ❑ Concession-only cards: targeted at people living on a low income (variously defined but usually based on means tested benefit claimant categories but may include other non-means tested benefits e.g. pensioners, unemployed people) at a low charge or free, and with substantial user discounts (typically 30-50%), *e.g. Leicester's Leisure Pass scheme is free to various benefit claimant categories, providing up to 50% discounts.*
- ❑ Multi-tiered cards: containing multiple tiers of card prices and levels of discount. These consist of a concessionary tier with low card prices and high levels of discount; and other tiers available to all or various groups with higher card prices and lower discount levels, *e.g. Oxford's Slice Card scheme has Bonus Slice as the concessionary tier; there are also Student Slice; Aqua Slice (swimming discounts), Active Slice (dry-side discounts) and Cool Slice (ice-rink discounts) available to all residents.*
- ❑ Residents' Cards for all inhabitants which may be given free (exceeded only by those for visitors and tourists) but user discounts are modest. No groups are specifically targeted by these cards. This group may be indistinguishable from a loyalty card for all local authority services which functions like those issued by supermarkets, stores and petrol stations, *e.g. Windsor & Maidenhead.*

1.2. Background

This study developed from earlier research carried out in 1993 by Collins and Randolph for Cardiff City Council who surveyed twenty-five local authorities with populations of over 200,000 that operated Leisure Card Schemes. The most comprehensive surveys of Leisure Cards were undertaken by Foote (1995) and the Local Government Anti-Poverty Unit (1996), both of which remain unpublished. Eady (1994) also undertook a limited qualitative analysis of Leisure Card Schemes, and drew on secondary sources in an attempt to produce recommendations for their operation as part of a Sports Council factfile.

Therefore, as well as being dated, the existing body of research into Leisure Card Schemes focused exclusively on practical management and did not take into account the burgeoning literature on poverty and social exclusion, nor considered Leisure Cards in the wider theoretical context of leisure and social policy developments. Indeed, the only publication in the field of leisure that linked leisure with poverty was a literature review undertaken by Dawson (1988).

Hence, this study is particularly timely for three main reasons apart from attempting to fill the gaps left by previous research and advance our understanding of Leisure Card Schemes. The first is the wider policy focus of the 'New' Labour government on the issue of social exclusion with the introduction of the Social Exclusion Unit at the end of 1997 and subsequent publications by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (1999), Sport England (1999a; 1999b) and Sport Scotland (1998) highlighting the role of sport and the arts in tackling social exclusion. An important policy development for Leisure Card Schemes as part of New Labour's attempts to modernise local government has been the replacement of CCT with Best Value.

Secondly, as mentioned above, there has been an explosion of publications on social exclusion since the mid-1990s highlighting the increased number of poor people and the growing gap between the rich and poor since 1979. Thirdly, Leisure Cards have undergone a phenomenal diffusion across the local authorities of Great Britain. This research found that approximately half of the local authorities in Great Britain were operating Leisure Card Schemes in 1997/8, and predicted this number would increase to nearly 80% in the

following five years. Indeed, at the beginning of the year 2000, using CIPFA (1999) estimates, the proportion of authorities operating a Leisure Card in England and Wales was 76%.

The above factors fuelled the author's personal interest in this subject area and the desire to make a positive contribution to both leisure and wider social policy analysis. Leisure Card Schemes presented a relatively self-contained phenomenon that brought together issues of providing leisure for disadvantaged groups as well as wider economic and managerial factors related to their operation, marketing and monitoring. In addition, previous studies had not provided any convincing evidence as to the effectiveness of these schemes individually or collectively in achieving their objectives, and particularly in encouraging poor and socially excluded groups to participate in leisure opportunities.

Therefore, this study has three broad aims. The first is to place Leisure Card Schemes within the wider historical development of leisure and social policy since their introduction in the early/mid 1980s. Secondly, to analyse Leisure Card Schemes in relation to the concepts of leisure, poverty and social exclusion. Thirdly, to analyse Leisure Card Schemes in the theoretical framework of the regulation approach using the ideal-type models of Fordist and post-Fordist Leisure Card Schemes to compare with the empirical research undertaken in this thesis.

1.3. Structure

As one of the primary objectives of Leisure Card Schemes is to encourage low income groups to participate in leisure activities, Chapter 2 defines concepts of poverty and social exclusion, and considers the shifts in the discourses on the causes and policy responses to these widely accepted problems (especially as set out by Levitas, 1998). These concepts are then related to leisure and perspectives on the public provision of leisure services (notably by Coalter, 1990a; Henry, 1993).

Chapter 3 introduces the regulation approach (Peck and Tickell, 1994) and is used to provide a theoretical framework for the discussion of shifts in leisure and wider social

policy. This theoretical approach, together with the review of literature and preliminary fieldwork enables the establishment of research constructs and the formation of ideal/typical models of Fordist and post-Fordist Leisure Card Schemes. The methods used to gather data on Leisure Cards were a national survey of all local authorities in Great Britain, combined with three detailed case studies of individual card schemes, and additional research on one local authority not operating a scheme.

Leisure and wider social policy developments during the period of Fordism, its crises and the emergence after Fordism of neo-Liberalism under the Thatcher governments of the 1980s and the Major administrations of the early 1990s are analysed in Chapter 4. A detailed review of existing research on Leisure Card Schemes is undertaken at this point, and comparisons are made to the ideal-type Fordist and post-Fordist models, bringing the reader to the point at which this study began in 1997.

Chapter 5 deals with the emergence of 'New' Labour and its rise to power in 1997. Particular consideration is given to general social inclusion policies, but then focuses on leisure policy developments. This provides the context to describe the diffusion of Leisure Card Schemes in Great Britain and highlight patterns of provision in various types of local authority. Chapter 6 extends into a detailed analysis of the reasons and targets for Leisure Cards, combining macro-level results from the national survey with micro-details from three case studies. This is continued into Chapter 7 which deals with the day-to-day management issues of operating a card scheme. Chapter 8 attempts to establish methods to assess the performance of Leisure Card Schemes, placing emphasis on measuring the achievement of social objectives.

The concluding chapter placed Leisure Card Schemes within the broader shifts in leisure and social policy which have occurred since the first of these schemes emerged. Comparisons are made between the empirical results obtained from this study and the ideal-type models of Fordist and post-Fordist Leisure Card Schemes constructed in Chapter 3. Further consideration is also given to the reasons for operating Leisure Cards, their performance, and the relation to the concepts of poverty and social exclusion discussed in Chapter 2. The theoretical framework adopted in this thesis is then evaluated in the light of the process of data collection and analysis undertaken, and recommendations

are made for future research, both into Leisure Card Schemes and in the field of poverty, social exclusion and leisure.

The structure outlined above allows the study to incorporate the wide, varied and extensive nature of the literature reviewed in this study, and the use of the framework of regulation theory. Chapter 2 establishes the concepts used throughout the study and Chapter 3 defines the structure of the following chapters based on the regulation framework. The literature reviews at the beginning of Chapters 4 and 5 thus provide the context for the emergence and development of Leisure Card Schemes, and for the period in which this study was undertaken.

Chapter 2

Poverty, Social Exclusion and Leisure: Concepts, Definitions and Indicators

As a result of reviewing existing research on Leisure Cards, it was revealed that their primary objective appears to be providing sport, recreation and/or wider leisure opportunities to people living on a low income by offering them discounts at public and sometimes private facilities (see Chapter 4.5). To date, there have been very few publications which combine the substantial literature on poverty and that of leisure in general (exceptions are Dawson, 1989; Allison, 1991), nothing on the 'new' concept of social exclusion and leisure, nor anything that links the two to the provision of public leisure services. In order to gain an understanding of what it means to live on a low income, this Chapter analyses the concepts of poverty, deprivation, social exclusion and inequality, and relates them to the public provision of leisure services. This will include definitions and different approaches to measuring these concepts, as well as discourses concerning causes and policy responses to them.

2.1 Poverty and Deprivation

Poverty is an intensely debated issue, yet it has no official definition in the UK. One of the major reasons for this is that there are a number of different manifestations of poverty which affect different groups of the population, in different geographical areas, in many different ways. Another reason is that poverty has political aspects, and governments will go to great lengths to avoid the negative image which the term poverty induces: "there is no correct, scientific, agreed definition because poverty is inevitably a political concept - and thus inherently is a contested one" (Alcock, 1997: p. 3). There are, however, two broad approaches to defining poverty.

Absolute poverty

Absolute measures assume that it is possible to define poverty according to the minimum standard of living based on a person's subsistence needs, that is defined by reference to the actual needs of the poor and not by reference to the expenditure of those who are not poor. Below this absolute level poverty occurs.

This was the approach adopted in the pioneering poverty studies undertaken by Rowntree (1901) and Booth (1902-03), both of whom used absolute definitions and measures of poverty, where an income threshold was set below which poverty was defined. They both found two types of poor, what Rowntree called 'primary poverty' which was a lack of resources for 'physical efficiency', and 'secondary poverty' which was caused by waste or lack of knowledge. Booth was more scathing of those defined by the latter, calling them loafers, feckless semi-criminals. This 'absolute' position is strengthened when the plight of Third World countries is considered, but has also been used by politicians such as John Moore (former Secretary of State for Social Security) in 1989, and in more recent comments by the Duke of Edinburgh, to claim that (absolute) poverty no longer exists in the UK (see also Lilley, 1996). The political implications of this perspective are discussed in more detail in section 2.2.

There are two major flaws to the absolute definition. The first is that any determination of what constitutes human subsistence is "a matter of judgement" (Beveridge, 1942). Levels of subsistence change over time, as do people's expectations. Therefore a minimum standard of living is shaped by the way society spends its money and behaves in general. Secondly, no account is taken of socio-cultural needs, and Donnison (1982) has argued that luxuries in one era may be seen as necessities in another.

Relative poverty and deprivation

The relative definition goes beyond basic subsistence needs, defining poverty in relation to the generally accepted standard of living in a specific society, or 'the custom of the country' as Adam Smith called it in *The Wealth of Nations* as far back as 1812. More recently in 1979, Townsend echoed Smith's words "individuals...can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong" (Townsend, 1979: p. 60).

Poverty in the 1990s in the UK goes beyond the inability to afford food or clothing: it is also about not being able to join a local sports club, or send your children on a school trip, or go with friends, or have Christmas dinner (Oppenheim and Harker, 1996). It is also necessary to include the social, psychological and cultural needs of people when

considering a definition of poverty because “men and women are not just physical beings...they are also psychological and social beings who possess personalities and live in communities” (Holman, 1978: p. 12).

Townsend (1979) asserted that the relative approach which he adopted is intended to establish an "acceptable minimum" level of needs which are established by the standards prevailing in our society (see also Oppenheim, 1994). Townsend devised a set of deprivation indicators (see Table 2.1 below) and argued that relative poverty occurred if three or more of them were experienced. Townsend recognised the need to include leisure activities within a definition of poverty as “deprivation can arise...in different spheres of life, such at work, at home, in travel and in leisure time activities” (Townsend, 1979: p. 271).

Therefore, when using the term ‘poverty’ it is necessary to make the distinction between absolute poverty (based on an income line) and relative poverty (including broader lifestyle factors), and only the latter may also be referred to as deprivation (Lee *et al.*, 1995). Townsend provided one of the most frequently cited definitions of deprivation as being “a state of observable and demonstrable disadvantage relative to the local community or the wider society or nation to which an individual, family or group belongs” (1987: p. 125).

Table 2.1 Townsend’s Deprivation Index (1979)

- ☐ Has not had a week's holiday away from home in the last 12 months.
- ☐ Adults only: has not had a relative or friend to the home for a meal or a snack in the last four weeks.
- ☐ Adults only: has not been out in the last four weeks to a relative or a friend for a meal or snack.
- ☐ Children only (under 15): has not had a friend to play or to tea in the last four weeks.
- ☐ Children only: did not have a party on last birthday.
- ☐ Has not had an afternoon or evening out in the last two weeks.
- ☐ Does not have fresh meat (including meals out) as many as four days a week.
- ☐ Has gone through one or more days in the past fortnight without a cooked meal.
- ☐ Household does not have a refrigerator.
- ☐ Household does not usually have a Sunday joint (3 in 4 times).
- ☐ Household does not have sole use of four amenities indoors (flush WC; sink or wash basin and cold water tap; fixed bath or shower; gas or electric cooker).

The approach adopted by Mack and Lansley (1985) was similar to Townsend's in that it used a set of indicators (in this case 35 rather than 12) but gauged public opinion on what were the most relevant for defining poverty. Table 2.2 below shows the top five of their standard-of-living items.

Table 2.2 The Public's Perception of Necessities

Standard-of-living items	% claiming item as necessary
Heating to warm living areas of the home if it's cold	97
Indoor toilet (not shared with another household)	96
Damp-free home	96
Bath (not shared with another household)	94
Beds for everyone in the household	94

(Mack and Lansley, 1985)

However, these relative approaches have come under considerable criticism. The adoption of an entirely relative approach where no other standard is applied, for example, would deny the existence of poverty in a country where everyone was starving. Indeed, more relevant to the UK, if living standards fell drastically but evenly, the number of people defined as poor would not change (Roll, 1992). McGregor (1981) argued that relative measures remove the moral element from poverty, for example, likening those who holiday at Butlins to those who go to Tuscany when there are other people with nothing to eat.

This raises the issue of whether it is possible or even desirable to obtain an objective definition of poverty. The question of whether this is possible continues the debate over relative approaches. The indicators used by Townsend are subjective, and one of the major criticisms of his work is that he does not appear to employ any clear method of selection. When these indicators are regarded individually, it is easy to question the validity of not eating a Sunday roast or not eating meat four times a week as indicators of poverty. Townsend (1979) maintained that value judgements by the social scientist are unavoidable, necessary and qualitatively different from those of others. Indeed, he went on to criticise consensus approaches, claiming that the population's attitudes are more easily open to manipulation, whereas the social scientist can set him/herself apart from society. Consensus definitions can also hide the opinions of large minorities who might not follow the consensus, but who are subsequently not represented in the results, such as lone parents

(Roll, 1992). However, ultimately someone has to decide the questions that are put to the population, and then interpret the results.

The desirability of an objective definition is another question. Whether categorised by absolute or relative measures, being labelled as poor is an undesirable stigma which people defined as such would strongly deny (Kempson, 1996; Smeeding *et al*, 1990). The former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, when in office claimed that it was an insult to label people receiving Income Support as poor. However, this could be viewed as an attempt to deny the existence of poverty, and Ruth Lister, former director of the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), argued that poverty does not cease to exist because of the language used to describe it (Roll, 1992). Indeed, not 'feeling' poor does not necessarily mean you are **not** poor (Atkinson, 1989).

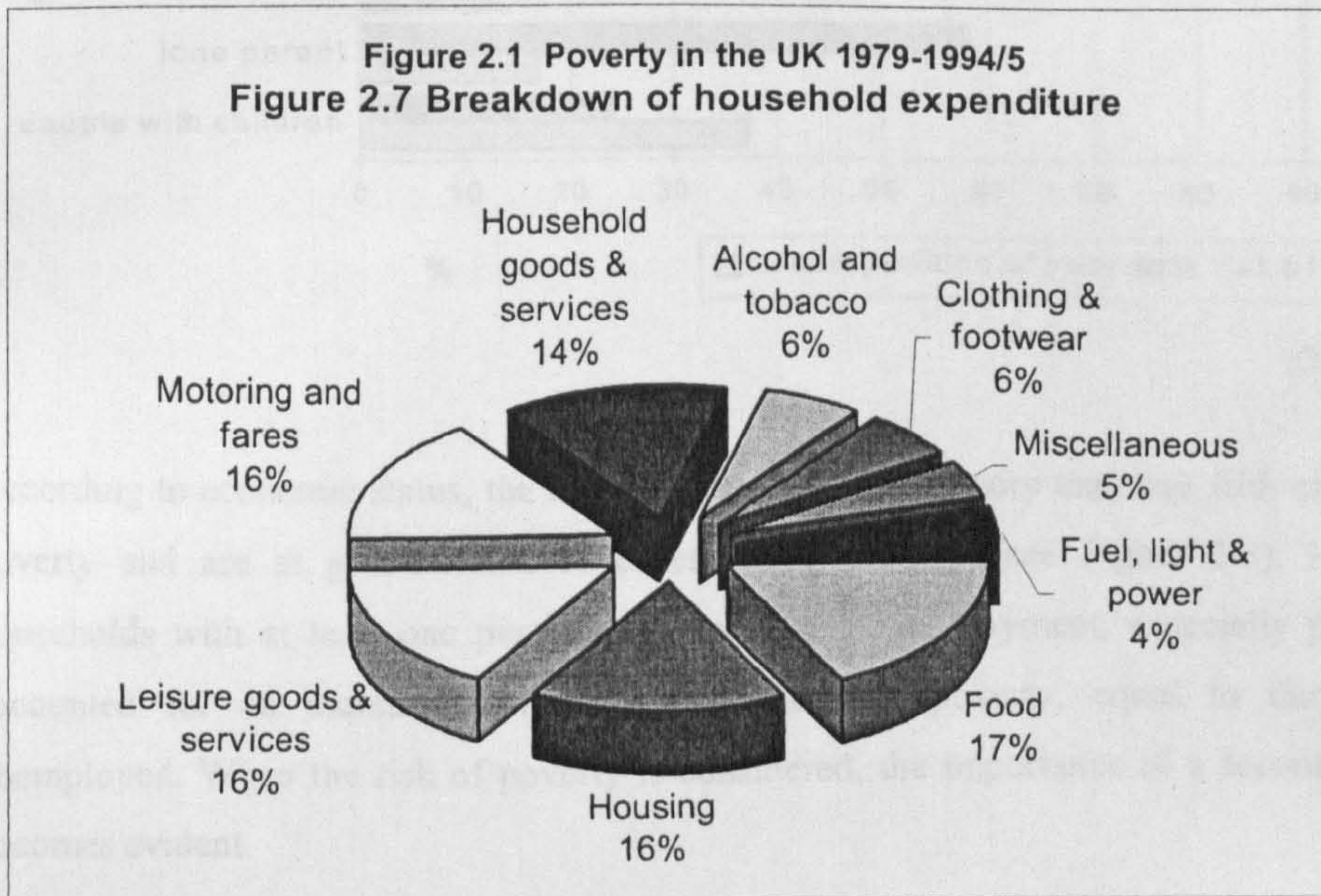
It immediately becomes obvious that much of the poverty debate revolves around semantics. The complexity of the debate is increased by the technical nature of many of the statistics and terms used by 'poverty experts'. Indeed, much of the meaning of the everyday realities of poverty has been lost in numerous interpretations of these technicalities and statistics (Oppenheim & Harker, 1996). It is important not just to view poverty as an academic subject, but as a political and moral issue which is a part of everyday life in current society. It should not become a semantic and statistical squabble which treats the poor as passive objects for attention (Piachaud, 1987).

The extent of poverty in the UK: measurement of poverty and deprivation

It therefore appears there is a need to accept some measure of poverty to identify exactly who is poor. All measures have their advantages and disadvantages, and the Social Exclusion Unit has produced a report which evaluates and recommends indicators of poverty based on income (Robinson and Oppenheim, 1998).

The Households Below Average Income (HBAI) is a frequently cited proxy for poverty in the UK and the EC, and the Child Poverty Action Group and Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) use it as their primary indicator. These statistics are produced by the Department of Social Security (DSS) and are based on the Family Expenditure Survey and Family Resources

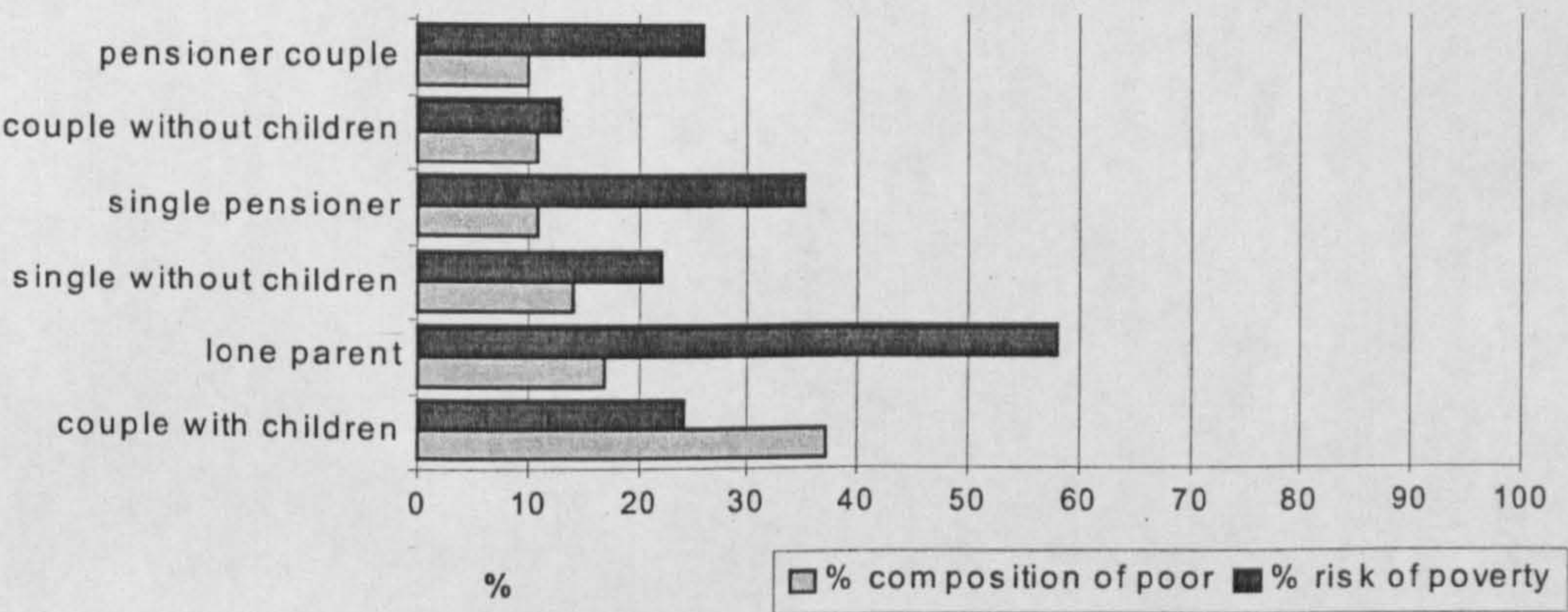
Survey, and describe the living standards of people in the lower half of the income distribution. 50% of average income (after housing costs) is taken as a line of poverty, which translates to an income of £166 a week for a couple with two children (DSS, 1995). HBAI statistics estimated that 25% of the population in the UK lived in poverty in 1992/3, a dramatic increase of 16% since 1979, although this fell slightly to 23% in 1994/5 (Figure 2.1).



(DSS, 1997)

These statistics have two immediate advantages according to the Social Exclusion Unit: they are easily and reliably quantifiable, and are comparable to other nations through, for example, Eurostat (Robinson and Oppenheim, 1998). Another advantage of the HBAI figures is their identification of exactly who the poor are, and the degree of risk for particular groups to fall into poverty. Figure 2.2 shows that the poor are dominated by couples with children (37%), with a fairly even distribution amongst other groups. However, lone parents account for only a small percentage of all poor people in the UK (17%), but are at high risk of becoming poor (58%). Indeed, Figure 2.2 demonstrates the large percentage of people who are not experiencing poverty, but are at risk and may fall in and out of poverty.

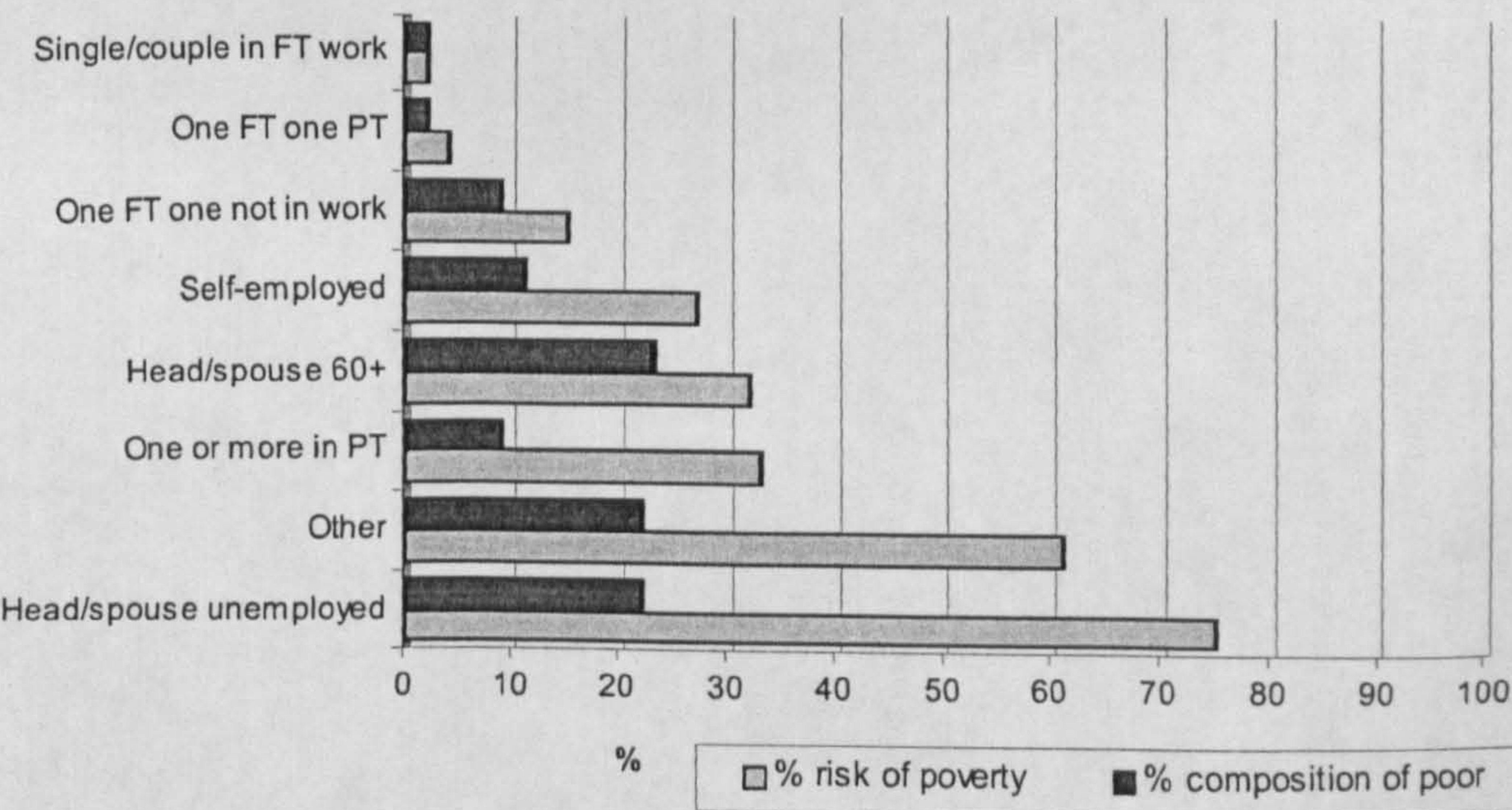
Figure 2.2 The composition of the poor and the risk of poverty according to family status 1992/3



(DSS, 1995)

According to economic status, the unemployed account for more than one fifth of those in poverty and are at greatest risk of experiencing poverty (see Figure 2.3). However, households with at least one person in some form of employment, especially part-time, accounted for an increasing proportion of those in poverty, equal to that of the unemployed. When the risk of poverty is considered, the importance of a second income becomes evident.

Figure 2.3 The composition of poor and the risk of poverty by economic status in 1992/3

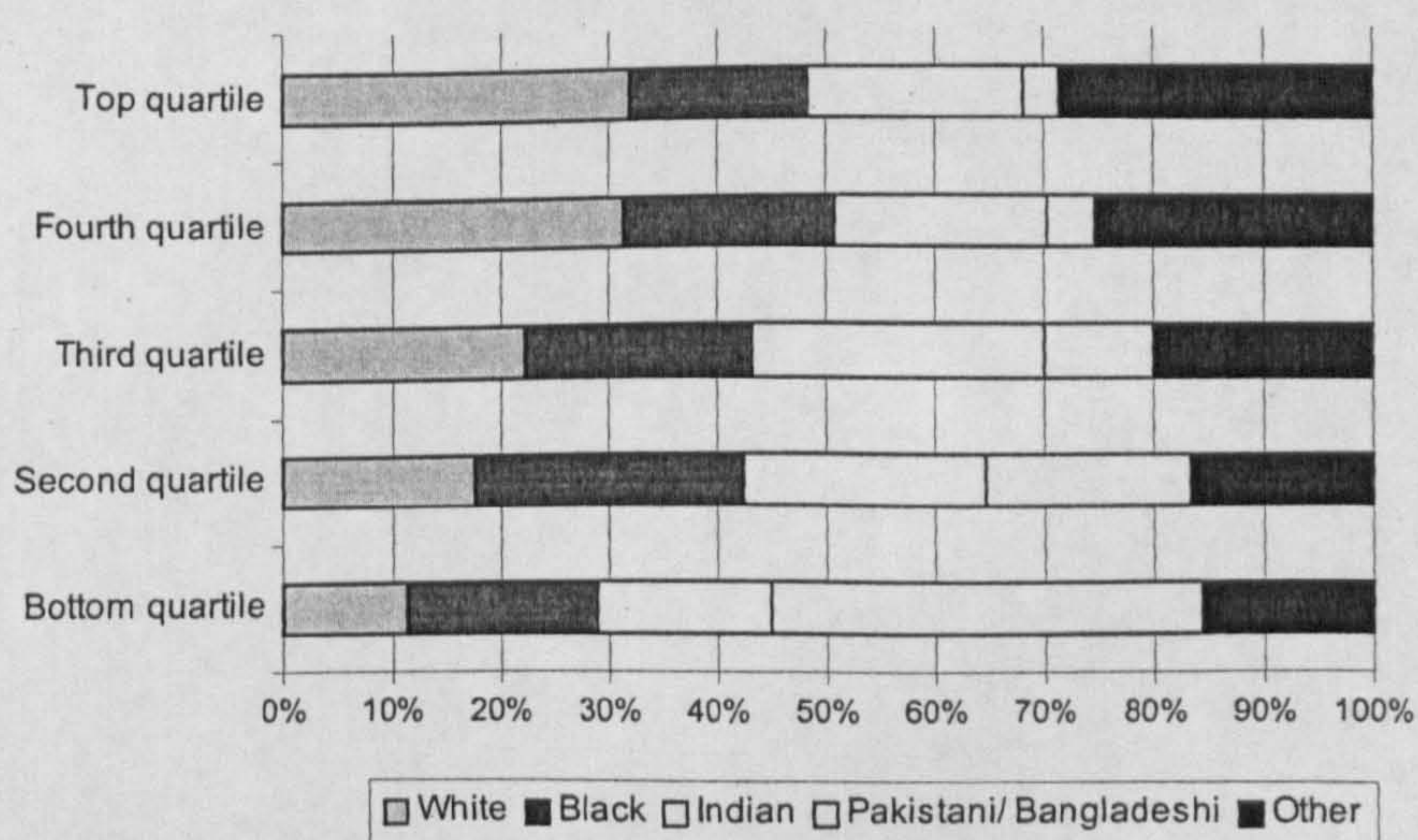


(DSS, 1995)

The HBAI figures also reveal the increasing gap between the richest and poorest tenths of the population. From 1979 to 1994/5 the poorest 10% of the population experienced a fall in real income of 8%, while overall, the average income had increased by 40% and that of the top tenth by 68%. The Joseph Rowntree Inquiry into Income and Wealth stated that 30% of the poorest people in the UK had failed to benefit from economic growth, and the Foundation has more recently produced the startling statistic that the richest 50 people in the UK are worth £3.4bn, while it takes 3.4m of the poorest people to accumulate the same amount (Barclay, 1995).

Further detail was provided with breakdowns for children, gender, and ethnic minorities. In 1992/3, 33% of all children in the UK were living in poverty, a 23% increase since 1979. 71% of these children lived in households with no full-time worker, although the percentage of children living with couples defined as poor was greater (76%) than those living with lone parents (71%). Overall, children are at greater risk of poverty than the population as a whole, and women were at greater risk of living in households at the lower end of the income distribution than men. As Figure 2.4 shows, all ethnic minorities, but especially Pakistani/ Bangladeshi people are much more likely to be in the bottom income quartile (65%) than the top quartile (2%), whilst whites are much more evenly distributed.

Figure 2.4 Ethnic group by income quartile



(DSS, 1998)

However, there are problems with using the HBAI as a measure of poverty. Firstly, it is subject to statistical/economic changes, so that if during a recession or economic crisis all incomes fall equally, the number defined as poor remains the same. The same is true in the case of economic boom periods if incomes rise equally.

Nor do the statistics reveal the duration of poverty, an issue which has received increased academic attention (Walker, 1995; Walker and Park, 1997). In this instance it is necessary to use another data source, the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). This longitudinal study showed that between 1991 and 1995, 6% of the sample were in the bottom two income deciles in all five years and that 12% were in the bottom three for the same period. This revealed a core of people experiencing persistently low levels of income, and who were more likely to be lone parents and single pensioners, living in socially rented housing, to be part of workless households and have no educational qualifications (Walker and Park, 1997). While at the bottom of the income spectrum there is considerable movement, people do not move very far up the ladder and may move down again. Therefore it is important not to define the population too narrowly to allow for movements in and out of poverty, while recognising the existence of permanent poverty. The concept of processes of poverty and social exclusion are dealt with in more detail in section 2.2.

In addition to the BHPS, the Social Exclusion Unit advocated the use of social security claimant data such as Income Support and Housing Benefit to measure the duration of poverty. Although only including those actually claiming benefit, they can provide broad indications of how long people are claiming for. Moreover, this data is available at ward level for spatial analysis (see the following section on the geographical distribution of deprivation).

More recent HBAI statistics showed that in 1996/7, 14.1m people (25%) were living in poverty (see Table 2.3). The poor comprised the same groups as described above, with women being more likely to be poor than men and child poverty at 35%. 63% of lone parents, 78% of the unemployed and 31% of elderly people represented the main groups living in poverty in the UK. Piachaud (*Guardian* 1.9.99) stated, however, that some changes had occurred amongst poor people, with the circumstances of some improving while others worsened or remained static:

Some improvements:

- ❑ increased child allowance (+550,000 parents, +800,000 children)
- ❑ Surestart (involving 5% of under 4s)
- ❑ reduced unemployment (-394,000).

Some static or worse:

- ❑ pensions, apart from winter heating
- ❑ disability eligibility
- ❑ reduced Income Support on margins (+300,000).

The net effect of these changes under 'New' Labour has been a reduction in the number of people defined as poor from 14m to 12m in 1999. However, this is still twice the level of poverty that existed in 1979.

Table 2.3 Poor people in the UK in 1996/7

Group	%	No.(m)
Adult women	24	5.3
Children	35	4.5
Adult men	20	4.2
Elderly	31	3.0
Lone parents	63	2.9
Unemployed	78	2.3

(DSS, 1998)

A further group that requires consideration is disabled people. 6.2m people were estimated to be living with a disability in 1988, with an estimated 75% dependent on state benefits (Martin and White, 1988). As it is unclear how many of these people can be defined as poor, and special needs and circumstances must be taken into account, disability will be considered in section 2.2 as part of the broader concept of social exclusion.

Geographical distribution of deprivation

In order to measure the geographical distribution of deprivation, various indices have been created (e.g. DoE/DETR 1983, 1994, 1998; Townsend, 1987; Carstairs and Morris, 1991; Gordon and Forrest, 1995; Welsh Office, 1995). As it is not possible to review all of these,

those employed in this study form the focus of this section (for discussion of the methodological detail of these indices, see Appendix I). All the following indices are used by Forest and Gordon in their atlas *People and Places 2* (1995) for England, and by White and Higgs (1997) for Wales. These indices are calculated using similar methodologies involving ranking according to Z scores obtained from various variables.

The Townsend Deprivation Index (Townsend *et al*, 1986 in Gordon and Forrest, 1995) already mentioned in this chapter comprises four main census derived variables: unemployment, housing tenure, overcrowding and the proportion of private households without access to a car. The top ten most deprived local authorities in England according to this index are listed in Table 2.4.

Nine of the top ten most deprived local authorities were in inner London with Tower Hamlets experiencing extreme levels of deprivation compared to those ranked beneath it. When authorities ranked 11-20 are taken into consideration, the next worst areas are Tyneside and a broad area through Merseyside, Greater Manchester and over the Pennines into West Yorkshire. Most of the biggest cities are in the top rankings, although there were pockets of rural deprivation in Cornwall, East Anglia, Kent, Cumbria and Northumberland. The lowest ranked districts were from mixed urban/rural, remoter rural or resort and retirement areas, with a strong concentration in the south east of England and along the M4 corridor. A similar pattern was present in Wales where deprivation was concentrated in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham, although White and Higgs (1997) claimed rural poverty was underrepresented due to the inclusion of owning a car as a variable, stating that car ownership was essential in rural areas and did not mean people were not deprived.

Another index was developed by Gordon and Forrest (1995) based on *the Breadline Britain in the 1990s Survey*. This was a national survey which used consensual or 'perceived' deprivation and determined whether people were living below the accepted minimum standard of living. The main advantage of this method is that it provides a tangible percentage of poor households rather than a Z score. The results were comparable to the Townsend Index and the top ten districts with the highest percentage of poor households are shown in Table 2.4. Although only Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Camden were ranked in the same position as the Townsend Index, only Liverpool and Knowlsey

were new entries. The overall patterns of deprivation remained the same with concentrations in inner London, Tyneside, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and into Yorkshire. The other major cities and rural districts of Cornwall, East Anglia, Kent, Cumbria and Northumberland all contained high percentages of poor households.

The last two indices are the 'official' version produced by the Department of Environment, Trade and the Regions (DETR) for England, the *1998 Index of Local Deprivation* (formally the Index of Local Conditions) and the Welsh Office equivalent, the *Index of Socio-Economic Conditions*. It is important to note, though, that the two indices use different methodologies and cannot be directly compared.

The DETR's index was updated in 1998 to take into account new local authority boundaries and new data for 1996/7 because the previous index was based on 1991 Census data. The indicators covered unemployment, low income, health, education, environment, crime and housing which correspond to the dimensions of social exclusion proposed by the SEU (Robinson and Oppenheim, 1998, see section 2.2). The main advantages of this index is its range of indicators and its geographical depth. Analysis is produced for district, ward and Enumeration District (ED) levels; there are over 180,000 of the latter in England (approximately equivalent to sectoral post code areas such as LE11 8 _ _).

This multi-level approach overcomes the lack of detail in the Townsend and the Gordon and Forest indices, revealing pockets of deprivation and its intensity within districts, and even within wards. For example Leeds is ranked 56th in the most deprived district index, but due to its severe deprivation in its worst areas, it is 7th on the intensity measure (percentage of residents living in the worst 10% of wards in England). The 10 most deprived districts in the overall index are shown in Table 2.4. The positioning is different from the Townsend and Gordon and Forest indices, with Liverpool and Manchester moving into the top three. The only new entries were Birmingham and Sandwell, both from the West Midlands. The same patterns of distribution were also found, with higher levels of deprivation in London, the North West, North East and parts of Yorkshire. An addition was the increase in defined deprivation in the West and East Midlands with 20% of their districts in the worst 100.

Table 2.4 Comparison of deprivation indices

Townsend Deprivation Index		Gordon & Forest % of poor households index		DETR Index of Local Deprivation	
Ranked districts	Z score	District	% of poor households	District	Degree score
1. Tower Hamlets	15.72	1. Tower Hamlets	38	1. Liverpool	40.07
2. Hackney	14.33	2. Hackney	37	2. Newham	38.55
3. Southwark	12.41	3. Islington	36	3. Manchester	36.33
4. Islington	12.12	4. Southwark	36	4. Hackney	35.21
5. Lambeth	10.93	5. Manchester	34	5. Birmingham	34.67
6. Newham	10.87	6. Lambeth	33	6. Tower Hamlets	34.30
7. City of Westminster	10.54	7. Liverpool	32	7. Sandwell	33.78
8. Camden	10.34	8. Camden	32	8. Southwark	33.74
9. Manchester	9.48	9. Knowlsey	31	9. Knowlsey	33.69
10. Hammersmith and Fulham	9.20	10. City of Westminster	31	10. Islington	32.21

(Townsend, 1986 et al in Gordon and Forrest, 1995; Gordon and Forest, 1995; DETR, 1998)

In terms of district types (OPCS, 1997 in DETR, 1998), inner London and the “ports and industry” were the most deprived, with 80% in the top 50 and almost all in the top 100. ‘Coalfields’ and ‘mixed industrial economies’ were next worse (40% top 50, 80% top 100) followed by ‘manufacturing’, ‘resort/retirement’ and ‘education/services’. The ‘most prospering areas’, ‘growth areas’, ‘mixed urban/rural’ and ‘coast/country’ had virtually none of their districts in the top 100.

As an index was also produced in 1991, it is possible to measure relative change during the period to 1996. The general pattern revealed that the gap between the North and South had closed, but this had occurred because inner-London and the South East declined while the North and Midlands improved. Metropolitan areas, new towns and cities improved while the resorts and Greater London worsened. In general, geographically peripheral areas such as East Kent and West Cumbria declined.

The variables used for Wales were different: unemployment, the economically active population, low socio-economic group, population loss amongst 20-59 year olds, the permanently sick in the population, overcrowding in housing, lack of basic housing amenities, standard mortality rate. This analysis was only undertaken at the ward level. However, similar patterns to the Townsend index were found with the urban conurbations containing 19 of the 50 most deprived communities (Cardiff 9, Swansea 6, Newport 3, Wrexham 1) although, Gregg and White (1997) stated that this index cannot be used to identify rural deprivation adequately as the variables are urban biased.

Indeed, the issue of rural poverty highlights some of the problems with using these indices (RDC, 1998; Gregg and White, 1997). Apart from the potential for researcher bias in the selection of variables or the manipulation of public opinion for consensual measures, there are some rural-specific problems. Firstly, the variables selected have less relevance to rural disadvantage and secondly, the incidence of rural deprivation is more dispersed, resulting in the underestimation of rural disadvantage (Bruce *et al*, 1995; RDC, 1998). The DETR index has been criticised for using variables more relevant to urban areas and giving them more weighting through the signed chi-squared methodology e.g. salience is given to areas with high population densities; and Enumeration Districts are too small to capture dispersed disadvantage. Rural areas experience different problems to urban areas, most

importantly access to essential services and issues of lack of local employment leading to people moving away and increasing isolation.

One of the main reasons behind the neglect of rural areas in these measures was identified by Schucksmith *et al* (1995) as the 'visible' nature of deprivation in urban areas and the way it is 'hidden' in rural locations, particularly as many of these areas are scenic, and considered somehow 'idyllic' and 'tranquil'. This is an important factor to consider in relation to the DETR index which was created to help guide the allocation of regeneration funding. Unfortunately, the Rural Development Commission (1998) in its attempt to develop indicators of rural disadvantage did not produce any that could be operationalised. Therefore, it is necessary to rely on OPCS categorisations of local authority types. Reliance on any one measure of deprivation, whether single indicator for groups (e.g. HBAI, benefit claimant levels) or area based (because poor people do not only live in deprived areas), runs high methodological risk, and therefore the use of a combination of measures is necessary (see Gordon and Forrest, 1995).

However, while the indicators and measures discussed above tell us how many poor people there are, who they are and more or less where they live, they do not tell us what they are experiencing. It is easy to get lost in numbers and percentages and lose sight of the horrors of poverty. Walker (1997) highlighted the fact that despite differing patterns of poverty, "they impose a common discipline" (1997: p. 114). Kempson *et al* (1994; 1996), and Walker *et al* (1995) all drew on qualitative studies of poor families in the UK and described their experiences. Due to its scarcity, money management is described, ironically, as a full-time job which is often the burden of women. The process is one of continual prioritising and searching for the cheapest alternatives, taking advantage of the flexible parts of the budget such as food and bill payments which can be delayed. Long-term planning becomes impossible, as hopes are continually dashed and aspirations frustrated by continuous movements on and off of benefits (Walker, 1997).

The needs and wants of the children are frequently placed first in order to avoid ostracism and bullying, often at the expense of food and clothing needs of parents, especially women (Middleton *et al*, 1994). Psychologically the experience can also be traumatising, inducing high levels of stress, depression, low self esteem, stigmatisation, even inducing thoughts of

suicide (Kempson, 1996). All of these factors are compounded within the families, often producing marital problems. Poverty is very much a lived experience, not a political or academic label. While leisure is an essential part of the quality of life, it must be placed in perspective with these basic realities.

A summary of the facts and figures described above is shown in Table 2.5 below.

Table 2.5 Summary table: who the poor are and their geographic distribution

Who are the poor?

- ❑ 25% of the UK population were living in poverty in 1996/97
- ❑ the poor are dominated by families with children
- ❑ although lone parents constitute a small proportion of the poor, they are at greater risk of becoming poor than any other group
- ❑ according to economic status, those most at risk of poverty are the unemployed,
- ❑ although there is increasing risk for households with at least one person is employed, especially in part-time employment
- ❑ in 1992/93 one third of all children in the UK lived in poverty, a 23% increase since 1979
- ❑ nearly two thirds of Pakistani/Bangladeshi people are in the bottom 25% of the population according to income
- ❑ from 1979 to 1994/5 the poorest 10% of the population experienced a fall in real income of 8%, while overall, the average income had increased by 40% and the top tenth by 68%
- ❑ a core of permanent poverty exists of approximately one third of poor people experiencing poverty for more than five years, and half for three years.

Geographic distribution

- ❑ pockets of poverty can exist anywhere, but there are concentrations of deprivation located in geographic clusters
- ❑ the most deprived areas in England are inner London Tyneside, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and into Yorkshire; Cardiff, Swansea and New Port in Wales
- ❑ rural poverty is not measured adequately (especially in Wales), but is evident in parts of Cornwall, East Anglia, Kent, Cumbria and Northumberland
- ❑ Greater London, the resorts, geographically peripheral areas have worsened since 1991
- ❑ a hierarchy of deprived areas exists according to local authority type: London and the "ports and industry" are the worst, followed by 'Coalfields' and 'mixed industrial economies' then 'manufacturing', 'resort/retirement' and 'education/services'.

2.2 Social Exclusion and Inequality

Lister (1990) and Scott (1994) developed the underlying argument in Townsend's work with more clarity, that poverty can be understood in terms of exclusion from citizenship. The European debate has focused on this issue and broadened the poverty debate to the wider concept of social exclusion (Room et al, 1993; 1995). Tricart, a senior officer in DGV, the section of the Commission responsible for social affairs, stated that: "today, the concept of social exclusion is taking over from poverty, which is more static than dynamic and seen far more often as exclusively monetary poverty... Social exclusion does not only mean insufficient income, and it even goes beyond participation in working life" (EC, 1994b: p. 12).

The term originated in France, where according to Silver (1994) it is rooted in Durkheimian sociology and Catholicism, was first used publicly by Rene Lenoir, a French Minister in 1974, and is concerned predominantly with social integration. From this perspective, "exclusion refers to the breakdown of structural, cultural and moral ties which bind the individual to society and family instability is a key concern" (Levitas, 1998: p. 21). The opposite of inclusion is insertion and is fundamentally linked to the introduction of the residual benefit RMI (*Revenu Minimum d'Insertion*) in 1988 which required recipients to sign a '*contract d'insertion*' mainly focused on job seeking but also including other forms of social participation related to daily living, behaviour and family relationships.

The subsequent development of the concept of social exclusion from the French tradition has, according to Room *et al* (1993), resulted in a melting pot of liberal, Anglo-Saxon concerns with poverty, and a more conservative (continental) concern with moral integration and social order. This amalgam, together with the multi-lingual and culturally diverse nature of the EU, has meant that no single discourse on social exclusion has emerged.

Three anti-poverty programmes have been undertaken by the EU to date, providing cross-national comparison, and sparking debates within member states. It has also led to research on the perceptions of poverty held by EU citizens. The term 'social exclusion' was initially

used at the European level as an alternative to the 'old poverty' concept, even though the latest EU programme was abbreviated to Poverty 3. Berghman (1998) claimed that the original reasons for this shift were political, as 'social exclusion' is less accusing than 'poverty'. However, he went on to assert that the social exclusion is more dynamic, processual and multidimensional. For Berghman, social exclusion has two distinct connotations: its comprehensiveness and its dynamic character.

Room *et al* (1993) provided one of the most widely accepted definitions of social exclusion as referring "to multidimensional disadvantage, which is of substantial duration and which involves dissociation from the major social and occupational milieux of society" (1993: p. 13). The 'milieux' relates to the four factors identified by Commins (below).

As part of the evaluation of the Poverty 3 programme, it emerged that a major difference between poverty and social exclusion is that the former is concerned with a lack of resources, whereas the latter is more comprehensive and is about much more than money. Indeed this research goes on to suggest that social exclusion occurs upon failure of one or more of the following:

- ❑ The democratic and legal system, which promotes civil integration;
- ❑ The labour market, which promotes economic integration;
- ❑ The welfare system, promoting what may be called social integration; and
- ❑ The family and community system, which promotes interpersonal integration.

The roles of each of these forms of integration is explained in more detail by Commins (1993: p. 4) as:

civic integration means being an equal citizen in a democratic system. Economic integration means having a job, having a valued economic function, being able to pay your way. Social integration means being able to avail oneself of the social services provided by the state. Interpersonal integration means having family and friends, neighbours and social networks to provide care and companionship and moral support when these are needed...In a way the four systems are complementary: when one or two are weak the others need to be strong. And the worst off are those for whom all systems have failed.

These four systems are based on T.H. Marshall's model of citizenship (1950) and demonstrate the clear link between social exclusion and incomplete or conditional citizenship.

The SEDEC (Social Exclusion and the Development of Europe) (1998) reiterated this with the view that in order to include people a "co-operative coexistence, between individuals and groups within a shared framework of individual civil, political and social rights" must exist (p11). The concept of social inclusion is linked to the principle of personal autonomy at the individual level, and the ideals of a free and democratic society at the collective level. The condition of social exclusion is described as relating to the lack of possession of one or more of the major types of "personal social capital" or "personal social goods", and thus the participation or inclusion that their possession makes possible. Inclusion therefore occurs when an adequate minimum of these goods are possessed. In the view of the SEDEC, normative inclusion is, or ideally ought to be, "inclusion in a free society on the basis of the possession and use of socially monitored and socially guaranteed needs-satisfying packages of personal social goods" (1998: p. 12). However, notions of a "free" society are paradoxically bound up with some exclusivity, for example, in the form of privacy, possession of personal stocks and supplies, personal autonomy and the right to form selective relationships with others.

However, what constitutes a 'package of social goods' and what it is to be a citizen in Britain or Europe is a political issue, and varies according to particular perspectives. Therefore, it follows that what constitutes social exclusion also varies according to opinion, as do the best means for achieving social inclusion. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Nevertheless, in distinguishing between poverty and social exclusion, if the former is restricted to absolute measures and specifically the lack of disposable income, poverty then becomes part of - a specific form of - the comprehensive concept of social exclusion (Berghman, 1998).

Further distinction is made between poverty and social exclusion by Allen *et al* (1998) who recognised the latter as a process and poverty as an outcome. In this sense poverty is a

static outcome, more specifically a lack of disposable income. However, Berghman (1998) argued that social exclusion can also be regarded as an outcome, albeit of a multidimensional process. Therefore he suggests the use of poverty and deprivation to denote outcome, and to use impoverishment and social exclusion to refer to the process (Berghman, 1998, p20). These concepts are represented in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 Differentiating between poverty, deprivation and social exclusion

	Static Outcome	Dynamic Process
Income	Poverty	Impoverishment
Multidimensional	Deprivation	Social exclusion

(Berghman, 1998)

Muffels (1993 in Berghman, 1998) considered poverty and deprivation to be complements rather than substitutes. The process of impoverishment relates to the mobility of people in and out of poverty. Walker (1995) stated that although research was not conclusive, statistics for the Netherlands showed that between 1985-1988 10% of the population was poor, but that at least 20% of the population was hit by poverty in at least one of these years. However, only 0.5% of the population was in poverty for the entire period. Mechanisms exist to 'trampoline' people out of poverty such as finding employment, children leaving home, older generations dying, and social security systems act to help prevent people from falling into poverty. These mechanisms may or may not act to save or prevent people from falling further into a situation of longer term multidimensional deprivation.

Walker (1995) developed this theme of process and outcome still further with a thesis that claimed failure to take adequate account of time causes us to understate how far poverty touches the lives of people. Moreover, it causes us to misunderstand the real nature of social exclusion "and thereby continue with policies that are at best ameliorative, and at worst, exacerbate the problem" (Walker, 1995: p. 104).

In terms of defining the poor, if the period for which poverty is measured is lengthened then the level of cross-sectional poverty is reduced. If that period is extended, so the extreme levels of poverty are approached and the permanently poor people are identified. However, there are still large numbers of people moving in and out of poverty. Indeed,

Walker (1995) went on to claim that permanent poverty is likely to be exceptional as half of the individuals who appear in the bottom decile of the UK income distribution one year have left by the second. Indeed, 47% of benefit claimants have stopped claiming after six months, with just 8% remaining after six years (Walker, 1995).

The mobility of people in and out of poverty, and those who experience permanent poverty was described by Kempson *et al* (1994) using the analogy of drowning. There are those who manage to keep their heads above the water, those who are sinking, some are struggling to the surface, and those who are drowning. According to Kempson *et al*, the process of sinking is easier and quicker than the struggle to the surface. According to this continuum, the trajectory is from poverty to social exclusion for those who are drowning. But as Walker (1995) identified, unknown people move in the opposite direction from social exclusion to poverty, but this remains unresearched.

The spatial dimension of exclusion is also receiving growing attention, primarily through the Regional and Structural Funds at the European level. The concept of spatial social exclusion refers to the concentrations of poverty in deprived neighbourhoods, rather than just to the poor persons themselves. People living within these areas often have access to fewer amenities and services, and may be isolated on the edge of urban areas in 'sink' estates, reliant on public transport (Kempson, 1996; SEU, 1998). In policy terms, target groups become essentially obsolete as the whole population of the community is targeted (Healey, 1998).

The vulnerability of an individual or a household must be seen to depend not only on available financial resources, but also insufficient or unsatisfactory community facilities, and/or access to them. Different places offer different environments for social life, and for many people these define the social worlds for their inhabitants "particularly for those with limited mobility and access to work and leisure opportunities" (Healey, 1998: p. 62).

With the increase in home based leisure, the space around the home has little meaning for many people who transect this space by car between "the school, the work place, the shopping centre, the leisure complex" (Healey, 1998: p. 61). The concept of neighbourhoods as social spaces in which people interact is essential in understanding the

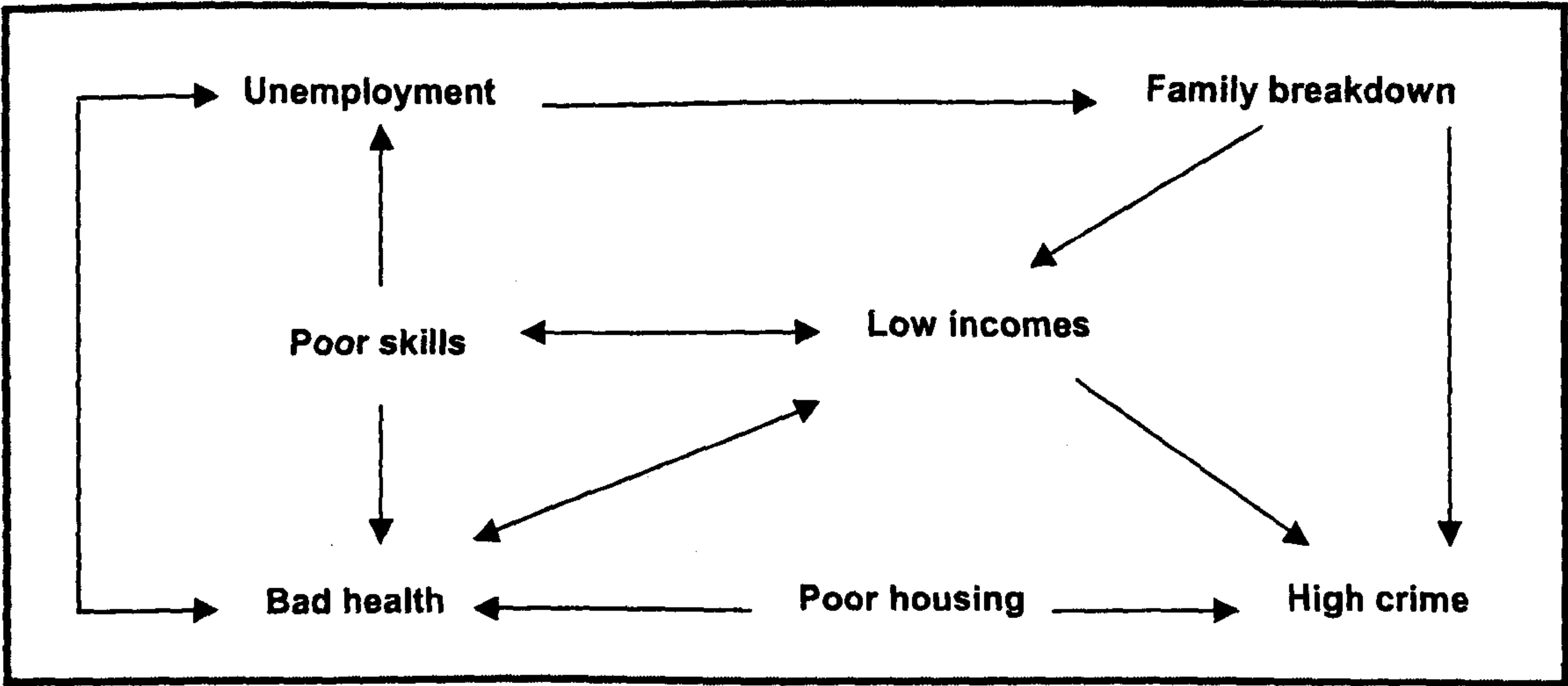
ideas of community and the development of social-physical landscapes which people become familiar with and ultimately 'own'. However, there are neighbourhoods which are bound together by problems and tensions, becoming isolated as a result.

This concept of spatial exclusion extends the boundaries of what the deprivation indices discussed earlier were attempting to measure. Areas are identified as social spaces which are isolated in social terms, rather than merely as deprived areas. However, the actual identification of socially excluded spaces is more problematic as it would involve qualitative, subjective and locally specific indicators.

Indicators of Social Exclusion

The establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit in the Cabinet Office in December 1997 further raised the profile of the concept in the UK (see section 5.4 for more detail). The Unit adopted the following description, which summarises the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion, as “a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown”. The SEU state that income poverty is only one of a number of key indicators of social exclusion, although it is central to it (see Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5 Schematic representation of Social Exclusion



(Robinson and Oppenheim, 1998)

Therefore, in order to measure the full extent of social exclusion, indicators have to be employed for each of these dimensions. The income poverty indicators have been discussed in section 2.1, and a summary of the others recommended by the Social Exclusion Unit are shown in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7 Summary of recommended indicators of social exclusion

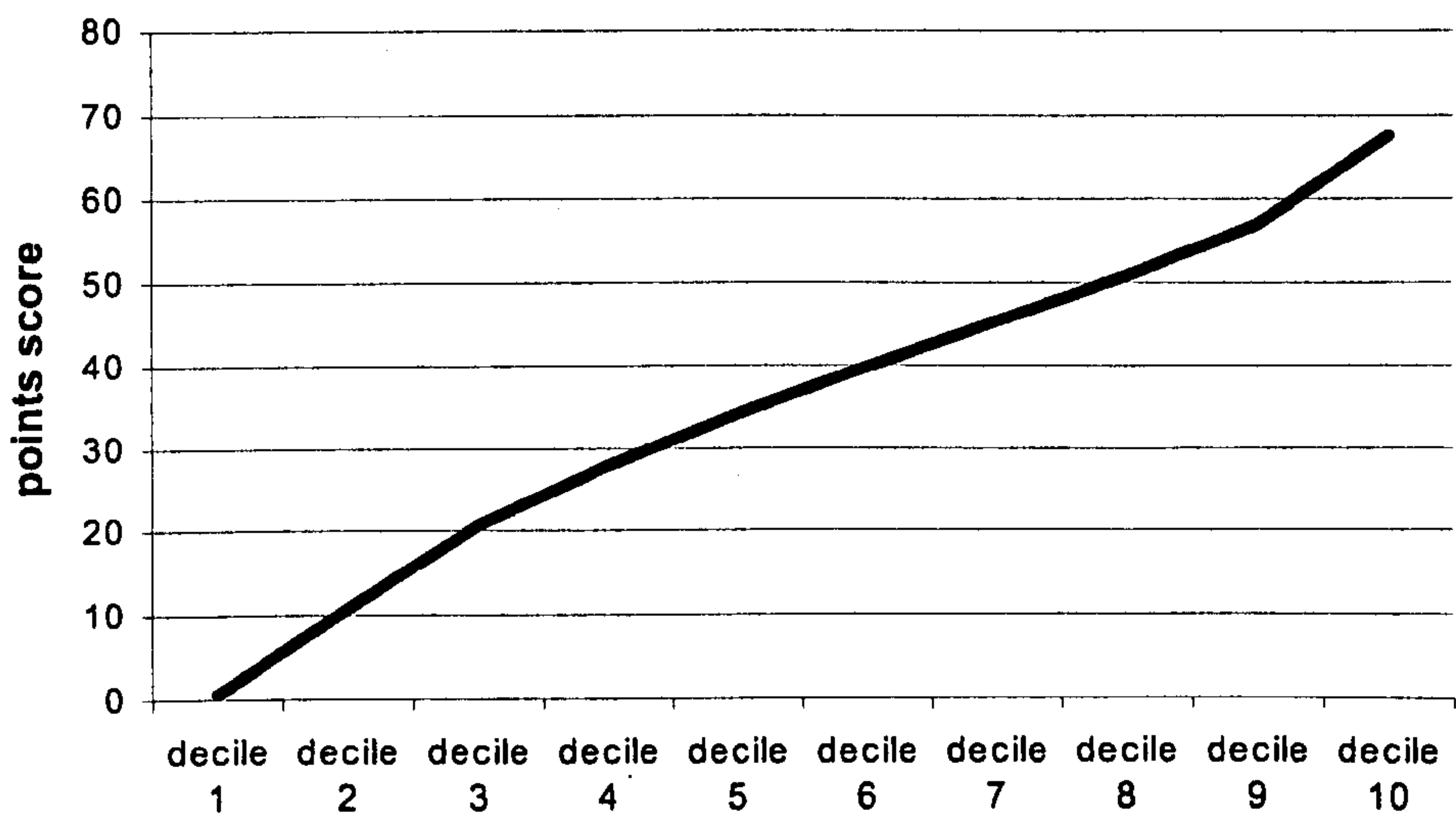
Dimension of SE	Main indicator	Supplementary indicators
Income Poverty	The proportion of people falling below 50% of average household income HBAI	<div><input type="checkbox"/> The change in average real income for people in the lowest three deciles</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> The length of time spent in the bottom three deciles</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> The incidence and length of time on income support and/or housing benefit.</div>
Exclusion from the labour market	ILO unemployment rate	<div><input type="checkbox"/> The unemployment ratio</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> The proportion of workless households</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> The duration of unemployment</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> The claimant unemployment track changes in unemployment at a local level.</div>
Exclusion in education	The proportion of 16 year old children failing to get at least 20 GCSE points	<div><input type="checkbox"/> The average GCSE points score.</div>
Health	The Standard Mortality Ratio in Class IV/V in relation to other classes for men and women.	<div><input type="checkbox"/> Adding an equity dimension (e.g. social class, socio-economic group) to the incidence of heart disease and stroke, accidents and cancer</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Tracking the incidence of depression with equity</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Action oriented indicators which track preventative strategies and access to health care with equity.</div>

(Robinson and Oppenheim, 1998).

By drawing on a selection of the indicators listed above, it is possible to gain a picture of the wider nature of social exclusion in the UK. Unemployment statistics are of particular importance to the current government because of their commitment to work as *the* major means of achieving social inclusion. Emphasis has been placed on the social and psychological benefits of employment rather than just the income it provides. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) measure is derived from the Labour Force Survey and takes into account all those eligible for employment rather than just those registered as unemployed and claiming benefit, therefore it is always approximately two points higher than the 'official' unemployment level. Since 1993 the ILO level has been falling steadily from 10.3% in 1993 to 7.1% in 1997. Measures of long-term unemployment are also important in identifying those who are most at risk of exclusion, using two years as a benchmark. From ILO statistics, the correlation between high unemployment and high long-term unemployment is strong and if the former is reduced, the latter will follow. A further measure to be taken into account is the workless household rate, which is the proportion of all households containing someone of working age where nobody is in employment. During the period from 1987 to 1997 this rate has more than doubled, and currently stands at 19.6%.

The link between low educational achievement and low income is clear from the polarisation of GCSE scores obtained by children according to household income deciles. In 1996, the bottom decile obtained an average points score of 0.6 compared to 67.5 in the top decile, and it is not until the fourth decile is reached that children score above the level set by the Social Exclusion Unit as indicating exclusion (Figure 2.6). The average score was 35.4 (A* 8; A 7; B 6; C 5; D 4; E 3; F 2; G 1).

Figure 2.6 Polarisation of GCSE scores 1996 (DfEE)



There is also variation according to ethnic origin, with 45% of white children attaining more than 5 A*-C grades compared to 38% of Asians and 23% of blacks. Moreover, 38% of 16 year olds defined as excluded by the Youth Cohort Study (out of work/unemployed, plus the 1-2% in part-time employment) obtained no GCSE grades at all.

The relationship between poverty and health has been demonstrated by several studies (Townsend *et al*, 1992; Benzeval *et al*, 1995; Drewer and Whitehead, 1997). According to the health rate indicator of standard mortality rate ratios (aged 35-64), people in the lowest socio-economic class are more likely to die younger than those in the higher groups (ONS, 1998). Moreover, babies are more likely to be born weighing less in the lowest classes than the highest; 4.8% of babies born weighing less than 2.5kg in class I compared to 7.7% in class V (ONS, 1998). This trend continues with growth and adult height.

The issue of disability is linked to that of health, and is notably absent from the Social Exclusion Unit's recommended list of indicators of social exclusion. Many disabled people experience what could be described as social exclusion before any income measures are taken into consideration. Beyond physical access to public spaces, the circumstances of disabled people include family and finances, education and employment, environment,

housing, transport and importantly empowerment (Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare, 1999). Although actively ‘encouraged’ to seek work under government restrictions to disability benefits and eligibility to Incapacity Benefit by ‘New’ Labour in 1999, there is no guarantee that disabled people will find work, or that it will be in any way fulfilling so as to ‘insert’ or ‘include’ disabled people. Low income, however, compounds these existing barriers, further restricting the opportunities for disabled people to involve themselves in social, voluntary and political life (Beresford, 1996).

Therefore, although social exclusion extends beyond income poverty, it remains at its heart. The range of indicators described above demonstrate the multi-dimensional and processual nature of social exclusion and the need for what the SEU call ‘joined-up action’ across government departments at both national and local levels (SEU, 1998). However, the causes of, and policy solutions for poverty, deprivation, social exclusion and inequality are essentially political contested issues.

A summary of the key facts and figures from this section are shown in Table 2.8 below.

Table 2.8 Summary table: social exclusion

<div>SOCIAL EXCLUSION<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ social exclusion is multi-dimensional and processual❑ it is what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown❑ income poverty is at the heart of social exclusion❑ during the period from 1987-1997 the rate of households with nobody of working age in employment has more than doubled, and currently stands at 19.6%❑ the bottom 40% of 16 year olds in terms of household income are excluded according to their level of educational achievement❑ the poor suffer from worse health than the rest of the population and those in the lowest socio-economic group are more likely to die younger than any other.</div>
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2.3 Three Discourses on Poverty, Deprivation, Social Exclusion and Inequality

As mentioned above, poverty is a political issue and the same can be said of the understanding of the term social exclusion. Ruth Levitas, in her book *The Inclusive Society?* (1998), brought together into a useful framework, the different discourses on the causes and required policy responses to the widely accepted problems of poverty and social exclusion, as well as on the relationship between inclusion/exclusion and inequality.

The first is a redistribution discourse (RED) that has been developed in British politics, and is primarily concerned with poverty but broadens into a critique of inequality, and contrasts exclusion with a version of citizenship which calls for substantial redistribution of power and wealth. The second is a moral underclass discourse (MUD) which is gendered and focuses on the moral and behavioural delinquency of the excluded themselves, 'demonising' the criminally inclined, unemployable young men and sexually and socially irresponsible single mothers. For these people, paid work is necessary as a means of social discipline, but whose self-exclusion (choosing not to work) is moral and cultural. Thirdly there is the social integrationist discourse (SID) that is based around the need for paid work in order to achieve social cohesion and integration, and to overcome social exclusion.

a) RED: Social exclusion and critical social policy

This discourse has its roots in the work of Townsend, discussed earlier, and his perspective of poverty as a multi-dimensional process, extending the debate from absolute to relative definitions, and from consumption to participation. His solution was redistribution, and he recommended a decreased reliance on means tested benefits, as benefits should be paid as of right.

However, the eighteen years of Conservative government which followed Townsend's findings was marked by "dramatic increases in inequality, in unemployment, and in the numbers of people living in poverty, as well as more restrictive conditions for less generous social security benefits" (Levitas, 1998: p. 11). Redistribution did occur during this period, but it was to the rich, as shown by HBAI statistics (see section 2.1) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation *Inquiry into Income and Wealth* (Barclay, 1995). The main

finding from the latter report was that the income gap between the rich and the poor had increased rapidly between 1979 and 1990, more than any other developed country except New Zealand, and that this was caused by:

- Rising unemployment;
- Widening wage differentials;
- Decreasing benefits;
- A more regressive population (including ethnic minorities) that were particularly adversely affected; and
- Inequalities in wealth had stopped declining (Barclay, 1995).

The poorest members of society had not felt the 'trickle-down effect' that increased economic growth was intended to bring about. Therefore inequality could not be justified and led Barclay (1995: p. 33) to conclude that "the living standards and life opportunities of the poorest...are simply unacceptably low in a society as rich as ours". Indeed, rising inequality was declared damaging to the social fabric of society and to economic efficiency. However, the suggested remedies included more active labour market measures, subsidies to employers and some combination of minimum wage and/or extended in-work benefits. In addition, calls were made for increases in benefit levels and changes to the benefits regime to ease transitions to work; future changes to the taxation system to favour low wage earners; increased housing subsidies and lower rents; and special measures to revitalise marginalised areas. This was a redistributive agenda which had a welfare to work element and fitted more closely with SID.

Indeed, Levitas (1998) criticised the Rowntree report for couching social issues in terms of economic interests, as it concentrated more on the economic costs of inequality and social exclusion. The report gave as much consideration to effects and cost of the poor on the 'non-poor' as on the experiences and situations of the poor themselves. There was even a movement towards MUD's gendered discourse when the report talked of the disaffected young men with no stake in society.

The development of the concept of social exclusion in Europe made its mark on the 1997 election with the publication of *Britain Divided: the growth of social exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s* by the Child Poverty Action Group (Walker and Walker, 1997). Poverty

was defined in similar terms to Townsend as a lack of material resources, especially income, necessary to participate in British society. The concept of social exclusion had a wider reaching meaning, referring to the “dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society” (Walker and Walker, 1997: p. 2).

Moreover, the concept of being entirely or partially ‘shut out’ implies inequality and as the title *Britain Divided* suggests, redistribution was at the top of the authors’ agenda for reducing this gap. Optimism was shown for the recognition by the Labour Party (e.g. Gordon Brown’s John Smith Memorial Lecture) of the need to reduce inequality and to tackle poverty.

However, during the period of Thatcherite domination “direct defence of equality was difficult” (Levitas, 1998: p. 12). The concept was openly attacked by Conservative politicians as an imposition of uniformity, and as immoral, totalitarian and a brake on economic growth. Inequality was effectively sold as democratic freedom of choice and expression, a legitimisation for reduced public spending and growing unemployment. The welfare state symbolised and embodied all that was wrong with the ‘nanny state’ and was duly attacked, retrenched and restructured.

Goodin (1996) argued that the concept of citizenship is more egalitarian than inclusion. Whereas inclusion focuses on insiders and outsiders, citizenship is more concerned with shared characteristics and the ideas of boundary and centre. T.H. Marshall’s model of citizenship from 1950 included civil, political and social rights identifying the need for a balance between all three for full citizenship. However, while he acknowledged a progressive growth in social rights, the movement towards greater inequality would be limited by the tension between social justice and the market. Indeed, citizenship could be used to legitimise inequalities so long as they did not run too deep and the equality of opportunity was maintained. Marshall’s model has subsequently been criticised because ethnic and gender inequalities were not considered, but it still forms the basis of an “egalitarian, redistributive, broad understanding of social exclusion, inclusion and citizenship” (Levitas, 1998: p. 13). Lister (1990) summarised the relationship between the three concepts of poverty, social exclusion and citizenship: “poverty spells exclusion from

the full rights of citizenship in each of these (civil, political and social) spheres and undermines people's ability to fulfil the private and public obligations of citizenship" (p. 68).

Therefore, between 1979 and 1997, "the social-democratic redistributive agenda was recast in this new language of exclusion and citizenship" (Levitas, 1998 p13) and developed in opposition to the policies of New Right governments. The main characteristics of this discourse are summarised in Table 2.9 below.

Table 2.9 Summary table: redistribution discourse (RED)

REDISTRIBUTION DISCOURSE (RED)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Emphasises poverty as a prime cause of social exclusion ❑ Implies a reduction of poverty through increases in benefit levels ❑ It has potential to valorise unpaid work ❑ In positing citizenship as the obverse of exclusion, it goes beyond a minimalist model of inclusion ❑ In addressing social, political and cultural, as well as economic citizenship, it broadens the critique of inequality beyond the material level ❑ It focuses on the processes which produce inequality ❑ It implies a radical redistribution of resources and power in order to reduce inequalities (Levitas, 1998 p14).

b) MUD: The Underclass of Dependency

The Conservative government's response to rising unemployment, poverty and inequality was to tighten eligibility for benefits, reduce their value and ultimately deny the existence of poverty, blaming the poor for their circumstances. The terms 'underclass' and 'culture of dependency' were used widely by supporters of the New Right, linking them to issues of social order and moral integration.

Levitas (1998) highlighted a misunderstanding of the New Right in the 1980s as an exclusively neo-liberal project based on market deregulation and the reduction of state intervention. In reality it was symbiotic, drawing from neo-conservatism as much as neo-liberalism. The distinction is important, as neo-liberal policies underpinned the economic strategies of privatisation, increased competition, entrepreneurialism, individualism etc.

But neo-conservatism, which developed in tandem, was concerned with social order rather than freedom, nation and morality- the state had to be more involved than ever. A strong state was needed to force economic and social reform, free-up the markets and break the hold of the trade unions. Moreover, at a time of intense urban unrest in the inner cities, the miners' strike and poll tax protests, there was a need to police the effects of its policies.

Harking back to Booth and Rowntree at the turn of the century, the New Right viewed the poor as either deserving, feckless, 'scroungers'; or undeserving, who really needed help. The former were condemned and demonised as exploiting the welfare state and being part of a culture of dependency, reliant on the benefits system. Indeed, this dependency culture was regarded as a pathological and moral condition created by the benefits system itself, the result of prolonged universal welfare provision (Levitas, 1998). According to the New Right, the Keynesian welfare state reduced personal initiative, independence and self respect, producing statements such as Norman Tebbit's famous 'get on your bike' and find a job. John Cole, political commentator, described the 'giro culture' which was endemic of the 'no-work culture' and was characterised by idleness, an erosion of the work ethic and crime (Cole, 1993 in Levitas, 1998).

The concept of underclass was central to this discourse. Townsend (1979) used the term without critical connotations in collectively describing different groups of the excluded poor (e.g. the elderly, disabled, chronically sick, long-term unemployed and one parent families). Frank Field's *Losing Out: the emergence of Britain's underclass* (1990) highlighted the reversal of Marshall's predicted increases in citizenship rights under Thatcherism, particularly due to exclusion from work and increased reliance on benefits. From a rather confused position, he highlighted inequalities in citizenship, but also claimed that low educational achievement and incomplete families characterised the underclass, which distinguished them culturally from the rest of society; ultimately they made society less civilised. In his later work, Field (1995) clarified his position by stating that state provision created dependency and eroded incentives to work and save.

The cultural characterisation of the underclass was made most prominently by the American Charles Murray who was published in the *Sunday Times* and visited Britain in 1989 under the invitation of the right wing think-tank the Institute of Economic Affairs. He heralded himself as “a visitor from a plague area come to see if the disease is spreading”, a disease spread by “people...whose values are contaminating the lives of entire neighbourhoods”, those who rejected the ethics of work and family (Murray, 1990: p. 23). The view point of the deserving and undeserving poor was upheld, with three factors determining underclass status: illegitimacy, crime and drop-out from the labour force. These factors created pathological communities with children socialised into the underclass. The absence of a father in the family was identified as a major factor in rearing such children, blaming the benefits system for making it too easy for single mothers to raise their children alone and removing the need for remarriage. Murray (1994) later went further in demonising single parenthood and proposed the reduction of economic support for them while increasing their stigmatisation. The gendered nature of these views is obvious: the delinquent males are wilfully idle and criminally anti-social; the delinquent women are sexually and reproductively irresponsible single parents.

The concept of a cultural underclass was politically appealing as it allowed the persistence of poverty to be recognised, whilst maintaining claims that class divisions were disappearing. Blame could be passed onto those ‘deserving’ poverty, thus absolving governmental responsibility for their circumstances and justifying the reductions in public spending necessary to wean them off of their dependency, especially through the benefits system. Meanwhile the support of those undeserving of their poverty meant that the state could not be accused of not helping those who really needed it.

Within critical social policy (RED), the term underclass became very unpopular and the blaming of the poor for their situations was condemned, mainly due to its association with Murray’s claims of moral inferiority. The interpretation of poverty from the perspective of a moral underclass has been rejected on three fundamental grounds: lack of empirical evidence; its imprecision; and its punitive rather than supportive policy responses (Oppenheim and Harker, 1996). The ambiguity of the term left authors such as Field without a clear position and opened the door for moral interpretations which shifted the argument from redistribution to retribution (Levitas, 1998). Lister (1990) argued that those

who adopted the concept of ‘underclass’ to restore the rights of citizenship to the poor were “playing with fire” (p. 26). Levitas (1998) claimed that the ambiguous and unsatisfactory use of the term gave rise to using the social exclusion concept in RED where it is used to actively refute MUD and the underclass debate.

However, Adonis and Pollard (1997) defended the use of underclass as they believed it accurately described the class predicament for those at the bottom of society, and the term is still widely used in the media and politics - Tony Blair has used it repeatedly. Indeed, the concept of social exclusion has moral dimensions in extending definitions of relative poverty to no or partial participation in economic, social, political and cultural spheres of life, and in some characterisations, alienation and distance from the mainstream society (Duffy, 1995). There is therefore a risk of social exclusion being drawn into the moral discourse. The main features of the MUD discourse are summarised in Table 2.10 below.

Table 2.10 Summary table: moral underclass discourse (MUD)

<p>MORAL UNDERCLASS DISCOURSE (MUD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ It presents the underclass or socially excluded as culturally distinct from mainstream society❑ It focuses on the behaviour of the poor rather than structural factors.❑ It implies that benefits encourage dependency and are bad rather than good for recipients❑ Inequalities among the rest of society are ignored❑ It is a gender stereotyped discourse about young criminal men and single mothers.
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c) SID: Social Exclusion, Social Integration and Europe

The major theme of SID which differentiates it from MUD and RED is its emphasis on the exclusion from paid work rather than broader exclusion from social participation. Therefore, the key to inclusion and integration is through paid employment. Throughout the European discourse the terms social exclusion and exclusion from paid work are used interchangeably. The improvement of education and training are key factors in ensuring people have more opportunities to enter paid employment and thus become included and integrated into society.

The SEDEC's (1998) research into comparative social inclusion policy in Europe provides an example of the SID discourse, and defines the social goods necessary for social inclusion as 'recognition', 'income' and 'work'. Although the primary focus is work, 'recognition' and 'income' are considered as social goods in their own right due the changing nature of the 'employment society' and therefore justifying distributive policy-making for the achievement of social justice and social inclusion in their own right, as well as in connection with work.

'Recognition' is connected to notions of identity and difference, trust and respect, and communication (e.g. Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992). The unconventional nature of this social good is that the more it is spent or invested, unlike conventional capital which depletes or devalues, the more it grows. Recognition is also concerned with formal and informal status. The recognition of formal status includes nationality, residency, and being an employee, whereas informal recognition may include recognising individual or collective lifestyle choices. The combination of these forms of recognition provide a broad understanding of citizenship and the autonomy of the individual with which it is inextricably linked. Social exclusion can lead to the formation of negative forms of recognition such as stereotyping, labelling and stigmatisation. The SEDEC (1998) indicated that a lack of recognition can be affected or determined to varying degrees by a lack of income and/or work.

'Income' refers predominantly to monetary income which can be used to purchase goods and services from the consumer market to satisfy needs and wants. In addition this is 'real income' or income 'in kind' which can include goods or services provided through the welfare state or informal welfare work, volunteering etc. Again, the two types of income form a 'package' and exclusion can occur when this 'package' is not complete and a person lacks minimal consumption resources. When this occurs, a person's resources are not sufficient to:

- a) Enable a person to reproduce their capacity to work sustainably;
- b) Fulfil responsibilities they recognise themselves to have (to themselves, significant others, or both); and/or
- c) Generally exercise their freedom, rights and responsibilities of citizenship (SEDEC, 1998).

This minimum income was described as "a universal and unconditional human right", but its acquisition is also deemed a "voluntary self-imposed responsibility" as the product of individual work and productive activities (SEDEC, 1998: p. 22). Therefore, the role of government (and the democratic state) is to respect people's conceptions of their responsibilities and to guarantee their rights to income and consumption of resources. This governmental action occurs mainly indirectly through supporting 'aspirations and self-provisioning' to work (e.g. 'free' education and training). Direct action is required in situations of extreme need where people cannot effectively exercise their own rights or fulfil their responsibilities. Therefore, social inclusion policies involve ensuring the equal distribution and maintenance of the social good of the 'income' package.

'Work' (or the capacity to do so) can be regarded as human capital, which can be enhanced by factors such as education or training. Social exclusion is often connected with unemployment, or lack of formal work in the labour market providing the monetary income referred to above. This is in turn reflected in welfare and 'workfare' policies. However, the SEDEC (1998) claimed that "mere participation in the formal labour market is no guarantee of social inclusion" (p. 24). Indeed, if working conditions are poor, pay is low, the contract (if one exists) is temporary or uncertain and worker rights limited, then the employee in the formal labour market may be as excluded as the unemployed. There is also an informal economy which consists of unpaid work, examples of which are housework and welfare work. This package involves a combination of formal and informal work and again is related to the 'recognised social status' package as roles of productivity are defined. In terms of social inclusion policies, the distribution of a minimum of the social good of work is a major aim.

Levitas (1998) pointed out that, amidst this preoccupation with paid work, there is little recognition of the role of unpaid work in both including and integrating people in meaningful employment and assisting their re-entry to the labour market. Markets are viewed as potentially unstable, producing unacceptable inequalities and operating in the short term, thus they need regulation including 'solidarity mechanisms' (EC, 1994a). However, this was not a prescription for redistribution, because welfare spending was deemed to be excessive and unsustainable. In this sense 'solidarity' means solidarity between groups of people and areas, e.g. those who do and do not have jobs; between

regions; between men and women. Thus the emphasis of SID is on integration through paid work and therefore “reduces the social to the economic” (Levitas, 1998 p26). Table 2.11 below shows the main factors that differentiate SID from RED and MUD.

Table 2.11 Summary table: social integration discourse (SID)

SOCIAL INTEGRATION DISCOURSE (SID)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	It narrows the definition of social exclusion/inclusion to participation in paid work
<input type="checkbox"/>	It largely neglects the reasons why people who are not in paid work are consigned to poverty
<input type="checkbox"/>	It obscures the differences and inequalities between paid workers
<input type="checkbox"/>	It also ignores gender issues as women are generally paid less than men and are more likely to be in low paid jobs
<input type="checkbox"/>	It neglects the gap between the owners of productive property and the workers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unpaid work is not addressed- again this is a gender issue
<input type="checkbox"/>	It undermines the legitimacy of participating in unpaid work (Levitas, 1998 p26)

Although RED, MUD and SID are presented as separate discourses, they are ideal types and overlap in certain areas. Levitas’ preoccupation is with unpaid work, and she highlighted how this is neglected in all three cases, producing gendered arguments. All three discourses have a moral element, MUD obviously more so than the RED and SID. They all differ on what the socially excluded lack: in RED they have no money; in MUD they have no morals; in SID they have no jobs (Levitas, 1998). RED is more encompassing than the MUD, which reduces the economic to morals whilst neglecting the political and social, and SID which reduces the social to economic and largely ignored the political and cultural. According to Levitas this multiplicity of meanings and applications of social exclusion makes it widely accepted and a powerful concept, shifting between discourses.

From the previous three sections, poverty can be regarded as a concept which increases in complexity when widened to include relative indicators of deprivation and social exclusion. At this point it is important to clarify the terminology that will be used in this study. Berghman’s typology (1998) provides a useful framework for distinguishing between concepts (see Table 2.6), where poverty is the static outcome of the process of

impoverishment - this is based solely on income, although relative to the rest of the population (e.g. HBAI statistics). Deprivation is the static outcome of the multi-dimensional process of social exclusion (e.g. Townsend's definition of deprivation). Therefore, people who are poor lack income (relative to others) and those who are deprived lack income as well as access to a variety of other goods and services. Poverty is thus a component of deprivation and social exclusion.

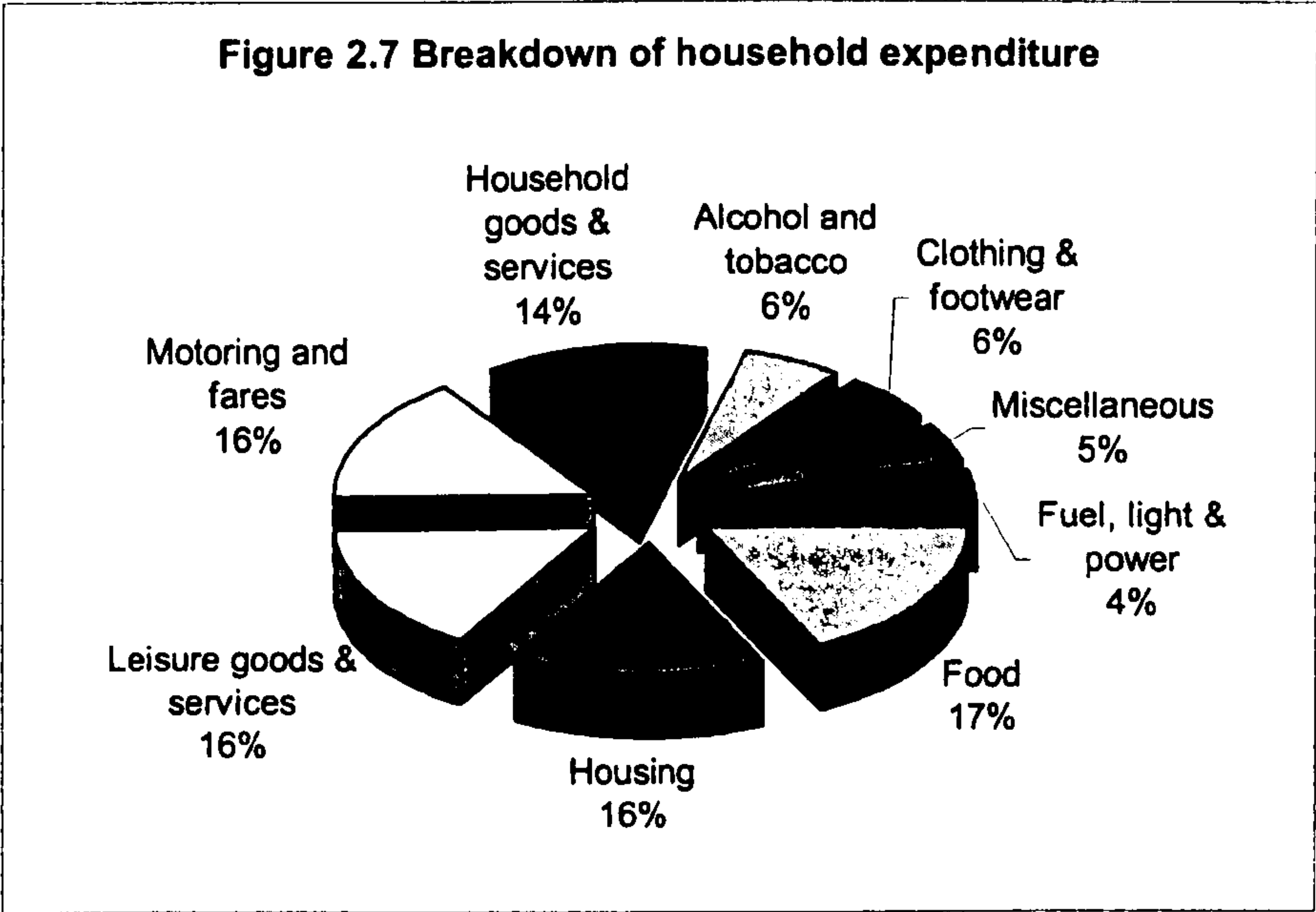
2.4 Poverty, Social Exclusion, Inequality and Leisure

The inclusion of leisure activities in relative definitions of relative poverty (e.g. by Townsend, 1979; Golding, 1986) highlighted the changes in work patterns and increases in free time, better access to leisure activities and services for the bulk of the population, as well as the growth in the 'leisure industry'. Whether personal, social movement, or commodity, leisure has become a source and site of inequality (Alcock, 1997). Despite the general increase in availability of leisure activities to individuals of modest means (Godbey, 1981), the expense involved in pursuing leisure is often associated with affluence, while the economically disadvantaged (despite their often substantial amounts of free time) are excluded from a large number of modern leisure facilities (Alcock, 1997).

Applying Berghman's (1998) distinctions between poverty, deprivation and social exclusion, being poor (lacking income) results in the inability to participate in leisure activities (since few are free) - here leisure is a site of inequality. This lack of income, the inability to participate in leisure activities, combined with various other factors (e.g. ill health, low educational attainment, unemployment, inability to access other goods and services) is part of the process of social exclusion which ultimately leads to deprivation - here leisure is a source of inequality.

The importance of leisure pursuits in our society is reflected by the increasing proportion of income people spent on them. It has also become more of an economic commodity; according to Martin and Mason (1998), while the volume of leisure consumption between 1971 and 1996 has grown by 10%, the volume of expenditure has grown tenfold. According to the Family Expenditure Survey (1996/7) which is based on a random sample of 6,400 households in the UK, apart from 1991, where high interest rates forced housing

spending to an artificial high, food has always accounted for the biggest slice of household income. However, the gap between food/ non-alcoholic drinks and leisure spending has been closing. In 1996/7, of the average household weekly expenditure of £328.80, £55.90 was spent on food while £55.10 was spent on leisure. Figure 2.7 shows the percentage breakdown of weekly expenditure, with leisure spending coming joint second with housing costs.



(FES, 1996/7)

The items of leisure expenditure included foreign holidays (£9.10 per week), TVs, videos, computers and CDs (£6.50) and gambling - including National Lottery tickets (£4.20). ‘Sport and camping’ only amounted to £2.90 per week (Table 2.12).

Table 2.12 Components of household leisure spending

Item of leisure expenditure	Amount spent per week
Foreign holidays	£9.10
TVs, videos, computers and CD players	£6.50
Gambling	£4.20
‘Sport and camping’	£2.90
Newspapers and magazines	£2.90
Gardening	£2.00
Cinema/theatre	£1.00

(FES, 1996/7)

However, the same survey also revealed that weekly household expenditure in the UK varied from £96 for the poorest decile to £720 for the richest. Assuming that the proportional breakdown of expenditure for the average household, then the poorest tenth would spend just £15.23 per week on leisure compared to £114.48 for the richest. However, it is much more likely that the proportion spent on leisure will decrease as income falls and *vice versa* as it increases, and so the gap between the richest and poorest in terms of leisure spending is much greater.

Because of the relative difficulty of getting a good response rate to income questions, many studies and surveys resort to the surrogate measure of socio-economic groupings, which do not accurately reflect income distributions. The General Household Survey (GHS) (1998) shows a correlation between occupation and participation in sport, declining according to status and with a difference of 40% between the professional and unskilled categories (see Table 2.13), a level last met in 1987.

Table 2.13 Participation in Sport by Socio-Economic Group

	Participating in at least one sport in last 4 weeks (%)			
	1987	1990	1993	1996
Professional	65	65	64	63
Manager	52	53	53	52
Junior non-manual	45	49	49	47
Skilled manual	48	49	46	45
Semi-skilled	34	38	36	37
Unskilled	26	28	31	23
Total	45	48	47	46
Difference between professional and un-skilled	40	37	33	40

(GHS, 1998)

The ‘Modest-but-Adequate’ (MBA) family budget measure of relative deprivation, used by the Family Budget Unit at the University of York, analysed the average amount spent on leisure goods and services by specific family types, according to a minimal budget level. Although the amount spent on leisure rises with income, it remains proportionally the same

and the lowest spending group on leisure are lone parents with two children (see Table 2.14).

Table 2.14 Modest-But-Adequate Weekly Family Budgets and Leisure:1992

Family Type	MBA Leisure Expenditure (per week)	MBA Budget Total (per week)	% of total budget spent on leisure
Single male	£16.46	£150.34	10.9
Single female	£12.63	£119.30	10.6
2 adults	£28.19	£210.87	13.8
2 adults and 2 children (aged 4 and 10)	£32.24	£316.50	10.2
2 adults and 2 children (aged 10 and 16)	£37.19	£322.53	11.5
Lone parent plus 2 children (aged 4 and 10)	£27.64	£296.04	9.3

(McCabe, 1993)

When benefit claiming family types are considered, the picture is very different. The Income Support (IS) level did not cover the estimated adequate weekly income according to the MBA measure for Low Cost families, for three of the four groups, thus plummeting them further into poverty (see Table 2.15). For the family of four living in local authority accommodation, IS levels fell £36.40 short of the estimated budget needs for a family of this size and these family types spend proportionally less on leisure. A lone pensioner in local authority accommodation spent just £2.81 on leisure each week. It is interesting to note, however, that according to this measure, despite the lower level of benefit claimants' incomes and expenditures, they still spent a similar proportion of their expenditure on leisure as the family types in the Table above, albeit a different quality of leisure experience. The families with two parents and two children, and the lone parent with two children spent over 13% of their Income Support income on *low cost* leisure.

Table 2.15 Low Cost Weekly Family Budgets and Leisure:1992

Family Type	Low Cost Leisure	Low Cost Budget Total	Income Support Level	Difference between LC budget & IS	% of IS spent on leisure
Lone pensioner/ owner occupier	£4.62	£67.06	£57.15	−£9.91	8.1
Lone pensioner/ LA* tenant	£2.81	£53.16	£57.15	+£3.99	4.9
2 adults and 2 children (4&10)/ LA tenant	£13.97	£141.40	£105.00	−£36.40	13.3
Lone parent/ LA tenant	£11.76	£110.72	£85.60	−£25.12	13.7
LA*= Local Authority				(McCabe,1993)	

Moving back to Townsend's (1979) study, he emphasised a difference in lifestyle between the poor and 'not poor'. This can be seen as part of wider global developments in the processes of production and consumption since the 1970s. The development of new technologies and the production of specialised goods and services has produced numerous niche markets and simultaneously permeated consumption-based lifestyles (see Chapter 3).

According to post-modern theorists, commodities have become 'signifiers' through which people articulate with the social order and 'negotiate' their individual self-identities (Baudrillard, 1970; 1975). In other words, we are what we buy or else we choose what we can afford. Saunders (1984) pointed to the freedom of individual consumer choice for those who can afford it, whilst those who cannot are repressed by a bureaucratised welfare state. Giddens (1991) and Featherterstone (1991) described the 'heroic consumer' whose life's project is lifestyle, while Coalter (1999b) described the continuous pursuit of the 'look' through consumption. Townsend was therefore justified in his inclusion of lifestyle in his index of deprivation as it has ceased to be an example set by the rich, but has become "a social construction that is paradoxically both differentiating and universalising" (Dean and Melrose, 1999: p. 55).

However, Dean and Melrose disputed the notion that poor people were attempting to emulate the rich through their consumption, but instead seek to enliven their lifestyles with 'fun' (1999). Within this argument, the distinction between 'real' and 'imagined' needs is

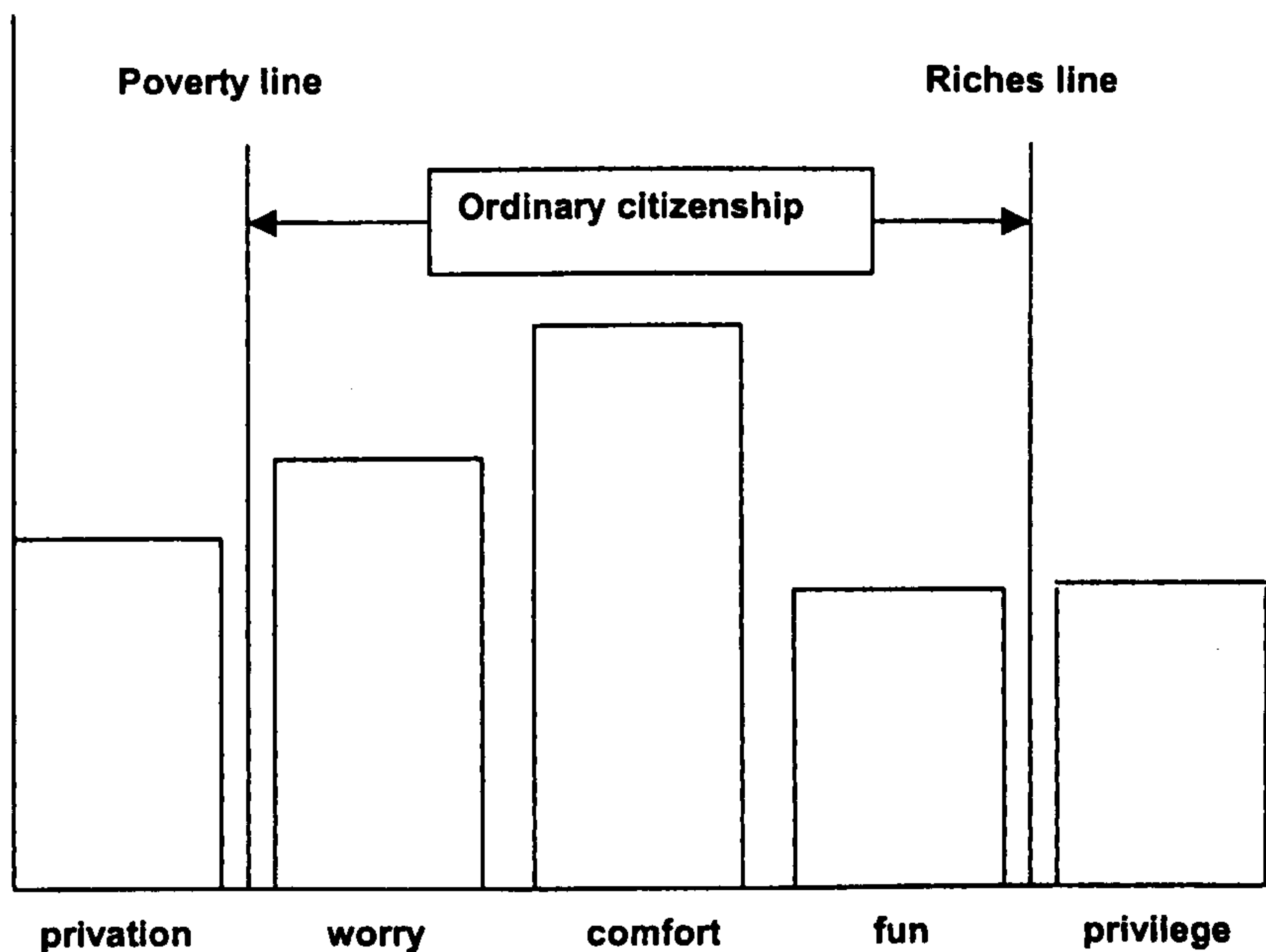
explored. There is a theoretical perspective which states that generation of imaginary needs drives capitalist accumulation (Marcuse, 1964; Althusser, 1971). A basic distinction can be made between consumption made to meet basic needs (e.g. basic eating and drinking to survive) and consumption to satisfy higher needs (e.g. eating in a restaurant or drinking in a pub for social reasons). These higher needs have been “generated by progress in a post-scarcity society” (Dean and Melrose, 1999: p. 56), and this provides the link to the discussion of absolute and relative definitions of poverty. Absolute measures are concerned with the ability to meet basic needs, and there is a level of income below which this is not possible (i.e. the poverty line). Relative measures are concerned with the ability to meet higher needs as a norm of society. Kaplan (1975: p. 233) identified a new poverty “with an aspiration for goods and other life-styles... dramatised and embellished by the mass media”. The development of relative definitions of poverty therefore expanded the debate beyond basic income resources to consider lifestyle, exclusion from citizenship and incomplete or partial participation in society.

Dale (1981 in Dean and Melrose, 1999) identified another type of consumption, that of waste. This involves displaying wealth and social position through ostentatious behaviour and must be distinguished from basic and higher needs. Dean and Melrose (1999) stated that the poor may seek satisfaction of higher needs or ‘fun’ in our consumer based society, but this is very different from attempting to emulate wasteful displays of wealth. There is a tendency to dream of riches rather than actively trying to attain them. This leads to their thesis that poverty and riches are analogous to two dots on the horizon that when approached appear to move further away. Poverty is, however, regarded as “an object of wholesome horror” while riches are an object of “prurient fantasy” (1999: p. 57).

Figure 2.8 shows a crude representation of Dean and Melrose’s findings from 72 individual interviews. The Y axis shows the average number of times the concepts of privation, worry, comfort, fun and privilege were discussed in relation to poverty and riches. The results show that poverty and riches are seen as excesses: poverty as an excess of worry and thereby a state of misery and helplessness; riches as an excess of fun and or indulgence and abuse of power. These excesses place individuals outside of the boundaries of ‘ordinary citizenship’ and into exclusion where both extremes retreat from public life. The norm of ‘ordinary citizenship’ and inclusion is associated overwhelmingly with comfort

which can be threatened by poverty or enhanced by ‘fun’. This complies with Scott’s assertion that deprivation and privilege lie outside ordinary citizenship (1994).

Figure 2.8 The boundaries of citizenship from poverty and riches discourse



(adapted from Dean and Melrose, 1999: p. 69)

Indeed, Scott (1994) drew attention to the Latin roots of the words ‘deprivation’ and ‘privilege’, which lay in the word *privatus* and formed the modern word ‘private’. As private is the opposite of public, both deprivation and privilege are rooted in exclusion, whether voluntary or forced, from that which is public. Saunders (1984) proposed that social decisions stemmed from the location of consumption, i.e. whether people consumed public goods and services or private. Privatisation of the national utilities, contracting out of public services and the growth of owner occupation and private pensions resulted in more people being dependent on the private sector. Those who remain dependent on public sector provision tend to be from often marginalised low income groups including people on the periphery of the workforce in insecure, low paid jobs. Therefore, goods and services such as private health care and education remain exclusive reserves of the wealthy, whilst the more common private pensions, car and home ownership etc., have lost their exclusiveness and positional value.

Moreover, the increase in leisure spending as a proportion of overall household expenditure identified above indicated that consumer based leisure activities have become an expectation of all groups in society.

The debate over whether or not access to leisure services constitutes a right of citizenship and should be provided as a welfare right stems back to the 1975 White Paper on Sport and Recreation when it was established as an element of social provision. There are a number of perspectives within this debate which Coalter (1990a) and Henry (1993) have described in detail, and need to be established before leisure policy developments in the UK can be understood.

2.5. Leisure Policy Perspectives

As the causes and responses to poverty and social exclusion are political issues, so is the public provision of leisure services. Political debates concern the most appropriate division of responsibility between the public, private and voluntary sectors in leisure, the most efficient role for local government and therein the balance between maximising income and catering for disadvantaged groups. Specific issues include the relationship between catering for need and meeting demand, the balance between the efficient use of resources and meeting equality of opportunity, and the balance between maximising individual freedom and achieving equal rights of citizenship. The debate tends to be polarised: the freedom of the market, meeting demand and efficient use of resources versus collective provision, to meet needs and provide equality of opportunity. The debate is more complex than this, in terms of which goods and services constitute leisure and how they should best be provided. These divisions reflect values, attitudes and ideologies about how leisure should be provided.

Henry (1993) used a political science approach to establish the typologies of values and attitudes regarding the role of the public sector in leisure provision. These typologies included liberal, conservative and socialist (see also Bramham and Henry, 1985 which included Social Democracy). However, as Coalter (1990a) pointed out, this typology may neglect the values and attitudes of professionals and managers in concentrating on the

party political sphere. Although it must be noted that Bramham and Henry (1985), and later Henry (1993) warned that this typology should be regarded as comprising ideal types and not specifically party political. Coalter (1990a) employed a more abstract organising framework provided by George and Wilding (1976) which included anti-collectivist, reluctant collectivist, Fabian Socialism and Marxism. As Coalter's anti-collectivist and reluctant collectivist groups are analogous to Henry's liberalism/New Right and traditional conservatism respectively, and Henry included Fabian Socialism and structural/scientific Marxism in his typology of socialism (also including the New Urban Left), it is possible to draw on both typologies to retain a balance between managerial and political perspectives. Table 2.16 summarises the ideological positions, market mechanisms and core values; both authors also deal with feminism and leisure policy separately.

Anti-collectivism

An anti-collective perspective is a mixture of political ideology and economic analysis. Politically, the focus is on finding the appropriate balance between the individual and the public sectors in providing for individual welfare. Economically, the relative efficiencies of the public sector and the market in the allocation of goods and services are highlighted. This perspective is analogous to the MUD discourse discussed in section 2.3.

The politics of anti-collectivism are what Henry (1993) described as liberalism and are characteristic of the New Right. Its core values are freedom of the individual, and in particular, freedom from state intervention in decisions on consuming goods and services. Indeed, individuals are deemed to be the best judges of their own wants and desires, not the state. However, with the right to freedom comes the responsibility for individual welfare and the welfare of the family. Therefore, the role of public provision is "minimal, residual and non-directive" (Coalter, 1990a: p. 154). Friedman (1962) stated that the state should only intervene in three circumstances: as neutral arbiter to ensure individuals can pursue self-interest through the market; where unfair competition exists (e.g. from monopolies); and when market imperfections make it impossible to charge those who benefit from public or merit goods or where externalities occur (roads, parks etc.).

Table 2.16 - Leisure policy ideological positions

Ideological position		Market mechanism	Core values	LCS implications
Coalter	Henry			
Anti-collectivism	Liberalism/New	Free market pluralism,	Individualism,	Low level discounts; focus on
	Right	minimal state	freedom/demand	economic and managerial objectives
Reluctant collectivism	Traditional	Market and residual state	Tradition and social solidarity	Price differentiation based on
	conservatism		and integration	recreationally disadvantaged groups
Fabian Socialism	Labourism/	Mixed market pluralism	Equality, Altruism	High level, universal
	Utopian			discounts
	Socialism			
Marxism	Structural	Non-market, economic	Ideology, equality	Criticism of LCS as tools for
	Marxism/	determinism		social control
	Scientific			
	Socialism			
New Urban Left		Socialism through a modified market	Hegemony	Targeting discounts at culturally diverse, disadvantaged groups

(adapted from Coalter, 1990a: p. 152; Henry, 1993: p. 48/49)

This perspective complies with those who view leisure as an individual experience based on freedom of choice and self-motivation. In this sense, state intervention is not only unnecessary but may serve to undermine self-motivation and instil dependency (Coalter, 1990a). For Roberts (1978) leisure is too diverse to be provided as a collective good or a right of citizenship, and it is not possible to distinguish 'need' from 'want'. Therefore, individuals should accept responsibility for the provision of their own leisure and not expect the state to provide it for them.

The second area of opposition to collective provision is based on economics. Providing leisure opportunities at below market prices will generate artificially inflated levels of demand among groups who place high value on those activities (Gratton and Taylor, 1985). As these people could pay the full market price for these activities this is an inefficient use of public money, and also makes it impossible to differentiate between the 'free riders' and those in real need. This adds justification to the assertion that individuals are the best judge of their own requirements and that services should be demand-led and consumer oriented. As described in Chapter 4, policies such as Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) have forced public leisure services into the market place (or a quasi-market) in line with the wider reaching privatisation of public utilities.

From this perspective, Leisure Cards, if not provided entirely by the commercial sector, would involve considerable private sector partnership. Leisure Card Schemes would involve limited discounts offered as a means of promoting certain products and services, with the ultimate aim of generating income and increasing market share and any resulting social benefits would be a bonus. Residents' Cards provide the closest example of an 'anti-collectivist' Leisure Card Scheme.

Reluctant collectivism and 'recreational welfare'

This perspective is much less coherent and integrated than anti-collectivism, and George and Wilding (1976) claimed it could best be characterised as 'pragmatism' (practical solutions to specific problems). Its fragmented nature means that it varies from service to service and even within services, but is based on a mixed economy of leisure between state and private provision. Whilst it recognises the importance of individualism in the pursuit of leisure, it also recognises inequalities in provision and the barriers which exist to prevent

participation, and restrict individual freedom. Therefore the market does not always operate in a socially just way and when this happens there is need for state intervention.

However, economic, rather than social inequalities are given precedence from this perspective: “obstacles are seen as practical issues such as financial cost, lack of transport or lack of personal interest rather than social barriers such as gender, class and race” (Coalter, 1990a: p. 157). The state therefore steps in when the market fails to provide goods, services or opportunities and there is “an implicit distinction between ‘want’ and ‘need’ based on the ability to pay” (p. 157). Those who can afford to pay do so, and those who cannot are provided for.

Despite the fact that the reluctant collectivist position varies from service sector to service sector, Coalter stated that two broad positions exist: one pragmatic and one political. From the pragmatic point of view, there are a plethora of activities that could be described as leisure, from direct, collective provision such as swimming pools and parks, to individualised consumption such as going to the cinema or a restaurant (Roberts, 1978). Added to this is the heterogeneous and pluralistic nature of leisure demand. Roberts therefore proposes a residual role for the state, and three criteria for deciding the appropriateness of public provision:

1. When the supply of resources is finite beyond the short term the state can defend against, for example, commercial monopoly;
2. When recreation is an expedient means to a non-recreational objective i.e. achieving externalities such as raising national prestige, improving public health, reducing crime; and
3. The pursuit of redistributive justice - this contrasts the previous two points which fit with anti-collectivism - and is concerned with ‘recreational welfare’. There is recognition of recreation as a public good which the state can distribute to enhance the quality of life among disadvantaged groups.

According to this last point, attempts should be made by the state to identify the ‘recreationally disadvantaged’, or more generally the socially and economically disadvantaged, and develop policies of positive discrimination (e.g. price concessions,

outreach work, special programmes). However, Roberts (1978) emphasised that these policies should be restricted to traditional areas of local government sport and recreation provision and not on the concept of need, as diversity of leisure demands should not be turned into rights of citizenship.

Coalter (1990a) stated that this refusal to accept leisure as a right of citizenship is the key to the reluctant collectivist position. Indeed, according to Marshall's model of citizenship, leisure would constitute a social rather than civil right because it is of a lower order than basic forms of social welfare such as education and health care. Moreover, a recognition of recreational disadvantage does not mean the only medium of provision is through the state, and the social right to participate should be guaranteed through a mixed economy.

As well as the concern for recreational disadvantage, the second of Roberts' points refers to using leisure as means to achieving externalities. Both these points underpin the political position of reluctant collectivism: one nation conservatism (Henry, 1993). Henry described this position as resistant to social, economic and political change. The potentially destabilising effects of an unfettered market lead to the need for state intervention and some public subsidy and provision. Welfare services ensure the compliance of the disadvantaged, as a general fear is held that the excluded are a potential threat to social order.

From this perspective, hierarchies within society are both inevitable and necessary, but those at the top have a responsibility for those below them and this is vital in ensuring social order. Other key values are that of family, community and nation. The standpoint of one nation conservatism is consistent with the promotion and protection of the high arts, or the 'democratisation of culture' and the preservation of national cultural heritage. It is also envisaged that national identity can be enhanced and promoted through international sporting success. However, there is no agreement about the degree of intervention, and some favour the anti-collectivist standpoint through fear of the state invading leisure institutions and perverting them for its own uses (Henry, 1993).

On the whole, this perspective proposes a more proactive role for the state, but a central tension exists between 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness'. A pragmatic commitment to the

efficient use of economic resources means eliminating waste and overstaffing and thus the acceptance, for example, of contracting out services when appropriate. But the lack of ideological opposition to state intervention and provision for disadvantaged groups implies a simultaneous commitment to effectiveness in achieving these objectives. In simple terms, reluctant collectivists attempt to ensure that resources are not given to those who do not need them (free riders). Thus attempts are made to target those most in need with subsidised resources, whilst making those who can afford to pay full market prices do so.

Gratton and Taylor (1985) pointed out that allocative efficiency can only be achieved through specific subsidies which vary from customer to customer, rather than general subsidies that are universal. However, they also stated that these types of targeted pricing policies lead to over-complex and administratively unworkable price structures. Coalter (1990a) identified Leisure Card Schemes as an example of these policies and stated that they had been tried "with limited success" (p. 161; see also CLR, 1993). The usual pattern has been differentiating prices according to activities and facilities, with more popular and high profile activities such as squash and golf, being priced around full market levels.

Therefore, the reluctant collectivist position with its commitment to efficiency and effectiveness and acceptance of public provision, suggests more demand-side subsidies than the traditional supply-side 'across the board' approach. In addition to this is a commitment to encouraging voluntary sector provision, to develop self-help and responsibility for individual provision, as well as reducing the burden on the public sector. However, these policies can be criticised due to the unrepresentative nature of the voluntary sector and the fact that disadvantaged groups may not participate.

The tension between efficiency and effectiveness has been increased by the advent of policies such as CCT which have placed emphasis very much on efficiency rather than effectiveness. Where economic objectives have salience, cost cutting and revenue generation become priorities, and marketing techniques become increasingly important to encourage increased use among existing customers. However, this does not address the issue of recreational welfare, and from this perspective, these marketing techniques will be used to identify and provide for non-participating groups (Coalter, 1990a). With the introduction of Best Value effectiveness measures and benchmarking, the tension remains

between encouraging more use from those paying market price and using resources to encourage disadvantaged, non-participating groups (see Chapter 5).

Levitas (1998) identified traditional conservatism as an equally important feature of the New Right under Mrs Thatcher, and the reluctant collectivist position would partially agree with MUD as although it is concerned with providing for disadvantaged groups, there is a moral element in determining who is deserving of discounts. Indeed, participation is not regarded as a right of citizenship, however, the perceived need for state intervention in a mixed economy also contains an element of SID.

Socialism

This fragmented perspective contains three main viewpoints: Fabian or Utopian socialism; Marxism; and the New Urban Left. From the Fabian Socialist perspective, recreational disadvantage is viewed as “a product of more fundamental socio-structural inequalities based on social class, gender relations and ethnic disadvantage and discrimination” (Coalter, 1990a: p. 164). Therefore, leisure inequalities reflect broader patterns of inequality, and meaningful freedom is not possible without equality. The market is regarded as an ineffective medium in distributing social goods and services, as it is based on demand rather than need. The role of the state is to actively intervene to correct inequalities produced and perpetuated by capitalist economies. This position was reflected in the 1975 White Paper on Sport and Recreation which established recreation provision as a welfare service and part of the community’s everyday needs.

In this sense, access to leisure goods and services is a right of citizenship and is instrumental for participation as a full member of society. The perception of need is far less individualistic than that of the anti-collectivists or reluctant-collectivists, and public provision is not only desirable, but essential. Leisure goods and services should be provided on a universalist basis, without singling-out any groups which may cause stigmatisation and restrict demand. A ‘Fabian’ Leisure Card would therefore provide large discounts for all members of the community, with any economic and managerial benefits being additional advantages.

Coalter identified one of the main approaches within Fabian Socialism relevant to the public provision of leisure services was 'institutional provision'. This approach advocates the intervention of the state in order to compensate for the inequalities of the market by providing certain services such as housing, education, health care and leisure. This concept extends to the state entering the commercial sector (e.g. golf, health and fitness, cinemas, discos). There are a number of reasons for this, such as the perceived need for the state to act as a market leader and example of good practice, or to gain profits to cross-subsidise activities for disadvantaged groups. Alternatively, the traditional areas of local government provision may be regarded as out dated in the context of changing leisure demands. Here the priority is the effective allocation of resources to ensure that disadvantaged groups are catered for. However, this approach has led to criticism of the failure of leisure services to achieve the required level of efficiency to include disadvantaged groups. The traditional corporate management style of 'top-down' delivery style has been questioned for its bureaucratic, inflexible, facility oriented characteristics (Coalter, 1986; Henry and Bramham, 1987; Murphy, 1986).

However, the nature and degree of state intervention has caused disagreement within the socialist movement and has led to its fragmentation. Tension has arisen over the desirability of public ownership and the control of the means of production, distribution and exchange (previously Clause IV in the Labour Party constitution), and more fundamentally about the possibility of achieving socialist aims through an essentially capitalist state system. Fabians or Revisionists favour attempting to reduce inequalities through the mixed economy, while traditional Marxists focus on class-based analyses of inequalities and the class struggle. The New Urban Left emerged at the beginning of the 1980s and sought and attempted to promote socialist policies at the local level, both as a reaction to the failure of the Labour post-war governments to achieve socialist goals and to the of the New Right policies of the government.

The socialist perspective on leisure provision will therefore largely depend on the type of socialism subscribed to. Fabian socialists would favour collective provision within the mixed economy. The major concern here is with the provision of equality of opportunity and cultural democracy, rather than the democratisation of culture. This latter point is also consistent with the New Urban Left supporters who actively encouraged multi-cultural and

community arts programmes in large Metropolitan authorities during the 1980s. Henry (1993) identified these authorities as the pioneers of Leisure Card Schemes, retaining spending on specific disadvantaged groups at a time of central budgetary constraints, as a form of positive discrimination (see Chapter 4).

Rather than providing a theory of social policy on how leisure should be provided, Marxist critiques encompass existing forms of provision within the context of capitalist society as a whole. Preoccupation with economic issues and the exploitative nature of the class struggle means that welfare and social policies exist to safeguard the interests of the empowered class and to reinforce the *status quo*. Social policies contribute to economic efficiency and ensure the acceptance of capitalist social and economic institutions. Leisure policy and provision is therefore regarded as a form of social control and legitimisation (Coalter, 1990a). Attempts to reduce potential social conflict through the creation of an artificial sense of community and national identity is regarded as an attempt to mask social and economic divisions and inequalities. The provision of leisure as a means to non-leisure ends, or externalities, means that it is no more than a tool. There is evidence of this in the 1975 White Paper which talked of sport and recreation reducing boredom, urban frustration, hooliganism, delinquency and social stress. There is a fine balance between the needs of disadvantaged groups (opportunity, choice, self-fulfilment) and the broader needs of society (integration, stability), and hence a dual role for leisure policy exists.

Ultimately, from the Marxist perspective, efficiency will always take precedence over effectiveness in meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups, and the values of competition and profitability serve to undermine the collective objectives of public provision. Moreover, the paternalistic, bureaucratic and managerialistic determinism of leisure services provision has excluded certain groups from participation (Clarke and Critcher, 1985). Indeed, Clarke and Critcher (1985) called for direct involvement in determining what is provided by the intended customers. More fatalistically, the capitalist system can be regarded as fundamentally incapable of ensuring the economic and social conditions necessary for people to realise their full potential, and so attempts to define and cater for needs will inevitably fail. However, authors such as Clarke and Critcher did propose other forms of provision with an increased role in the decision-making process for participants, such as community recreation.

Therefore, from the traditional Marxists perspective Leisure Cards would form part of this critique on capitalism, constituting no more than a distraction from the more important issues of capital and the class struggle. The use of discounts would be seen as a form of social control over poor and potentially volatile groups, or control and oppression of the working class by the ruling classes.

Feminism and Leisure Policy

Various elements of Fabian socialism and Marxism are features of feminist perspectives on leisure policy. There are several positions within the feminist perspectives and while there is disagreement about the causes of, and solutions to, the problems experienced by women, there is agreement that women are in a socially and economically disadvantaged position. Not only are women economically disadvantaged in comparison to men, they are often dependent on them, as discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2.

Marxist feminists regard patriarchy as a sub-system of capitalism and just as traditional Marxism criticises leisure as producing and perpetuating the inequalities within capitalism, Marxist feminists regard it as performing the same function for patriarchal values. Sport and the arts serve to reproduce the sexual division of labour within capitalism through the gendered stereotypes they promote, and by portraying women as the weaker and inferior sex. While radical feminists agree with Marxist feminists over the role of leisure in reproducing patriarchal values, they propose a more radical solution - the replacement of the system of patriarchy as an end in itself. Marxist feminists seek the replacement of capital relations, of which patriarchal relations are a sub-system. Liberal feminists (liberal here is meant in the sense of mild social reform and has no economic connotations) are less radical still, and are concerned with reducing the inequalities between men and women. In the field of leisure provision, this implies the application of feminist thinking to leisure policy decision making and an increase in opportunities for access to leisure activities for women.

The critical standpoints of socialism and feminism in the face of 18 years of Conservative government lends itself to the RED discourse. There are, however, varying degrees of radicalism and opposition to the capitalist system as a whole, from radical feminists and

traditional Marxists to liberal feminists and Fabian socialists. Broadly the agenda is redistributive, whether it is from rich to poor or men to women, the redressing of inequalities is sought.

Thus, there are commonalities between the discourses proposed by Levitas (1998), Henry (1993) and Coalter (1990a) (see Table 2.16). Anti-collectivism is underpinned by the ideology of the New Right, the provision of leisure services through the market, and a moral/underclass perspective of the recreationally disadvantaged (MUD). Reluctant collectivism is more difficult to pin down due to its pragmatism, but its association with traditional conservatism and the use of leisure as a tool for achieving externalities within a mixed economy, places it between MUD and SID. The socialist typology is diverse, but its redistributive agenda and concern for the redressing of inequalities in society is consistent with the RED discourse.

The Leisure Card is a policy tool which has developed amidst these competing discourses and, to varying degrees has been shaped by them. The following Chapters will analyse the development of Leisure Card Schemes in the context of changing local government leisure services within wider shifts in economic, political, social and cultural structures which have occurred since the 1970s. Ultimately, the analysis will focus on the role of Leisure Cards in local government services of the late 1990s and bring together the political debates on poverty, social exclusion and leisure under the New Labour administration.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This Chapter describes the methodology adopted in this study which links the theoretical approach adopted to the methods employed to gather data. Firstly an overview of social research paradigms provides the background and context for the introduction of the broad theoretical approach of regulation theory. The principles of regulation theory are laid down in sections 3.2 to 3.6, shifting through Fordism to the post-Fordist debate, and the reasons for selecting the more defined regulation approach are justified. The establishment of research constructs using the regulation approach in section 3.7 provides the link between the theory and their measurement through employing the methods of a national survey and case studies. The processes involved in these data collection techniques and their advantages and disadvantages are evaluated in sections 3.8 and 3.9. It must be re-emphasised that this Chapter was written in the light of literature reviewed and included in Chapters 4 and 5. It will be necessary for the reader to move between these Chapters and to consider the thesis in its entirety.

3.1 Social Research Paradigms

There is no agreement within the social sciences regarding the use of the term 'paradigm'. Kuhn stated that a paradigm is "a set of values and techniques which is shared by members of a scientific community, and which acts as a guide or map, dictating the kinds of problems scientists should address and the types of explanations that are acceptable to them" (1970: p. 175). However, for some scientists, the term paradigm is broadly applied, distinguishing only between positivist and anti-positivist, or qualitative and quantitative paradigms. For others, there are as many paradigms as there are groups of like thinking social scientists e.g. phenomenology, symbolic interactionalism, Marxism, post-modernism, feminism etc.

Sarantakos (1998) identified three broad paradigms, or dominant theoretical perspectives, within the tradition of social research, positivism, interpretivism (or anti-positivism) and the critical perspective. All three vary according to their interpretation of reality (ontology),

perception of human beings, the nature of science and the purpose of research (epistemology), and in the case of critical theory, its ethical approach. While for positivists reality is fundamentally objective, for interpretivists it is subjective whereas from the critical perspective, reality is created by people and the relationships of power, conflict, tension and contradiction, not nature. From the critical perspective there is also a need to distinguish between appearance and reality. What appears to be real is not because it does not reflect underlying conflicts and tension, and therefore the task of the researcher is to uncover illusions, look beneath the surface to find reality. The critical approach falls between objectivity and subjectivity; while the latter has value, the former cannot be denied.

Positivists perceive human beings as rational individuals that obey external laws without free will. This contrasts with interpretivists who give humans more autonomy as creators of their own world without restrictions of external laws. Again, critical theory falls somewhere between the two, perceiving humans as creators of their own destinies, but at the same time restricted and oppressed by social factors and conditions. Positivists also perceive science as rule based, value free and deductive, whereas interpretivists use value judgements based in inductive reasoning. Critical theorists fall between determinism and humanism (voluntarism) where people are confronted by socio-economic situations but are capable of challenging them or adapting to them, this involves a degree of emancipation and empowerment which is not value free. Indeed, critical theorists are not only studying reality, they are acting on it.

A similar pattern is reflected when the purpose of research is considered, positivists seek to explain social life, predict its course and discover its laws, while interpretivists seek to understand social life and discover people's meanings. As stated above, critical theorists are engaged in the uncovering of reality and to explain "social order so that it becomes the catalyst that leads to the transformation of social order" (Fay, 1987: p. 27) or to explain "social reality, criticise it and empower people to overthrow it" (Fay, 1987: p. 23) or in a more milder form to help understand and change social reality (Lather, 1992).

A further distinction has to be made between methodology and method, two terms which are often confused. A methodology entails theoretical principles as well as a framework that

provides guidelines about how research is done in the context of a particular paradigm. Essentially, the methodology translates the principles of a paradigm into a research language and demonstrates how a phenomenon can be approached, handled and explained. Again there is dispute over the application of the term methodology, as some scientists claim that the methodology is the same as the research model employed by a researcher in a particular context (see Lather, 1992).

Alternatively, methodology refers to “a theoretical and more abstract context...in conjunction with distinctive, uni-dimensional and mutually exclusive theoretical principles” (Sarantakos, 1998: p. 33). From this perspective methodology consists of principles that are closely related to those of a particular paradigm which are then translated down to guidelines for research procedures. Methods are the tools used in the procedure, the set of instruments used by the researcher to gather empirical evidence and analyse data.

The extreme ontological and epistemological positions of positivism on the one hand and interpretivism on the other, are reflected in the methodologies and methods associated with each. Positivism is closely associated with quantitative methodologies and methods such as surveys and structured interviews. Interpretivism is more closely associated with qualitative methodologies and data collection techniques such as participant observation and semi-structured interviewing. There is, however, no widely accepted critical methodology, and the well documented ‘quantitative versus qualitative’ paradigm debate has led to increased acceptance of combining mutually compatible methods within a methodology.

The lack of existing academic research into Leisure Card Schemes, or indeed, the conceptual link between leisure participation, poverty and social exclusion, highlighted the need to adopt a theoretical perspective in order to guide the research process. A number of factors had to be considered in the light of the initial research questions, literature reviews, analysis of existing research into Leisure Cards and the preliminary visits to local authorities operating schemes (in Coventry and Leicester).

Firstly, the theoretical basis to this study had to be sufficiently dynamic and robust to incorporate the concepts of poverty, social exclusion and those relating to the provision of leisure (see Chapter 2). Social exclusion alone is a multi-dimensional concept, involving economic, social, political and cultural considerations. Leisure Card Schemes add organisational, financial, managerial and marketing dimensions within the context of local government leisure policy, as well as links with the voluntary and private sectors.

Secondly, the historical development of these concepts had to be considered in order to provide a contextual background for the introduction and development of Leisure Card Schemes. Thirdly, the theory had to be directly applicable to the State, and specifically local government. Finally, the methodology had to be adaptable in order to encompass the macro-level analysis required in uncovering the distributional patterns of Leisure Card provision, and the micro-level analysis of individual schemes.

This led to the consideration and subsequent adoption of regulation theory (RT), which originated from critical Marxist theory and has been widely used by economists, political scientists, social scientists, urban planners, geographers, as well as in the study of leisure policy (Henry, 1993; Henry *et al*, 1993; Ravenscroft, 1998) and poverty (Dean and Melrose, 1999; Kennett, 1996). The following sections will outline the theoretical principles of RT and develop its application to this study.

3.2 An introduction to Regulation Theory

The regulation school of thought is highly diverse; there is no single, universally accepted 'Regulation Theory'. Indeed, there is confusion over the concept of regulation itself as the English word 'regulation' refers to a conscious and active intervention by the state or other collective organisations (Boyer, 1990). It is the French word *régulation* which is most commonly used by theorists and refers to a type of regulation which is neither wholly deliberate nor automatic.

Drawing on the commonalities between the different schools of thought, regulation theory is concerned with “the social processes through which capitalist expansion is secured within an inherently unstable and class divided society” (Jessop, 1990a: p. 307). Jessop (1990a) stated that the origins of RT lay in classic Marxist analysis of the political economy of capitalism, and stressed the value of RT in considering wider social and political factors, avoiding the reductionism of concentrating exclusively on the economy and class struggle. RT “confronts the paradox that capitalism has proved more durable than envisaged in classical Marxian theory” (Jessop, 1994: p. 284) in that crises may mark the path of irreversible decline, but also (in the actualities of capitalist development) may play a rejuvenating role.

Indeed, regulationists generally (although not necessarily) refer to three periods of accumulation:

1. 'competitive' regulation (mid 19th Century to 1920s);
2. 'Fordist' regulation (1930s to early 1970s); and
3. transition from Fordism, often referred to as 'post-Fordism' (beginning in the early 1970s).

These periods are defined in retrospect, and thus only when a period has reached crisis and been succeeded by a new regime of accumulation can a new mode be identified. The key shift for the purposes of this analysis is from Fordism to post-Fordism. The period of transition from Fordism has been interpreted by some authors as the intensification of Fordist arrangements, or neo-Fordism (Aglietta, 1979), whilst others have advocated a transition to a new set of relationships known as post-Fordism (Jessop, 1992; Stoker, 1989), ‘post-industrial’, ‘post-modern’, ‘fifth-Kondratiev’, and ‘post-collective’ (e.g. Esser and Hirsch, 1994). The debate around this most recent transition is developed in section 3.5. Jessop (1992) provided a framework for the periods of Fordism and ‘post-Fordism’ using five comparable reference points:

1. **The labour process** - this refers to the form of labour in the production process. A key concept is the wage relation linking consumption to production and economic growth.

2. **A regime of accumulation** - this is a macroeconomic regime, sustaining growth in capitalist production and consumption. This specifies the nature of the relationship between investment, production and consumption. Within a regime of accumulation a set of macroeconomic relations allows increased capital accumulation without the system collapsing due to instabilities. Short-term irregularities and imbalances in the cycles of production, consumption, investment and the demand and supply of labour and capital are replaced by long-term crisis tendencies.
3. **A mode of regulation** - stability is about brought not only by economic processes, but also the combination of and social, political and cultural activities in order to achieve compatibility between production and consumption. It must be realised that these activities are not necessarily established for the purpose of sustaining a regime of accumulation.
4. **A mode of societalisation** - a pattern of institutional integration and social cohesion which complements the dominant accumulation regime and its social mode of economic regulation and thereby secures its dominance within wider society.
5. **A social formation** - combining the above four factors.

In attempting to answer the central question of how capitalism survives and maintains growth despite the antagonistic crises and struggles which characterise it, the answer lies in regulatory mechanisms: institutional forms; societal norms; and patterns of conduct.

However, the crises which occur due to prolonged periods of accumulation are regulated rather than resolved, and eventually build up to a crisis point. At this point a period of experimentation to resolve these crises occurs, from which a mode of regulation might or might not emerge. It is important to note that these accumulation regimes and modes of regulation are not necessarily deliberate or planned in any way, rather they are a product of social, political and economic struggles which temporarily stabilise around institutionalised forms.

As the focus of this research is on the periods of Fordism and its crisis and the emergence of what some authors refer to as 'post-Fordism', in the following section (3.3) the widely accepted period of Fordism will be described, followed by an analysis of its crises and the emergence of post-Fordism as a second period (3.4), interpreted through the regulation approach (3.5).

3.3 Fordism

There is general agreement between the schools of regulation about the existence and nature of Fordism. The concept of Fordism was first used by Gramsci (1971) to describe the period which started in the 1930s and eventually ended in the mid-1970s. It is named after Henry Ford, due to the mass production techniques he employed to produce his model 'T' and other motor cars, and which became widespread, not only in manufacturing, but many other industries around the globe. Using Jessop's five-point framework, Fordism had distinct characteristics which set it apart from other periods of capitalist development:

a) labour process

Fordism can be seen as a distinctive form of labour process either at the level of a specific production process, or in other types such as the business enterprise, branch, region or wider economic space. With regards to the latter, Fordism involves "mass production of complex consumer durables based on moving assembly line techniques operated with the semi-skilled labour of the mass worker" (Jessop, 1994: p. 253). Jessop did not claim that every worker or technique of production is involved in this process, but that mass production is the "main source of its dynamism" (1994: p. 253).

b) an accumulation regime

'Ideal' Fordism would involve a virtuous cycle of growth in relatively closed economies. This growth would be based on the labour process mentioned above as well as on rising productivity and profit would be based on economies of scale and utilisation of capacity, increased mass demand due to rises in wages, and increased investment in improved mass

production techniques. Fordism can also be used to describe dominant modes of growth in more open economies involved in exporting and importing mass-produced consumer durables.

c) a social mode of economic regulation

Fordism involves several key features of a social mode of economic regulation:

- The separation of and control in large corporations with a distinctive multidivisional, decentralised organisation and collective bargaining;
- Wages indexed to productivity growth and retail price inflation;
- Monetary and credit policies designed to secure effective aggregate demand;
- State-sponsoring of norms of mass consumption and the provision of infrastructure and means of collective consumption; and
- State involvement in managing the conflicts between capital and labour over both individual and social wages so that the virtuous circle of Fordist growth can be maintained (Jessop, 1994: p. 253).

The key wage bargains would be agreed in the leading industries and then diffused to the rest of the economy, including the index of welfare benefits financed through progressive taxation.

d) a mode of societalisation

This mode involves the consumption of mass-produced, standardised goods and services in the nuclear family, as well as the provision of standardised collective goods and services by the bureaucratic state. This implies that the Fordist society is urban-industrial, middle-class wage-earning.

e) a social formation

This is the contingent correspondence of the four features described above.

Lipietz (1994) broadly agreed with this analysis, reducing it to '3 pillars'. The first was Taylorist organisation of labour (automation, division of labour etc.); the second was a regime of accumulation based on the growth of popular consumption and mass production; the third

was a mode of regulation that induced the conformity of the employers and employees to the regime. Moreover, the Fordist societal paradigm was based on 3 pillars of progress:

- ❑ Technical progress;
- ❑ Social progress (progress in purchasing power while respecting the restraint of full employment); and
- ❑ State progress (as a guarantor of general interest against the 'encroachments of individual interest' (Lipietz, 1994: p. 342).

All of the aspects of Fordism described above are relevant to the Keynesian Welfare State, a key feature of the period, both in the 'heyday' of Fordism and during its crisis and was central in guaranteeing the majority of workers a regularly rising income which in turn helped maintain the growth of consumption. Firstly, the economies of scale and supply-driven production provided a role for the state in compensating for limited microeconomic flexibility. The state provided a balancing role in managing the wage relation, labour market policies and guiding aggregate demand, thus avoiding violent swings in demand characteristic of competitive economies. This stability, in turn, encouraged firms to continue investing in scale economies.

Both the Fordist mode of regulation and the Keynesian welfare state were based on the stable nuclear, patriarchal family in which the male breadwinner provided for his wife and children. One of the major factors contributing to the crisis in the Keynesian welfare state has been the demise of this traditional family form. In short, "if the Keynesian welfare state helped secure the conditions for Fordist economic expansion, the latter helped in turn to secure the conditions for the expansion of the Keynesian welfare state" (Jessop, 1994: p. 256).

Therefore, referring back to the social exclusion discourses and leisure policy typology discussed in Chapter 2, the Fordist paradigm was dominated by RED (redistribution discourse) and Fabian socialist leisure policy. The emphasis during this period was clearly on the use of the welfare state as a fundamental tool for resource redistribution, evident through the signification of sport and recreation as a welfare right in 1975 and the subsequent expansion in

facility development (see section 4.1 for detailed analysis). Table 3.1 summarises the main characteristics of Fordism.

Table 3.1 Characteristics of Fordism

Fordism	
ECONOMIC RELATIONS	
Manufacturing markets	Mass production Deskilled labour Mass consumption
Organisation types	Mechanistic 'tall', bureaucratic
Management type	Corporate management, centralised control
POLITICAL RELATIONS	
Political economic system	Corporate decision policy making, unions and government
Central-local relations	Local responsibility for service provision; central responsibility for economic planning
Local government	Large-scale, bureaucratic, management and control
CULTURAL RELATIONS	
Social impacts	Worker alienation
Dominant culture	Welfarism
Rights of the individual	Universal rights of citizenship
LEISURE POLICY	Fabian socialism, recreation as welfare
TYPOLOGY	
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	
LEISURE POLICY	
Orientation of leisure professionals	Bureaucratic, liberal welfare professional
Leisure policy emphasis	Social democratic, leisure as a right
Leisure policy rationale	Largely social with some economic benefits (externalities)
POVERTY/SOCIAL EXCLUSION DISCOURSE	Redistributional (RED)

(adapted from Henry, 1993: p. 181)

However, the Keynesian Welfare State also undermined some of the conditions on which the Fordist mode of accumulation was based. The balance of class power shifted in favour of organised labour with labour costs spiralling. The institutionalisation of the social wage had the potential to apply the brakes to profits and continued growth. Moreover, the welfare state

itself acquired its own expansionary drive as a major institutional structure within the Fordist regime, which had important resource implications. Capital-labour relations were also affected, in terms of the basic incentive to invest or to work and in the overall pattern of societalisation (later identified as welfare dependency). However, by the late 1970s, this crisis provided the opportunity to forcibly re-impose a unity of economic policy in the interests of renewed accumulation: the search for an 'fix' to the crises of Fordism began. Indeed, as the following section describes, the wider crises in Fordism and the subsequent period of development have divided and fragmented RT.

3.4 The crisis of Fordism and the 'Post-Fordist' debate

An integral element of the regulation approach is that a mode of regulation is not a permanent solution to the contradictions of capitalism; it can only translate short-term crises into long-term crisis tendencies. Stoker (1989) identified three such tendencies in the Fordist era:

1. Mass production can lead to over-production and the saturation of markets;
2. Unskilled workers and machine-paced labour work can result in high absenteeism, labour turnovers and strikes; and
3. Fordist labour processes are inapplicable to some industrial sectors, particularly services.

The last point relates directly to state provision of collective services and resulting inefficiencies, over-staffing and over-expenditure which burden the economy. These tendencies combined with certain transnational events during the 1970s, sent Fordism into crisis. Due to extensive military expenditure and a weakened domestic economy, it no longer became possible for the US dollar to fully underwrite the Fordist ideal. The stability of world trade was removed and currencies were left unprotected, most falling considerably in value. The quadrupling of oil prices in 1973/4 deepened the world-wide recession still further, and faced with the additional cost of joining the EC, Britain was forced to take an IMF loan. The conditions of this loan forced reductions in public expenditure, a key component of Keynesian economics.

Peck and Tickell (1994) took a more global perspective when analysing Fordism and its crisis, highlighting fundamental tensions at the 'interface' between national forms of regulation and global accumulation. The emergence of an unregulated world credit system (as opposed to the control of monetary circulation by Bretton Woods-type agreements) and the circulation of private capital led to the loss of control of interest rates, one of the most important levers for Keynesian nation states in aggregate demand management. Indeed, according to Aglietta (1982) the circulation of unregulated credit was a factor eroding the regulation of the whole Fordist system. Therefore, paradoxically, global Fordism was undermined by the evolution of the international financial institutions that initially underpinned it (e.g. the IMF, the World Bank, GATT).

Increased international competition from countries using cheaper and/or more sophisticated technology in the processes of production saw high wage levels become a drag on economic competitiveness (a cost of production) rather than a contributor to consumption. As real wages dropped, so did consumer demand, and the "virtuous cycle of Fordism had turned vicious" (Peck and Tickell, 1994: p. 291).

Subsequent reductions in public expenditure signalled the end of Keynesian demand management, the cornerstone of social democracy, since the spiralling rates of unemployment and inflation could no longer be traded off against each other. The economy stagnated, parliamentary majorities were narrow and industrial disputes escalated. The post-war consensus was broken, and Fordism had to be assessed in the light of a changing world economy (Henry, 1993). Solutions were sought in the neo-conservative rhetoric of the New Right for the crises of Fordist collectivism. The authoritarian style of the Conservative party under its new leader, Margaret Thatcher, and calls for the state to be 'rolled back', grew in popularity.

3.5 The Post-Fordist debate

Amin (1994) stated that the crossroads of capitalism had been reached in the late 1970s, and that the emergent technological, market, social and institutional changes were very different from those which dominated the economy after WWII. Indeed, the Conservative governments led by Mrs Thatcher contrasted with the consensus of post-war social democracy, employing a combination of neo-liberal economic policies and one-nation conservative rhetoric concerning moral values and social order. Table 3.2 below summarises social democracy (referred to by Giddens (1998) as political parties and groups of the reformist left, including the Labour Party) and Thatcherism (neo-liberalism/the new right) and demonstrates the economic orientation of the latter around the freedom of the market place and competition in determining the distribution of resources both on a national and international scale (influenced by the work of Frederick von Hayek), of individual choice and freedom and the acceptance of inequalities as inevitable. This in turn involved a residual safety-net role for the welfare state and a reduction in direct government involvement in the market place, implemented through the privatisation of national utilities.

Moreover, the reduction of trade union power was essential in creating a more flexible workforce adaptable to technological advances in the growing service sector and simultaneously reducing workers' rights and their control of wage levels. Further reforms included the civil service and local government in particular, and these issues are dealt with in more detail with specific reference to leisure policy and provision in Chapters 4 and 5.

Table 3.2 A comparison between classic social democracy and Thatcherism

Classical social democracy (old left)	Thatcherism (neo-liberalism/the new right)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Pervasive state involvement in social and economic life❑ State dominates over civil society❑ Collectivism❑ Keynesian demand management, plus corporatism❑ Confined role for markets: the mixed or social economy❑ Full employment❑ Strong egalitarianism❑ Comprehensive welfare state❑ Linear modernisation❑ Low ecological consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Minimal government❑ Autonomous civil society❑ Market fundamentalism❑ Moral authoritarianism, plus strong economic individualism❑ Labour market acts like any other❑ Acceptance of inequality❑ Traditional nationalism❑ Welfare state as safety net❑ Linear modernisation❑ Low ecological consciousness

(adapted from Giddens, 1998)

The social, economic, political and cultural changes that occurred in this shift from social democracy to Thatcherism has fragmented the regulation schools. Whilst the period of Fordist social democracy is widely accepted, the naming of a subsequent period is more contentious. The application of the term ‘post-Fordism’ is disputed among those within the debate with regards to the origin of crises, the bearers of change and visions of the future.

In a search to explain the deep-rooted changes which occurred through Thatcherism, the British debate has been heavily influenced by the journal *Marxism Today*, which drew selectively from literature to produce a picture of post-Fordist *new times* consisting of:

- ❑ A shift in new ‘information technologies’;
- ❑ More flexible, decentralised forms of labour process and work organisation;

- Decline of the old manufacturing base ('sunset' industries and the growth of the 'sunrise', computer-based industries);
- The hiving off or contracting out of public sector functions and services (CCT);
- A greater emphasis on choice and product differentiation, on marketing, packaging and design, on the 'targeting' of consumers by lifestyle, taste, and culture rather than by categories of social class;
- A decline in the proportion of the skilled, male, manual working class, the rise of the service and white-collar classes and the 'feminisation' of the work force;
- An economy dominated by multinationals, with their new international division of labour and their greater autonomy from the control of the nation state; and
- And the 'globalisation' of the new financial markets, linked by the communications revolution (Hall, 1988: p. 24).

This interpretation of 'new times' was extended beyond the economy to social and cultural shifts such as greater fragmentation and pluralism, the emergence of new identities associated with work flexibility, the maximisation of individual choice through personal consumption (Hall, 1988).

This has been condemned as a mistranslation of the regulation approach, both from outside and within its ranks (Barbrook, 1990; Stoker, 1989; Lovering, 1991; Tickell and Peck, 1992). This approach can be seen as a periodisation of history from within a Marxist perspective which stresses the dialectical and evolutionary nature of historical change which is teleological (Rustin, 1989; Clarke, 1990; Bonefield and Holloway, 1991; Pollert, 1988). Absolute turning points, rules of transition, clear breaks and distinct phases are rejected in favour of a mixture of continuity and change from one phase to another (Meegan, 1988; Lovering, 1991; Bonefield, 1993). An over-simplification occurs when 'guiding principles' are accepted (based on partial truths) which deny history its heterogeneity as a multi-determined process (Gentler, 1988; 1992; Amin and Robins, 1990; Graham, 1992). By analysing history in this way, Bonefield (1987) stated that the theory is forced onto events rather than emerging from them as history is unfolded from theory rather than theory from history.

This leads us on to the criticism that RT as a whole is functionalist. The succession of a mode of regulation is explained in terms of securing capital accumulation. This implies that post-Fordism developed because capital accumulation needed it. The major problem with this is that the effects of a phenomenon cannot serve as an explanation of its origins. Holloway (1988) claimed that Jessop overstated the coherence that regulation assumes, underplaying the struggles which occur within capitalist development, and indeed that it is without hope "the world is closed, the future is determined" (p. 99). The key to understanding the instability of capitalism is the class struggle and the exploitation of one part of the population by another, and this does not feature prominently in RT (Holloway, 1988). According to Bonefield (1987) RT treats the working class as objects of history, powerless observers, reversing its own initial attempts to analyse the development of capitalism through class struggle.

The central methodological fault which Bonefield highlighted is the separation of the social as a whole into labour process, regime of accumulation, mode or regulation, societalisation, and the possible combination of them all, each achieving their own formal structure. To assert this and then claim that they combine unintentionally to unify under a historic bloc is not credible (Bonefield, 1993).

The *Marxism Today* vision has been criticised as deterministic and structuralist, lacking conceptual rigour, holism and futurology (Pollert, 1988; Hirst and Zeitlin, 1991). From within RT this account has been criticised for over-emphasising the subjective, individual and playing into the hands of the politics of the New Right (Rustin, 1989; Sivanandan, 1990).

Indeed, the "dispute over the politics of the future lies at the heart of the post-Fordist debate" (Amin, 1994: p. 5) and a search for a political project which is more democratic, more egalitarian and more humane than neo-Liberal Conservatism is underway. Moreover, this search has adopted a more critical approach in an attempt to avoid these criticisms of teleology and functionalism.

For example, Boyer, Coriat, Lipietz, Leborgne and Petit of the Parisian regulation school, were much less forthright with their visions of the future than Hall *et al*, pointing to 'ways out

of Fordism' and highlighting national differences as important in future developments. This approach adopts an openness which allows for unforeseen interventions and outcomes of various conflicts. However, looking back at the work of Aglietta (1982) as one of the founders of the regulation approach, his vision of a neo-Fordist future was more rigid and defined a period where Fordist methods were extended and deepened. The regulation approach has moved on from this standpoint which is now 18 years old and focuses on post-Fordist scenarios rather than extensions of Fordism.

Regulation theory was identified by Peck and Tickell (1994) as having a *retrospective* role in the analysis of Fordism, but also *prospectively* in the determination of the successor regime. However, this does not necessitate prediction or prescription, questions are inevitably raised as to if or when, and how, the restoration of growth will occur *after* Fordism. Indeed, '*after-Fordism*' is Peck and Tickell's preferred term for this phase of analysis, rather than prematurely naming it post-Fordism. The danger of partial readings and applications of regulation theory is highlighted, as these fall short of the regulationist requirement for integrated analysis in the wider processes of accumulation and its associated regulatory forms. This had led to calls for more restrained and critical approach to post-Fordism (Jessop, 1992).

Rather than prematurely predicting a single post-Fordist development path, Peck and Tickell argued for RT to play a positive role in raising macro-level and critical questions about the *sustainability* (social, ecological and economic) of the various experiments being undertaken as "the theory has a positive role to play in the development of a progressive agenda" (1994: p. 289). There is no need to "lamely" endorse the neo-liberal agenda, for example, because it happens to be dominant at that moment, RT must be employed to challenge that agenda. Indeed, the emergence of monetarism is seen as a tactical response to these global developments and the crises of Fordism rather than a regulatory solution to them. By their nature, deregulated markets and flows of credit represent a "regulatory vacuum" not a fix.

This perspective is supported by the development of 'Third Way' politics (see Giddens, 1998) adopted by the 'New' Labour Party over the period since 1993 and espoused since their landslide general election victory in 1997. As shown in Table 3.1, the Third Way programme

is characterised by a 'radical centre' based around a mixed economy and the democratic family, instead of the traditional nuclear family. The key role of the state was defined as social investment and the forming of synergies between sectors, balancing regulation and deregulation, between international, national and local, between economic and non-economic issues.

Giddens (1999) stated that the two dominant political philosophies of the postwar period (the 'old left' of social democracy and the 'new right' of neo-liberalism) were out of touch with the demands of the moment. Moreover, he believed that few people want to return to top-down bureaucratic government and that "society can no longer be run as if it were one gigantic marketplace...People want something different...The Third way is that something" (Giddens, 1999: p. 25). However, Giddens also recognised that the third way was not yet a fully fledged political philosophy, but it was fast becoming one.

Although it is too early to assess the impacts of this policy programme, it will be necessary to consider and critically analyse it in the context of leisure and broader welfare (or workfare) policy of direct relevance to this study (see Chapter 5).

Table 3.3 Third Way Programme

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ The radical centre❑ The new democratic state❑ Active civil society❑ The democratic family❑ The new mixed economy❑ Equality as inclusion❑ Positive welfare❑ The social investment state❑ The cosmopolitan nation❑ Cosmopolitan democracy |
|--|

3.6 Post-Fordism from the regulation approach

Despite fragmentation within the regulation schools, these disputes and debates are becoming the “strands of one broad theorisation of change...or cohabitants within one approach” that is the *regulation approach*, (Amin, 1994: p. 4). This *regulation approach* is based on a critical approach to attempts to secure economic accumulation (Peck and Tickell, 1994; Jessop, 1994; Lipietz, 1994). Authors from the regulation approach are more cautious in predicting what comes after Fordism, although they agree that a radical change must occur in the regime of accumulation and the mode of regulation (Tickell and Peck, 1992). The present is viewed as a period of experimentation to overcome the crises in Fordism - the shape of post-Fordism will emerge from dialectical confrontation between rival forms (i.e. a period of struggle). Thus, as mentioned earlier, there is some hesitation in naming the period which follows Fordism.

Jessop (1994) stated that the developments in the labour market, the macro-economy and the mode of regulation are post-Fordist, but was much more cautious in asserting that a stable post-Fordist system had not yet been established. The main reason he gave for this was the absence of a ‘mode of societalisation’ such as that of the Americanism which underpinned and sustained the development of Fordism. For Jessop the absence of an accepted ideology which depicts the rules of the game means it was still premature to claim that a stable and self-reproducing growth regime existed.

As highlighted earlier, the British authors involved in *Marxism Today* were quick to herald the new times emerging under neo-Liberalism, as a post-Fordist era. However, Jessop (1992) asserted that the minimum conditions for referring to post-Fordism as a successor to, rather than a new form of Fordism (or neo-Fordism) are:

- a) It must involve discontinuity to be POST-Fordism, and
- b) It must also have significant continuity to be post-FORDISM.

Therefore, the paradigm of post-Fordism could be related to 'continuity in discontinuity' found in one or more of Jessop's five reference points of Fordism. Jessop (1992; 1994) produced an ideal-type model for what post-Fordism *would* consist of. It is important to note that this is not prescriptive and that it serves as a set of hypotheses that can be tested and adapted.

a) a labour process

A post-Fordist labour process could be defined as "a flexible production process based on flexible machines or systems and an appropriately flexible workforce" (Jessop, 1994: p. 257). The key concepts here are flexibility (specifically flexible specialisation) and technological developments in the fields of information and communication. This pattern can be called post-Fordist because it emerges from and/or helps resolve the crises of Fordism, more specifically:

b) an accumulation regime

As a stable mode of economic growth post-Fordism would be based on the dominance of a flexible and permanently innovative pattern of accumulation (Jessop, 1990b; 1992; 1994). Therefore, its virtuous cycle of growth would be based on:

- economies of scope (diversified production rather than long runs of identical products);
- process innovations;
- rising incomes for polyvalent workers and the service class;
- increased demand for new, differentiated goods and services favoured by the growing discretionary element of these incomes;
- increased profits based on technological and other innovations as well as the full use of flexible capacity;
- reinvestment in more flexible production equipment and processes/ products/ organisational forms; and
- a further boost to productivity owing to economies of scope and constant innovation.

Post-Fordism therefore transforms mass production and transcends it, segmenting existing markets and opening new ones. However, an important point here is that the wage levels of the core polyvalent workers do not necessarily diffuse to the rest of the economy ('trickle-down'), leading to increased polarisation of incomes. Hence the propensity of peripheral workers to

consume differentiated products with lower (and relatively decreasing) levels of discretionary expenditure than their 'core' counterparts (see Chapter 2).

c) a social mode of economic regulation

Supply-side innovation and flexibility would be essential features of the main areas of post-Fordist regulation:

- ❑ the wage relation would be polarised between skilled and unskilled workers;
- ❑ greater emphasis would be placed on flexibility in internal and external labour markets;
- ❑ a shift would occur towards enterprise (or plant level) collective bargaining;
- ❑ new forms of social wage would develop;
- ❑ a shift would occur from hierarchical, bureaucratic to lean and flat organisation structures which are more flexible and responsive to changes in demand;
- ❑ competition between firms would be increasingly based on non-price factors such as quality and performance, responsiveness to customers, customisation, customer services etc.; and
- ❑ the domination of the money form by private entities and the circulation of bank credit.

Therefore a combination of strategies to solve the crises of Fordism and those designed to escape it, are features of a post-Fordist social mode of economic regulation.

d) mode of societalisation

Jessop (1992) stated that it was too soon to anticipate what this would be as no mode had emerged comparable to that of 'Americanisation' during the Fordist era. A gap remained after neo-liberalist Reganism and Thatcherism in the 1980s and a "well developed and relatively stable" post-Fordist social formation is unrealised (Jessop, 1992: p. 260).

Jessop (1992; 1994) focused on the form of a post-Fordist state, which he claimed did not immediately emerge in response to the crises of Fordism, in fact the reverse was true and an intensification of Fordist practices occurred. For example, the pursuit of full-employment continued and welfare commitments were maintained, despite growing stagflation and tendencies towards a fiscal crisis. Increases in public spending on leisure provision during this

period exemplify this, as sport and recreation were used as tools in the attempt to control social unrest (see section 4.2).

The failure to solve the crises and restore the cycle of accumulation of Fordism and the Keynesian welfare state, saw the search for a new state form able to solve deepening contradictions and re-stabilise the state system. Despite extensive trial-and-error experimentation, Jessop (1994) claimed that what is gradually emerging is a “structural transformation and fundamental strategic reorientation of the capitalist state” (p. 263). He described the product of this transformation as the ‘hollowed-out Schumpeterian workfare state’. This concept can be dealt with in two parts.

The Schumpeterian workfare state (SWS)

Jessop (1994) argued that during the latter half of the this century we have witnessed a transition from the Keynesian Welfare State (KWS) to a Schumpeterian Workfare State (SWS). Whereas the KWS was characterised by a commitment to full employment, social welfare and the management of aggregate demand, the SWS is characterised by a commitment to market opportunity, popular capitalism and supply side management. While the governments of the post war period were committed to the KWS and attempted to shape the international economy with broader social and political objectives, the Conservative governments of the 1980s accepted international economic forces as given and attempted to create a labour force to conform to them (Whiteside, 1995). The result has been the creation of a highly unequal and heterogeneous society, and “a more highly centralised but technocratically pervasive form of political regulation” (Dean and Melrose, 1999: p. 103).

Since the late 1970s, governments have attempted to moderate social security spending, predominantly through means-testing benefits, and tighten control over administration by adopting a more managerialist approach and increasing central control. These policies have been part of a deliberate strategy accepting inequality (Walker, 1997). Increasing emphasis has been placed on individual responsibility for finding employment or participating in training schemes, with the right to social security depending on fulfilling those responsibilities. This signifies a shift to US-style ‘workfare’.

The KWS was based on the trade-off between political freedom, civil obligations and social rights through a degree of restriction on the individual through paying taxes, collective ownership and the universal welfare state. In the SWS, the space between the citizen and state is 'hollowed out' as the balance of power shifts to global markets. A social trade-off occurs where economic forces take priority, and what is left is the individual's 'stake' in society. This 'stake' involves specific individual responsibilities such as earning a living and supporting a family, which can be 'encouraged' if not enforced by workfarism. Dean and Melrose stated that "the transition from KWS to SWS represents the immediate context in which compromising assumptions about the basis of social belonging and governance are being negotiated within popular discourse" (1999: p. 105). Although the values of the social democratic welfare state are under threat, they remain an oppositional force within the debate.

The 'hollowing-out' of the nation state

The nation state has been subject to two major trends which result in its hollowing-out. The first is the shift upwards to international, flexible production systems and the global environment. This loss of autonomy, while creating the need for supranational co-ordination, also creates a gap which leads to the second trend, which is a downward shift to the subnational/regional/city level and in particular an increase in the significance of local governance (Mayer, 1994) (discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5). There is even a third possible trend which is the creation of horizontal links between various localities and regions which bypass the national level (e.g. consortia of cities formed in the EU).

Stoker and Pyper (1997) stated that "governments have attempted to come to terms with the 'hollowing-out' of the state while adopting new modes of governance as enablers, contractors and regulators" (p. 1). This process has been referred to by some authors as New Public Management (hereafter NPM). Facloner (1999) described the evolution of NPM in the UK as "the most articulate attempt to recast administrative cultures, structures and procedures in response to the various criticisms levelled at public sector activity by the Conservative Party since the mid-1970s" (p. 3). A key feature of NPM reform was the movement of the boundaries of the British state. As stated above, many of the functions of government have

been reallocated to a range of agencies through policies such as privatisation, CCT and the establishment of quangos, resulting in a more pluralist, mixed political economy (Falconer, 1999). As we shall see in Chapter 5, many of these NPM reforms have been adopted and developed by New Labour as part of the 'Third Way' approach.

The main characteristics of post-Fordism are summarised below in Table 3.4, including shifts in poverty and social exclusion discourse, and changes in leisure policy and provision. The emergence of Thatcherism with its neo-liberal economic policy and neo-conservative rhetoric described in sections 3.5 and 3.6 signified a shift from redistribution discourse (RED) to the moral discourse of MUD. The undeserving poor were blamed and punished for their circumstances by restrictions in state benefits. Meanwhile entrepreneurialism and individualism were encouraged to realise the 'trickle-down' effect, whilst the gap between the rich and poor increased, the state sought to control key aspects of society and the economy (Stoker and Pyper, 1997). Economic and managerial objectives took salience over social provision in the public sector which was restructured and retrenched. Within this process leisure policy typologies shifted towards anti-collectivism and reluctant collectivism, providing welfare provision for selected target groups under the contracts of CCT (these themes are discussed in detail in section 4.2).

However, with the emergence of New Labour and the Third Way, according to the social exclusion discourse, a further shift has occurred from MUD to SID in the establishment of workfare policies focusing on employment as the main means to avoiding or overcoming exclusion. This is complemented in the field of local government leisure policy with the replacement of CCT with Best Value that has direct implications for public management and local governance (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Table 3.4 Summary of Post-Fordist characteristics

Post-Fordism	
ECONOMIC RELATIONS	
Manufacturing markets	Flexible production Skilled labour Market niches
Organisation types	Organismic, flat, flexible
Management type	Deconcentration, autonomous roles to section/division, managers within organisations
POLITICAL RELATIONS	
Political economic system	'Strong state, free economy'
Central-local relations	Service provision, taxation levels, economic development, centrally decided
Local government	New flexible forms of corporate policy-making
Welfare state	Hollowed-out Schumpeterian workfare state
CULTURAL RELATIONS	
Social impacts	Two-tier workforce, 'core' and 'peripheral'
Dominant culture	Enterprise culture
Rights of the individual	Dual system of consumer rights and 'safety net' welfare provision
LEISURE POLICY TYPOLOGY	Reluctant collectivism
LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEISURE POLICY	
Orientation of leisure professionals	Entrepreneurial 'industrial' professional
Leisure policy emphasis	Leisure as a tool of economic or social regeneration
Leisure policy rationale	Largely economic with some social benefits
POVERTY/SOCIAL EXCLUSION DISCOURSE	Broad shift from redistribution (RED) to moral (MUD) to social insertion (SID) discourses.

(adapted from Henry, 1993: p. 181)

3.7 Establishment of research constructs

In the light of the criticisms of teleology and functionalism levelled at RT and more specifically of the Hall *et al* vision of post-Fordist 'new times', the authors from the regulation approach have clearly been keen to distance themselves from this standpoint, regarding it as a misinterpretation of the approach (Mayer, 1994; Peck and Tickell, 1994). As described above,

regulationists are cautious in naming a post-Fordist era, criticising the neo-liberal responses to the crises of Fordism and involving themselves in the search for stability. The role of regulation theory must be, as Peck and Tickell described it, to criticise and challenge the experiments of capitalism, in order to avoid functionalist, deterministic and teleological criticisms. From this perspective, the world is not closed nor the future determined, and the struggles and inconsistencies within the development of capitalist societies are open to analysis and criticism as the experimentation continues. Post-Fordism must be regarded as an ongoing period of struggle for stability and growth which has not yet been resolved. The main role of regulation theory, is to critically assess these attempts to sustain growth.

The identification of historic blocks of time is bold and sweeping, as with any macro-level theory (such as Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare states 1990) there is ample opportunity for criticism on the grounds of oversimplification. Jessop (1992) recognised this in his assertion that in order to make these claims, certain assumptions have to be made at the lower level and therefore that not all phenomena will comply to the higher level theory. However, if this danger is acknowledged, and a critical perspective is adopted, then the regulation approach provides a framework for analysing the development of capitalist societies which avoids the reductionism of traditional Marxist analyses.

Indeed, referring back to the paradigm of critical theory in section 3.1 and the Marxist roots of the regulation approach, Aglietta (1979) claimed that what is concrete or 'real' can only be uncovered at the end of a globalising procedure in which deductive and critical moments interact through the fusion of different modes of investigation. This concept can be described in terms of moving from what is initially simple ('real concrete') to a high level of complexity ('concrete in thought') via empirical research.

In this process, concepts are continually defined and redefined, transcending former limits of understanding (Aglietta, 1979). Empirical evidence is crucial in this theory-building process. The regulation approach can thus be seen as a relatively open process where theoretical and empirically driven statements continually interact and modify each other (Jessop, 1990b). This highlights the flexibility of a regulation 'approach' as opposed to a rigidly defined theory

(Painter, 1994). The approach forms through hypothetico-deductive and experimental phases, a process of flux. This flexibility extends to the acceptance that an enquiry can define its own level of complexity and abstraction, and its findings will be assessed with reference to that level. By this logic, an enquiry which defines itself at a low level of complexity cannot be criticised for not explaining a complex phenomenon, but at the same time, a complex enquiry cannot be criticised for its inability to explain all simple phenomena. This is an important point as it is an attempt to answer the reductionist criticisms laid against RT. Therefore, there appears to be a choice:

1. to recognise the limit of complexity of the enquiry and leave higher level issues unresolved; OR
2. to make assumptions without 'concretisation' at the lower level of complexity.

It appears that regulationists on the whole choose the second option, leaving themselves open to methodological criticism. Teleological questions must again be raised about whether reality is being interpreted accurately, or whether too many assumptions are being made, so as to force reality to conform to a theory at the higher level by generalising inaccurately about 'lower level' phenomena. Leisure Card Schemes are a 'lower level' phenomena and, although the regulation approach is guiding the research process, a critical perspective is maintained throughout.

Indeed, three options were available to the researcher:

- a) adopt a structural Marxist approach and use testable hypotheses to support or reject in relation to the existence of a post-Fordist approach in Leisure Card Schemes;
- b) use grounded theory;
- c) rise to the challenge of moving from the macro-level of regulation theory to the micro-level of Leisure Card Schemes to establish whether managerial micro-processes would be consistent with the macro-framework of post-Fordist policy.

As this study is driven by exploratory and explanatory, rather than predictive objectives, it must be stressed that the first option, that of adopting a structural Marxist perspective (see Hall

et al., 1988) was rejected as being epistemologically flawed in its teleological assumptions. The use of grounded theory to develop a theory of policy behaviour associated with Leisure Card Schemes was regarded as neither appropriate or desirable for a micro-level phenomenon. Thus, the challenge was to explore the micro-level phenomenon of policy behaviour associated with Leisure Card Schemes, and to establish if this was consistent with macro-level accounts of post-Fordist policy. This approach is reflected in the research aims identified in Chapter 1:

1. to place Leisure Card Schemes within the historical development of leisure and social policy;
2. to analyse Leisure Card Schemes in relation to the concepts of leisure, poverty and social exclusion; and
3. to analyse the policy framework associated with Leisure Card Schemes in the theoretical framework of the regulation approach.

This was achieved through the construction of ideal-type models of policy in respect of Leisure Card Schemes based on the theoretical concepts of Fordism and post-Fordism, which underpin the debate within regulation theory discussed in sections 3.3 to 3.6. Jessop (1992; 1994) has identified the characteristics of Fordism, which have been widely accepted across the various schools of regulation theory, and are discussed in detail in section 3.3. The concept of post-Fordism has been more hotly debated (see section 3.6), requiring the use of a range of regulationists reviewed (see sections 3.5 and 3.6) (Jessop, 1992; 1994; Peck and Tickell, 1994; Mayer, 1994; Harvey, 1994). The review of local government management literature from the regulation perspective (Stoker, 1989) and more specific shifts in leisure policy at both central and local levels (Henry, 1993) was also instrumental in the construction of the models.

These ideal-type models of Leisure Card Schemes were constructed around central themes which were identified in the review of the limited existing research into card schemes, most notably Foote, 1995 and the LGAPU (unpublished) national survey (see Chapter 5). This process was also aided through close contact with two local authorities operating Leisure Card

Schemes during the early phases of the research, which helped the researcher gain an understanding of operational and management issues.

Combining the literature reviewed on the concepts of Fordism and post-Fordism with that of Leisure Card Schemes, enabled the researcher to establish the ideal-type models summarised in Table 3.5. A set of conceptual benchmarks was established for each of the central themes relating to the operation and management of Leisure Card Schemes for comparison with the empirical reality of the research findings from the national survey and the case studies.

Firstly, it was necessary to analyse the policy objectives of Leisure Cards in order to understand what operators were trying to achieve through operating the schemes. An ideal-type Fordist model of Leisure Card operation would be operated by predominantly social objectives, such as a clear commitment to encouraging leisure participation amongst poor and socially excluded people (Jessop, 1992). Any economic and managerial benefits, such as increased income, would be an added advantage only. For an ideal-type post-Fordist model of Leisure Card operation, the focus of policy objectives would be reversed. A blurring of objectives would occur as economic and managerial concerns increased in significance (Mayer, 1994). The benefits of increased income and managerial efficiency through unifying price structures and attracting cardholders paying full price, for example, would be given priority over social objectives directed towards disadvantaged groups.

In terms of the research undertaken by local authorities before establishing a card scheme and its policies, very little or no research would be expected under the ideal-type Fordist model. The market would be regarded as homogenous in terms of needs, and so all poor and socially excluded people would be regarded as having fairly uniform needs (Jessop, 1992). Thus the card scheme would be operated with a paternalistic approach, providing discounts determined by leisure officers for, rather than with, the community. By contrast, a post-Fordist ideal-type model Leisure Card would be established through extensive market research, leading to the identification of segments within the potential market. For example, this might include user and non-user surveys of municipal facilities, detailed analysis of existing usage data, the use of relevant poverty data and consultation with anti-poverty officers (where they existed).

Gathering empirical data on how Leisure Card Schemes were managed and administered was essential for comparison with the ideal-type models. In the Fordist model of Leisure Card operation, a homogenous product would be produced for a homogenous market identified above (Jessop, 1992). For example, only one type of card would be produced, providing a set rate of discounts on selected activities for all those eligible to apply for it, in this case, mainly government benefit claimants. This scheme would be managed through a hierarchical, bureaucratic organisational structure, comprising separate departments, with little liaison between them and where decisions were taken by policy makers at some distance from customers (Stoker, 1989; Henry, 1993).

The ideal-type post-Fordist Leisure Card would contrast with this model by producing a more diverse product to meet the needs of target segments (Harvey, 1994). This would involve a multi-tiered format with a variety of discounts on a wide range of activities stretching beyond the public sector to include commercial and voluntary facilities, such as cinemas, bowling alleys, sports clubs, shops etc. The scheme would operate through a flatter, more responsive organisational structure where decisions regarding the schemes were made closer to the customer, i.e. at the leisure facilities (Jessop, 1994; Henry, 1993). This flexibility would be achieved through close contact between Client and Contractor, as well as other local authority departments (e.g. social services) and partners from the commercial and voluntary sectors.

Using polyvalent workers would also contribute to the operational flexibility by enabling the dedication of more human resource hours to the scheme at times of intense activity, such as during its launch or evaluation period (Jessop, 1994). Further flexibility could be achieved through the use of high technology systems such as swipe cards, which enable managers to continuously monitor card use and respond to changes in demand in terms of marketing activities and resource allocation (Jessop, 1994; Henry, 1993). The ideal-type Fordist model would not employ a high technology system, undertaking minimal record keeping of members' details at the central council offices, and operating without detailed knowledge of cardholder consumption at leisure facilities.

Moreover, conflict could be expected between the Client and Contractor under CCT arrangements in the management of the ideal-type Fordist model. This conflict would be based on the Client's concern for achieving social objectives and the Contractor's practical focus on economy and efficiency related to their operation of facilities and services. The provision of discounts through a Leisure Card Scheme, would, for example, be potentially damaging to revenue if it was not compensated for by increased use. This situation would be compounded by any lack of co-operation between local authority departments, resulting in the Leisure Card being operated in relative isolation by the Client from other services such as social services.

The ideal-type post-Fordist Leisure Card Scheme would contrast this by being characterised by increased competition and the contracting out of services as part of the hollowed-out Schumpeterian workfare state, such as the Leisure Schemes themselves (Jessop, 1992; 1994). Therefore, under CCT and new managerialist practice, the Contractor would be expected to manage the Leisure Card, focusing on the economic and managerial benefits discussed above. Moreover, with the consideration of Best Value's introduction, the development of partnerships between Client and Contractor, between local authority departments, as well as with other sectors could be expected.

Marketing brings together many of the other themes identified in Table 3.5. The mass market approach of ideal-type Fordism involved little research and subsequent differentiation of Leisure Cards as 'products' in terms of the discounts offered and the activities included in them. Combined with a lack of effective monitoring techniques (discussed below), and a hierarchical organisational structure, ideal-type Fordist schemes would be unresponsive to changes in demand (Jessop, 1992). This unresponsiveness would have certain consequences for schemes, such as inappropriate pricing policies, either set too high or low. In addition, unoriginal promotional activities could be expected, designed for a mass market, such as posters in public places and leaflets for people to pick up.

Ideal-type post-Fordist Leisure Card Schemes, however, would operate in the belief that demand existed for differentiated goods and services amongst market segments (Harvey, 1994). It would therefore be necessary to offer a variety of choice in the form of a range of

discounts, including for example, attractive commercial discounts such as cinemas and shops. Promotional activities would also be more targeted towards these segments, involving for example, mailshots to members with common participation habits. Moreover, as demand changed, operating the scheme through a flat organisational structure, the use of monitoring, research and developing the Leisure Card offers, would be important in order to ensure responsiveness. These activities would also assist in setting appropriate prices for the card and for discount levels.

Indeed, due to the lack of technological developments, initial research and target setting for ideal-type Fordist Leisure Card Schemes, monitoring of take-up and use of Leisure Cards would be limited. By contrast, the technological developments adopted by post-Fordist Leisure Card Schemes would enable detailed monitoring of membership by target group and their use of facilities. In turn, this would lead to increased responsiveness to demand, as well as assisting in the allocation of resources by managers.

From the review of Leisure Card research and regulation theory literature, certain factors were identified that could potentially inhibit the development of the Fordist and post-Fordist ideal-type models (Jessop, 1994; Peck and Tickell, 1994; Foote, 1995). One of the central crisis tendencies within the Fordist welfare state was an inability to maintain high levels of public spending, resulting in budget constraints from many public sectors service providers (Henry, 1993). Budget restraints could have direct consequences for Leisure Card Schemes, such as an inability to invest in technological developments such as swipe card systems used for administration and monitoring activities. With the imposition of CCT and increasing requirements for accountability and the achievement of both effective as well as efficient resource allocation, the lack of investment in such technology would make it difficult for Leisure Card operators to meet these requirements. In addition, the lack of marketing activities and general unresponsiveness of ideal-type Fordist card schemes to changes in demand would result in low membership and use by cardholders. A lack of appropriate technology would also cause problems in ensuring membership renewal rates were high.

Factors that could inhibit the development of a post-Fordist model include possible resistance to changes in management style and organisational structure and the adoption of more flexible, responsive practice. This could be combined with the persistence of Fordist management techniques whilst attempting to achieve economic and managerial objectives, which are characteristic of the post-Fordist model. For example, a Leisure Card Scheme might retain out-of-date information technology systems and hierarchical organisational structures, fail to research target markets or set targets and maintain a 'scattergun' mass marketing approach, whilst attempting to achieve economic or managerial objectives such as increasing revenue or restructuring pricing policy. Although this might be brought about by budget restraints and the increasing cost of providing services, a mix would exist where Fordist management practices could not achieve post-Fordist objectives and expectations.

Indeed, in order to clearly operationalise these theoretical ideal-type models of Leisure Cards in designing the research methods, more detailed research objectives were identified, namely to determine:

1. what types of local authorities operated Leisure Card Schemes;
2. how and why LCS were operated;
3. to whom LCS were available and what they provided;
4. how LCS were managed, marketed and monitored;
5. how the performance of LCS could be evaluated, especially with regards the social inclusion of poor and other excluded people in leisure activities; and
6. why local authorities did not operate LCS.

To achieve these research objectives, data had to be collected on both the historical development of Leisure Cards and their situation in 1997/98, which is the focus of the following section.

Table 3.5 Summary of Ideal Fordist and post-Fordist models of Leisure Card operation.

LCS THEME	FORDIST MODEL	POST FORDIST MODEL
Policy objectives and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social objectives with some economic benefits (externalities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blurring of social and economic policies
(Research Objective 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited or no initial market research (as the market is deemed to be homogenous).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subordination of welfare issues by economic and managerial concerns (Jessop, 1992)• Extensive market research into niches to assess differentiated demand.
Management and administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mass production of a homogenous product• Hierarchy and bureaucratic 'tall' organisation structures and economies of scale• Distinctive multi-divisional organisation structure• Limited technological development• Conflict between social objectives of client and contractor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible production processes based on flexible systems and an appropriately flexible workforce• 'Flat' organisational structure• Technological developments (especially in information and communication)• Increased competition and contracting out of social services• Increased profits due to maximisation of flexible capacity• Increased cross-departmental co-operation• Increased co-operation between sectors.
(Research Objectives 3 & 4)		
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mass demand in a homogenous market• Limited R&D• Unresponsiveness to changes in demand due to hierarchic nature of the organisation• Limited variety and unoriginal marketing methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased demand for new, differentiated goods• Increased responsiveness to demand through flatter organisational structures• Increased R&D activities• Lack of originality of schemes.
(Research Objective 4)		

(table cont.)

THEME		FORDIST MODEL	POST FORDIST MODEL
Problems		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inefficient allocation of resources due to 'free-riding'• Inability to sustain subsidy levels and general resources due to central constraints on spending• Inability to demonstrate achievement of social objectives due to lack of monitoring and market research• Low take-up and use due to unresponsiveness to changes in demand• Low renewal rates due to lack of technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resistance to changes in management and organisational structure• Persistence of standardised production techniques and lack of technology leading to inflexibility and unresponsiveness• Rising cost of services• Central constraints on budgets.
(Research Objective 4)			
Monitoring and Evaluation		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited by lack of technology and resources• Lack of initial market research means a lack of target setting and makes subsequent evaluation difficult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive monitoring and evaluation enabled by technological advances• Increased responsiveness to customer needs.
(Research Objectives 4 & 5)			
Future		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adoption of 'post-Fordist' practice and policy e.g. advances in technology, increased competition, adoption of targeted marketing techniques, increased responsiveness to changes in demand and more customer contact, salience of economic over social objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased blurring of social and economic objectives• Increased co-operation between sectors• Increased product R&D• Further developments in technology• The development of new markets and increased segmentation• Increased responsiveness to customer needs/desires• Best Value.

(sources: Jessop, 1992; 1994; Peck and Tickell, 1994; Mayer, 1994; Harvey, 1994; Stoker, 1989; Henry, 1993)

3.8 Selecting research methods and the national survey

Adopting a pragmatic approach and guided by the research questions and the methodological framework provided by the regulation approach i.e. that of continuous research, defining and re-defining concepts, starting at a low level of complexity before developing generalisations; two phases of research were proposed. Firstly a national survey to provide an empirical, quantitative bedrock from which case studies could be drawn: the second phase. The national survey was to provide the macro picture of Leisure Card Scheme distribution and operation, while the case studies were to delve below this to uncover the reality of operating individual schemes.

The survey method was employed in this study to collect data on the different constructs identified in Table 3.5 from as many local authorities in Great Britain as possible. The research tool used was a postal questionnaire because despite their pitfalls, the fact remains that this is the most effective and efficient method of collecting large amounts of data from a large, geographically dispersed sample.

The advantages and disadvantages of using postal questionnaires are well documented (Bryman, 1992; de Vaus, 1990; Fink, 1995; Hoinville, 1977; Lahlou 1992; Moser and Kalton, 1971). Principally they produce large amounts of quantifiable data and are more economical, both in terms of financial cost and time, than conducting an equivalent number of face-to-face interviews. As Seltiz (1959) surmised, questionnaires can be sent through the mail, interviewers cannot (in Moser and Kalton, 1971). The influence of the researcher is also avoided, as Sudman and Bradburn (1974) discovered that the age, sex, race and social class of the interviewer can all affect responses. This also reduces the potential for the interviewer to lead questions, and to attempt to force answers in such a manner that the questions are asked (Bryman, 1992; de Vaus, 1990; Fink, 1995). Respondents may also be more likely to answer questions of a more sensitive nature.

There are, however, a number of disadvantages in using this method of research which had to be accounted for whilst designing and administering the questionnaires. Firstly, data is collected simultaneously and at a single juncture in time, allowing little scope for analysis of any change over time (Bryman, 1992). The researcher is also unable to manipulate any of these variables, imposing constraints on the generalisation of findings from which definite causal relationships can be defined. The apparent advantage of interviewer absence is off-set by the inability of the researcher to clarify or provide further explanations of terms or questions within the questionnaire (Bryman, 1992; Moser and Kalton, 1971). Also, because the researcher is not present, there is no guarantee that the questionnaire has been completed by the person it was intended for (Moser and Kalton, 1971). This may produce a variety in the roles and status of respondents which could affect comparability, although this was not such a problem in this research as the emphasis was upon the information, not who provided it.

Moreover, as the respondents can read all the questions before answering any, the answers to early questions may be influenced by latter ones, possibly producing the affect of false consistency. Although to a lesser extent than with structured interviews, the respondents are conscious of the fact they are being studied, having preconceptions about the researcher's intentions which may influence their answers (Webb *et al*, 1966). For example, they may answer in a socially desirable way, or attempt to present themselves or their organisation in a positive light (Bryman, 1992). This was envisaged as a particular problem with the questionnaire for local authorities operating card schemes as they may have neglected to answer sensitive questions or failed to provide extra information which might reflect badly on the scheme, the local authority or themselves as leisure officers. Linked to this is the problem of 'acquiescence syndrome' where the questionnaire is treated routinely and filled in without thought (Bryman, 1992). There is also no opportunity for the researcher to collect extra data through observation, or by asking supplementary questions to probe beyond the given answer (Moser and Kalton, 1971).

One of the most widely recognised problems with postal questionnaires is the potential for modest or poor response rates (Bryman, 1992; de Vaus, 1990; Fink, 1995; Hoinville, 1979). The questionnaire can be completed at the respondents convenience, but may never be completed at all (Stacey, 1965). However, this survey achieved a 52% rate of return, which is excellent for a survey of this type. This rate was achieved, along with the minimisation of other problems associated with postal questionnaires by the following actions:

- ❑ The CIPFA report on *Charges for Leisure Services* (1996) and the *On-Line Leisure Directory* (1997) were used to identify which authorities operated a scheme and to provide a contact name and address for the leisure officer responsible for its management. This enabled the targeting of authorities with the two different questionnaires. Both of these sources, however, proved unreliable and resulted in cross-checking and re-sending questionnaires to many authorities.
- ❑ As all local authorities were surveyed, the resulting responses provide a random sample, enabling the use of more statistically powerful tests in the analysis stage.
- ❑ The Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (the most prominent body for leisure professionals in Great Britain) fully supported the survey, endorsing it with the use of their logo on the covering letters and questionnaires. The fortnightly ILAM Bulletin, which is sent to all Chief Leisure Officers and members, contained a formal request for all questionnaires to be completed and returned as soon as possible. This helped the response rate and also provided publicity for the research.
- ❑ A covering letter was included explaining the background and aims of the research and full instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. A request was also made for any relevant documents and data to be enclosed. This was repeated in the questionnaire and enclosing this information meant the respondents saved time by not answering certain questions.
- ❑ A summary report of the results of the survey were also promised to all responding authorities to encourage response.
- ❑ A self-addressed pre-paid envelope was also provided.

- ❑ After an initial response rate of 30% follow-up letters and questions were sent which improved the response rate to 52%.

The aim was to translate the objectives of the study into straightforward questions and the actual design of the questionnaire comprised principally closed questions, with some open ended (Lahlou, 1992). The closed questions enabled simple coding for a variety of statistical analyses (Bryman, 1992). However, the cost of this limited option response is that detail may be lost, and any intervening variables which the researcher is unaware of, remain unidentified and unmeasured. There was also the possibility that the questions may have been interpreted in different ways, especially when relative terms were used such as 'often' or 'significant'.

Where more detailed answers were required, open ended questions were used, giving greater latitude over the nature and detail of response. These responses are more difficult to code and analyse in order to draw comparisons between respondents, but the most interesting were used as quotations to typify and add richness to the results. However, these questions were limited in number as too many potentially long answers is inhibiting for respondents and discriminated against those who are less articulate. The following guidelines were followed when designing the questionnaire in order to minimise the potential pitfalls:

- ❑ questions were made as clear and unambiguous as possible, avoiding relative terms and measures;
- ❑ simple language was used without any jargon;
- ❑ questions were kept short, using longer questions only when clarifying terms;
- ❑ "double-barrelled" questions (asking two questions in one) were avoided;
- ❑ a conscious effort was made not to phrase questions in a leading manner; and
- ❑ the overall design of the questionnaire and the order of questions was as clear and logical as possible. Questions were grouped into sections and the respondents were eased into the questionnaires through simple, non-threatening questions in attempt to make the questionnaire flow as closely as possible to how a

conversation or interview would. (Bryman, 1992; de Vaus, 1990; Fink, 1995; Hoinville, 1977; Lahlou *et al*, 1992; Moser and Kalton, 1971).

In order to check that these guidelines had been followed effectively, the questionnaires were piloted with four local authorities whose officers gave feedback on the clarity, structure and style of the questionnaire as well as the phrasing and content of the questions. The final choice of questions are listed in relation to the constructs they were attempting to measure in Table 3.6, the questionnaires themselves are located in Appendix IIa and IIb.

Table 3.6 Constructs measured in the survey of local authorities

	Authorities Operating Leisure Card Schemes (Appendix 1a)	Authorities not operating Leisure Card Schemes (Appendix 1b)
Research Objective 1	Political control and any change since the last election (Question 2)	Political control and any change since the last election (Question 1)
Research Objective 1	The use of a definition of poverty and existence of a poverty strategy (Questions 3, 4)	The use of a definition of poverty and existence of a poverty strategy (Questions 2,3)
Research Objective 1	History of the scheme (Question 5)	
Research Objective 2/6	Objectives of the scheme, research and target setting (Questions 6, 7, 8)	Reasons for not operating a Leisure Card scheme (Question 6)
Research Objective 3	Budget details (Questions 10-14)	
Research Objective 3	Target groups for the scheme (Question 15)	Details of discount/concession schemes offered by the authority (Questions 4,5)
Research Objective 3	Activities and facilities available to members (Questions 16, 17)	
Research Objective 4	Administration of the card (Qs 18-20)	
Research Objective 4	Membership details (Qs21-23)	
Research Objective 4	Marketing of the scheme (Qs 24-26)	
Research Objective 4/5	Monitoring of the schemes performance (Qs 27-33)	
Research Objective 6		Whether officers/members are considering introducing a Leisure Card Scheme in the future (Q 7)
	Information on the support of low income elite athletes (Qs 34-36)	Information on the support of low income elite athletes (Qs 8-10)

Bryman (1992) claimed the importance of measurement as a research stage, linking theoretical concepts with empirical research. The aim was to establish links between measures which are taken to be indicative of the research constructs, thus producing a synthesising effect to a mass of observations (Bryman, 1992). As several constructs were clearly divided between authorities operating a scheme and those not doing so, two questionnaires were designed. The aim was to gather highly structured data for Leisure Card Schemes and to compare and contrast certain responses from schemes operators and non-operators. Respondents answered standardised questions so that variation in response would occur due to genuine variations and not variations in the manner of asking questions (Bryman, 1992).

Questionnaire to Leisure Card operators

In terms of attempting to answer what types of local authorities operated a Leisure Card (research objective 1), political control of the local authorities was deemed an important question in attempting to establish a link between the wider policy context of local and central government, and the operation of Leisure Card Schemes, and more specifically if certain political parties were more or less likely to control authorities with card schemes. Moreover, by asking what year the scheme was established it was possible to identify under which Party it was introduced, as well as indicating how long the scheme had been in operation. A similar motivation was behind establishing whether or not authorities using a definition of poverty and/or an anti-poverty strategy, were more likely to operate a Leisure Card.

Obtaining the reasons for introducing a Leisure Card Scheme (research objective 2) was done through a closed, multi-response question with seven options derived from reviews of existing research, but leaving an 'other' option for an open-ended response. It was envisaged that individual schemes would have numerous and variously worded reasons and that grouping was necessary for the purposes of coding. A similar style question was asked regarding the research involved in establishing the scheme, although problems with obtaining accurate information about schemes established a long time ago were

anticipated. A question was also asked about the existence of any targets and for the respondent to specify them, this was aimed at providing comparison with subsequent monitoring data.

Budget details were requested in the form of revenue and cost, with closed responses and an 'other' option. A subjective question was also asked relating to the respondents' view of the adequacy of the budget, and although the potential for biased and/or non committal responses was anticipated, it was hoped the question would give a feel for how those closest to the scheme felt about it.

Subsequent questions relating to the target groups included in the card scheme, the activities and facilities included and its administration, were all closed questions based on previous research, but always with open ended 'other' options (research objective 3). Of particular importance here was the inclusion of application leaflets and marketing material for the schemes, which enabled the researcher to gather all relevant information as well as critically assess the quality of the material. Moreover, the additional information enabled the classification of Leisure Card Schemes into types: concession, multi-tiered and residents cards (see Chapter 1). A specific question was asked about the marketing of the schemes, again closed responses were offered for the purposes of coding as well as 'other'.

The questions related to membership were not only designed to gather information about membership levels, but also the management and administration of the scheme i.e. how long cards were issued for, how often they had to be renewed etc (research objective 4). This theme continued with the monitoring of the card scheme, with space provided for respondents to detail the exact procedure undertaken. Respondents were also invited to enclose data from their schemes obtained during the monitoring process, as well as the latest review report if one existed (research objective 5). This was followed by an open ended question relating to the problems encountered in the operation of the scheme which the researcher then coded, and in some cases, quoted.

A section was included on the support of low income elite performers by local authorities and then a free space for respondents to make any comments plus a confidentiality option at the end designed to encourage confidence, freedom of expression and data protection. Due to low response rates, this question (which was also included for non-operators) was omitted from subsequent analysis.

Questionnaire to non-operators

It is important to stress at this point that the focus of this research was on Leisure Card Schemes and that this questionnaire was designed to provide limited comparison with authorities that were not operating schemes. These schemes constituted a relatively coordinated and identifiable phenomenon about which a limited amount of research had been undertaken. What was being provided for low income groups by other local authority sport and leisure departments in terms of discounts/concessions was unclear, unresearched and potentially highly diverse and authority-specific, varying down to the facility level. Therefore, the questionnaire was designed to gain a basic overview of what was being provided by these authorities in the way of discounts/concessions, why they did not operate a card scheme and whether they intended to in the future (research objective 6). The questionnaire was kept short and focused on the research topic, which was Leisure Card Schemes.

The introductory questions on political control and poverty-line/anti-poverty strategies were asked for comparison, as was the question on market research. The detail of concessions/discounts and target groups was requested for limited comparison with card operators. The following questions asked why these authorities did not operate schemes and when, if ever, they planned to introduce a card scheme. This gave an indication of potential future coverage of Leisure Card Schemes. The section on elite performers was the same as for card operators, as were the sections for further comments and confidentiality.

Data analysis from survey

An SPSS database was established in preparation for the returned questionnaires from the national survey. This database included a number of variables drawn from various sources which the responses were added to. All of the local authorities in Great Britain were represented on the database, distinguishable by:

- ❑ authority type (English District, Metropolitan, Unitary, London, Scotland, Wales);
- ❑ ONS authority type;
- ❑ population size (CIPFA, 1998);
- ❑ amount spent per capita on leisure services (CIPFA, 1998);
- ❑ percentage of poor people living within the authority (Gordon & Forrest, 1995);
- ❑ Townsend deprivation index ranking (Gordon & Forrest, 1995);
- ❑ DETR index of local conditions ranking (DETR, 1998);
- ❑ percentage of residents claiming Income Support (Regional Trends, 1997);
- ❑ percentage of residents claiming Housing Benefit (Regional Trends, 1997); and
- ❑ percentage of residents unemployed (Regional Trends, 1997).

This also provided more detail on the types of local authorities operating Leisure Cards (research objective 1).

The responses to the survey were then coded and added to the database, enabling statistical tests to be undertaken. The database also contributed to the selection of case studies. Of the 411 local authorities surveyed, a response rate of 52% was achieved, including 115 respondents from authorities operating schemes and 100 from those who did not (Table 3.7). The respondents reflect the distribution of authority types in the UK, although Metropolitan Districts are slightly under represented this may be due to local government reorganisation and the establishment of Unitary Authorities. Although it is not clear exactly how many authorities operate leisure cards, estimates from CIPFA data (1998), the *On-Line Leisure Directory* (1997) are of over 50% coverage. These results are slightly biased towards Leisure Card Scheme representation as they are the focus of this research.

Table 3.7 Leisure Card survey response, by local authority status

	All authorities		Total Response		Respondents operating LCS		Respondents not operating LCS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
London Boroughs	33	8	17	8	12	10	5	5
Metropolitan Districts	36	8	9	4	16	14	3	3
Unitary Authorities	27	7	19	9	14	12	5	5
English Non-Met Districts	261	63.5	130	60	57	49	73	73
Scotland	32	7.8	18	8	10	9	8	8
Wales	22	5	12	6	6	5	6	6
Total	411		215	52	115	53	100	47

The analysis of the survey results and the database (contained in Chapters 4, 5 and 6) provided an overall picture of Leisure Card Schemes in Great Britain in 1997/8. More specifically, answers were provided to the initial research questions:

- ❑ types of local authorities operating LCS (objective 1);
- ❑ why LCS were established (objective 2);
- ❑ who LCS were available to and what they provided (enabling the definition of a typology of LCS- see Chapter 1) (objective 3);
- ❑ how LCS were administered, marketed, monitored and what problems were experienced in managing them (objective 4);
- ❑ why local authorities did not operate LCS (objective 6).

However, in terms of answering research objective 5 to assess the effectiveness of schemes by take-up, targeting and use at facilities, inadequate responses were provided in the survey. Moreover, the level of detail was not sufficient to gain a full understanding of the establishment and historical development of schemes, nor the more in-depth issues surrounding their everyday management and operation. While providing the surface

picture of card schemes, the survey revealed new issues which required more investigation in order to uncover the reality, as Mintzberg stated “we uncover all kinds of relationships in our hard data, but it is only through the use of... soft data that we are able to explain them” (1979 in Sarantakos, 1998: p. 587). This leads us into phase two of the research, moving from the macro level of the survey, to the micro level of the case study. The case study approach of Eisendhart (1989) was adopted and is described below.

3.9 Case Studies

Yin (1991) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). Indeed, authors such as Yin (1984; 1991; 1993) and Hartfield (1972, in Sarantakos, 1998) asserted that case studies are a model of research which deals with all aspects of research, refuting the long held belief that they were an inferior method of inquiry due to their low levels of quantification and generalisations. There has been increased interest in this method more recently, particularly within the social sciences, and improvement in the structure and methodology of case studies has taken place (Sarantakos, 1998). Yin (1991) distinguished case studies from other forms of research with the following characteristics.

- ❑ It studies units in their totality and not aspects or variables of these units.
- ❑ It employs several methods of data collection, primarily to avoid errors or prevent distortions.
- ❑ It often studies a single unit: one unit is one study.
- ❑ It perceives the respondent as an expert not just as a data source.
- ❑ It studies a typical case (Hartfield, 1982 in Sarantakos, 1998).

Today case studies are widely accepted as a valid form of inquiry, particularly when the research context is too complex for survey studies or experiments, when the phenomenon cannot be removed from that context and when the researcher is particularly interested in structure, process and outcomes of a phenomenon (Yin, 1984; 1991; Bonoma, 1985; Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 1995).

Case studies can be employed in both quantitative and qualitative studies (although the latter is more usual). Quantitative studies may employ cases prior to the main quantitative study as a form of exploration, as a form of pre-test, or alternatively as a post-research explanation of the main study to provide examples (Sarantakos, 1998). From a qualitative perspective, case studies are a research model in their own right, and do not merely serve quantitative studies.

Yin (1991) identified six categories of case study based on single or multiple units of analysis which may be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. As the name suggests, the exploratory case study investigates uncharted areas, attempting to define research questions and generate hypotheses. The descriptive case fully describes the phenomenon being studied, whilst the explanatory goes further to establish the nature of cause-effect relationships, providing answers rather than posing research questions. The case study process for this study did not fall distinctly into any one of these categories and included aspects of all three: uncovering new themes, describing the phenomenon, attempting to explain relationships and events both within and across cases, shaping hypotheses in the form of recommendations and frameworks of best practice, and discovering new research questions for the future.

During this study, the cases have been accredited equal importance with the survey and neither were regarded as precursors to the other. The cases provided another perspective on Leisure Card Schemes using a variety of different data collection methods which strengthened the final measurement of the research constructs (Chapters 4, 5 and 6), and the comparison with ideal-type Fordist and post-Fordist models. Moreover, the cases

were essential in refining and sharpening the constructs in order to limit the generalisations made in the concluding chapter. The flexible, adaptable, longitudinal nature of the case study approach allowed new themes to emerge, as well as developing existing constructs. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative methods have been combined through a pragmatic perspective.

Table 3.8 Summary of Advantages of Case study Research

STRENGTHS	
1. Generating novel theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ maintains the vitality of inquiry; □ unfreezes thinking rather than being bound by preconceptions; □ useful when current perspectives seem inadequate.
2. Testable emergent theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ measurable constructs have already undergone repeated verification during theory building process.
3. Intimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ theory closely mirrors reality and a deeper understanding is reached (Gertz, 1973).
4. Contextual sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ when the phenomenon cannot be removed from its setting and is broad and complex in nature (Yin, 1994); □ expands the range of research problems that can be considered.
5. Multiple data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ provides stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses.

(Adapted from Bonoma, 1985; Bryman, 1988; Eisenhardt, 1989; Haralambos 1991; Stake, 1995).

Table 3.9 Summary of Disadvantages of Case study Research

WEAKNESSES	
1. Over complexity	<input type="checkbox"/> attempts to build a theory which encapsulates everything, <input type="checkbox"/> simplicity of overall perspective is lost.
2. Missing key issues	<input type="checkbox"/> due to large volume of data.
3. Narrow and idiosyncratic theories	<input type="checkbox"/> generalisation is not always possible, reducing external validity.
4. Practicality	<input type="checkbox"/> time consuming and costly.
5. Execution	<input type="checkbox"/> access to organisations may be difficult.
6. Politically	<input type="checkbox"/> preference is for deductive, numerate and causally directed research.
7. Subjectivity	<input type="checkbox"/> personal interpretation is frequently misunderstood.
8. Nothing is solved	<input type="checkbox"/> rather, new puzzles are created.
9. Substantial ethical risks	
10. Triangulation	<input type="checkbox"/> routines for data collection exist but none are universally agreed upon.
11. Construct validity	<input type="checkbox"/> failure to develop a sufficiently operational set of measures.
13. Reliability	<input type="checkbox"/> if performed by another researcher would he/she find the same results?

(Adapted from Bonoma, 1985; Bryman, 1988; Eisenhardt, 1989; Haralambos 1991; Stake, 1995).

The strengths and weaknesses of the case study approach are summarised in Tables 3.8 and 3.9. The main point of contention focuses on what Bonoma (1985) called the trade-off between internal validity (data integrity) and external validity (contextual richness or 'currency'). This refers to the loss of contextual richness but high data integrity in methods employing highly scientific approaches such as experiments, and *vice versa* in

qualitative approaches, such as case studies. As mentioned earlier, developments have recently occurred in the methodological approaches of case studies to counter some of the claims such as unreliability, subjectivity and lack of construct validity. Yin (1984) defined the design of case study research as a research strategy, established replication logic as an essential part of multi-case analysis and stressed the importance of validity and reliability in the design of case research. Later, Yin (1991) went on to establish a case study protocol involving:

- ❑ an overview of the case study project – aims of the research, case(s) to be investigated, special characteristics of the phenomenon under study, expected outcomes;
- ❑ field procedure – selecting case(s), gaining access to cases/people, resources required, data collection methods, planning for the unexpected;
- ❑ case study questions – reminders of the issues that need to be addressed during the study; and
- ❑ a guide for preparing the report – elements it must contain, style etc.

Following such a protocol and employing different methods such as interviews, document and quantitative data analysis enabled the triangulation of data, as the following sections describe. Other authors have defined more detailed case study process such as Eisenhardt (1989) and Bonoma (1985) which have been considered in combination with the work of Yin in particular to form a more rigorous and methodological step by step process for this phase of the study which is described below.

Getting Started

The first part of the case study process was to set the initial research objectives which were to provide a detailed analysis of the research constructs, and to pay specific attention to:

- ❑ the reasons and targets for schemes (Chapter 6);
- ❑ the management and marketing of schemes (Chapter 7); and
- ❑ monitoring and evaluating the performance of Leisure Card Schemes- take-up, targeting of groups and use at facilities (Chapter 8).

Initial contact with two local authorities operating card schemes was instrumental in associating the researcher with the technical (and often jargonised) environment in which Leisure Cards are operated, as well as identifying early themes and important actors. Bonoma described this phase as 'soaking-in' (1985).

Selecting cases

The results of the survey were instrumental in establishing criteria for selecting cases. However, due to the different types of Leisure Cards identified in the survey, and the more practical constraints of securing access to authorities with sufficient levels of available data, theoretical sampling methods were employed. The aim was to provide further insight into different types of card scheme and analyse them through the established research constructs. As Eisenhardt stated, "while cases may be chosen randomly, random selection is neither necessary, nor even preferable" (1989: p. 537). Initially, three card operating authorities were selected as cases, and a fourth non-card operating local authority. This retained the focus of the research on Leisure Card Schemes whilst also including a non-operating authority, the reasons for it not having a card and the potential for it to introduce one. Time and resource constraints were also influencing factors in determining the number of cases selected.

Criteria were then established for selecting the three Leisure Card Schemes:

- ❑ authorities with over 100,000 inhabitants;
- ❑ one authority with a concession only card scheme;
- ❑ one authority with a multi-tiered scheme;
- ❑ a scheme using a management information system with micro data; and
- ❑ schemes that had been in operation for two years or more.

Due to the inability of Resident Card schemes to target low income groups specifically and their lack of coverage nationally, a case study was not deemed necessary. An attempt was also made to reflect the different types of authority in the UK. Although English authorities dominated the national survey, a Welsh or Scottish authority was considered, as was an English Unitary authority.

After consulting the database set-up with the results of the survey, a short list of viable candidates was drawn up and telephone contact was made to discuss access. Certain authorities, such as Cambridge City Council, did not have the time or human resources to provide access to relevant data. Other authorities, although willing to provide access were deemed too small in terms of population size or the low membership of the scheme, or inadequate in terms the type of data available.

The final selection included Leicester as a pioneering concession only leisure card scheme established in 1985 as part of the first wave of schemes identified in the national survey. The scheme had membership of nearly 30,000 of its 270,000 residents, providing more than adequate data as well as interest in the recent decision to cut its budget by one third.

Oxford was chosen as a 'new breed' of leisure card. It is a relaunched scheme in a multi-tier format which introduced a management information system capable of producing micro detail of facility use. Membership of the relaunched scheme had already reached 14,000 of its 110,000 residents after only nine months.

Cardiff, as the youngest capital city in Europe, have operated a concession only card scheme very similar to Leicester's but with less than 4,000 members from a population of 315,000. This reflected many of the schemes represented in the survey. The Cardiff scheme was at a crucial point in its life-cycle and was under review, with a decision being made to expand and invest as Oxford have, to continue in the same way or potentially to reduce the budget as in the case of Leicester.

Brighton and Hove Borough Council, with a population of 245,000, was initially selected as the non-card operating case due to a number of interesting factors. The first was that the authorities of Brighton and Hove had recently been merged to form a Unitary authority, expanding the population to be covered by a merged leisure department. Issues relating to the merger procedure such as administration, organisational structure and managerial factors, added a new perspective to the card operating cases. In terms of the potential application of a card scheme, the former Brighton authority was a recognised high profile leisure provider, especially in the fields of culture and the arts in a town with a particularly Metropolitan image. In addition to these factors, the Brighton and Hove Borough Council had recently published an anti-poverty strategy and had been a Best Value pilot authority.

However, while the interviews at Brighton and Hove produced interesting data on why the authority did not operate a Leisure Card, additional data on usage, customer satisfaction and general market research was very limited and out of date, or simply not provided when promised. The constraints of financial resources and time also meant that further fieldwork such as user and non-user surveys were not feasible. The results from the interviews and document analysis are contained within section 8.6, as a 'mini-case' of why an authority does not operate a Leisure Card.

Data collection

Yin (1984) developed the concept of replication in case study research, where cases are treated as a series of experiments involving as much replication of data collection techniques as possible to increase validity and replication of findings. Both primary and secondary data was collected. Secondary data took the form of:

- socio-economic data for the city as a whole (mainly from census data);
- 1998 Index of Deprivation data at the district/ward levels (only recently received and not included in this report);
- analysis of any Anti-Poverty reports or research;

- ❑ leisure committee reports;
- ❑ departmental/corporate strategies;
- ❑ previous research conducted into the schemes e.g. customer satisfaction surveys;
- ❑ data from the scheme i.e. membership composition, use at facilities; and
- ❑ marketing literature.

Primary data collection took the form of semi-structured interviews with local authority employees who were directly involved in the establishment of the schemes, setting their policy objectives and managing it on a daily basis (see Appendix IIIa & b). These interviews took place with leisure card officers (where one existed), Assistant Directors, Client side policy officers, Direct Service Operator officers or private contractors (depending on the CCT contract) and facility managers (depending on their degree of involvement in the scheme). It was necessary for a researcher to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of using this qualitative technique before any data was collected (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10 Summary of advantages and disadvantages of semi-structured interviews

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
1. A compromise is reached between structured and more in depth research methods	1. The mass of information may lead to key issues being ignored or dropped, or attempt to use everything
2. A degree of structure allows comparison between subjects	2. The information gathered may be unreliable or invalid due to incorrect responses e.g. lying, forgetfulness or a genuine lack of information
3. Allows clarification of terms and questions	3. Interviewees may be influenced by the presence of the researcher i.e. the way questions are asked and to what extent they are leading.
4. There is scope for exploration as there are no fixed answer options	
5. Ideas may be generated not previously considered by the researcher	
6. Allows access to many different types of people and information.	

(Adapted from Haralambos, 1991 and Bryman, 1988).

All interviews were structured around the research constructs outlined above, and a sample of questions asked is in Appendix III. In order to facilitate both within and across case analysis, the same questions were asked to as many interviewees as possible. This enabled comparison of responses between leisure officers of different levels of responsibility in the same department, as well as between respondents from different cases. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the development of certain themes and the emergence of new ones, thus enabling the modification of the research constructs. For example, the role of Leisure Card Schemes as part of CCT contracts was developed in interviews between Client side officers and Contract officers. In addition to the large amount of detailed data on official policy produced, the opportunity was taken to gauge individual leisure officers' opinions on certain issues. Although these opinions could not be taken as scientific facts, they gave an insight into the relationships between the actors involved in the schemes.

A degree of flexibility was provided by the developmental nature of the case study approach allowing slight modifications to interview schedules, especially to ask case-specific questions, as well as providing the freedom to develop certain themes within the interviews themselves where an issue was of particular interest e.g. where interviewees from the same department gave conflicting opinions on the same issue. However, this flexibility was not a license to be unsystematic, as Eisenhardt (1989) called it, rather 'controlled opportunism'.

Through multiple data collection methods it was envisaged that quantitative data could bolster qualitative when it corroborated and provide opportunity for reconsideration of constructs when it did not. Moreover, qualitative data was to be used to provide further insight into quantitative results. This limited form of triangulation formed a stronger substantiation of subsequent generalisations and facilitated the comparison between empirical data and the ideal-type Fordist and post-Fordist Leisure Card models.

Data Analysis

Eisenhardt (1989) identified two 'tactics' for analysing data collected from case research to improve the reliability and validity of results: within case analysis and across case analysis. Analysing within case data is necessary because of the large amount of data produced from multiple sources and the potential for what Pettigrew (1988 in Eisenhardt, 1989) called 'death by data asphyxiation'. The cases were therefore initially written individually, gathering data and providing a complete understanding of the cases. This allowed unique patterns for each case to emerge and accelerated cross-case analysis.

Eisenhardt (1989) stated that cross-case analysis was needed because people were notoriously poor processors of information. The reasons for this are numerous as people:

- ❑ leap to conclusions based on limited data;
- ❑ are overly influenced by the vividness of certain data;
- ❑ are overawed by elite respondents;
- ❑ ignore basic statistical properties; and
- ❑ inadvertently drop disconfirming evidence.

The potential to reach false or premature conclusions highlights the need to look at the data in different ways. After the cases were written individually, similarities and differences between them were noted. This was combined with comparison of data produced by different data sources e.g. historical data from committee reports, membership data from databases, interview data.

Shaping results

From within case and cross-case analysis, plus overall impressions, tentative themes, concepts and relationships between variables emerged. A conscious effort was made to continually refer back to the research questions for the study, the objectives for the case study phase of this research and in particular the theoretical guidelines of the regulation approach and the research constructs. This enabled the sharpening of the research constructs and the retention of the research focus as different data sources were converged on a series of single, well-defined constructs. This was of particular

importance as it was not possible to use factor analysis to collapse multiple indicators into a single construct because indicators and measures varied across cases, and qualitative data is difficult to collapse anyway. While confirmatory results from the analysis stage provided increased validity of the findings, conflicting results provided the opportunity to refine the constructs and look for reasons why. Qualitative data was particularly useful in explaining reasons for relationships between certain variables.

Enfolding results and literature

This stage of the overall research process brought together results from the survey and the case studies into defined constructs within the regulation approach framework. This enabled the comparison to be made between the empirical data gathered and the expectations of the ideal-type Fordist and post-Fordist models. It is important to note that the results from the survey and the case studies have not been collapsed under these constructs. Instead, a macro picture is provided by the survey research which is then contextually enriched by the case study findings at the micro level. This avoided the repetition of constructs in a survey chapter and then a case study chapter, enabling constructs to be dealt with coherently and in detail from different levels of analysis.

Therefore, the framework of the regulation approach provides the structure for the following Chapters and the analysis of the research results. The literature review at the beginning of Chapter 4 provides the historical context for the introduction and development of Leisure Cards, analysing the transition from Fordism, the advent of Thatcherism and the Major administrations. Existing research literature on Leisure Cards is also enfolded in order to form a comparison with the results from this study and to add to the historical analysis of their development. As this study is the most recent analysis of Leisure Card Schemes, conflicting literature provided an opportunity to highlight developments and changes, whilst literature confirming the findings reflected consistencies and in some cases served to increase confidence and the internal validity of the results.

Chapter 5 brings the reader up to the period in which this study was undertaken, charting the rise of 'New' Labour to government and analysing policy initiatives relevant to this research. This establishes the context for the research findings which are presented in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 and enables conclusions to be made regarding the development of Leisure Cards within the context of broader leisure and social policy shifts, as well as the comparison between the empirical data gathered and the ideal-type Fordist and post-Fordist models, in Chapter 9.

Chapter 4

The Emergence of Leisure Cards in Great Britain

The main aim of this Chapter is to describe the structural shifts which occurred in the period of transition from Fordism within which Leisure Cards emerged and developed. The focus of sections 4.1 to 4.4 is on leisure policy development in the post-War period, whilst section 4.5 is dedicated to the analysis of Leisure Cards as they began to be introduced in the early 1980s and their subsequent development into the early 1990s. For the purposes of the analysis which is undertaken in the next three chapters, it must be made clear that sections 4.1 to 4.3 deal with central and local leisure policy development, whereas section 4.4 only covers central policy under the Major administrations to provide continuity in the analysis of successive Conservative governments (1979-1997). Section 5.1 will analyse local leisure policy after 1993 with the emergence of New Labour, therefore, section 4.5 covers Leisure Card development from 1980 to 1993 only.

4.1 The Keynesian Welfare State and Leisure Policy: Fordism

In an attempt to ensure that Great Britain did not return to the deprivation of the 1930s, post-War governments implemented a national plan for social security based largely on the proposals of the Beveridge Report (1942) for a National Insurance scheme and the creation of a National Health System which formed the basis of the Keynesian Welfare State (see section 3.2 for more details). This gained consensus among all political parties and by the time of the 'never had it so good years' of Conservative control in the 1960s, Labour's Tony Crossland argued that there was no longer a need to direct any further resources towards the poor (Crossland, 1967 in Alcock, 1994).

Overall there was an inadequate appreciation of the seriousness of poverty and the relation of state policy to it. The Beveridge Report drew on the research of Rowntree and his studies of the inhabitants of York (1901;1941) which attempted to determine what subsistence needs were, and what income levels were necessary to satisfy them- an 'absolute' measure of poverty. The post-war social security system incorporated these types of measures and attempted to provide an income adequate to meet the needs of all, through insurance benefits paid to male heads of household. The Fordist period was

dominated by the consensus based on redistribution (RED) where the state actively intervened in the economy through high taxation and public spending.

However, although a general review of the welfare system may have been inspired by reformist thinking, the nature of intervention in the area of leisure in the post-war period was different (Henry, 1993). At the national level, the establishment of the Arts Council (1946), and the National Parks Commission (1949) were not inspired by the desire to provide equality of opportunity through direct state provision. However, the Wolfenden Report (1960), which led to the establishment of the (Advisory) Sports Council in 1965, was concerned with the general lack of sporting opportunities.

The Arts Council was born of the Committee for Entertainment, Music and the Arts (CEMA) which focused on funding professional artists, and the original aim of the Arts Council continued this, together with the promotion of high and popular arts to foster public morale. The focus was on the democratisation of culture with a 'conservative' or 'paternalist' rather than reformist style. The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) followed this line of policy with more concern for the interests of industry in the countryside and conservation than promoting recreation and access. According to Henry (1993) the initial aim of the (Advisory) Sports Council was not the provision of sporting opportunities for all, rather it was concerned with extrinsic factors such as Britain's failing international sporting reputation. However, by the time the Sports Council obtained its Royal Charter in 1972, its main aims were: the provision of sport for the welfare and enjoyment of the population at large; to increase the number of facilities; support the improvement of performance; and to do, or commission research.

Therefore, there were not many changes from the pre-War period, State leadership prevailed which justified intervention by reference to externalities achieved through support for leisure, or where market imperfections occurred through the free market. This contrasted with welfare reformism which justified state intervention in order to promote the rights of individual access to leisure opportunities for their own sake. This did not occur until the 1960s and 1970s, and of particular significance was the Wilson government (1964-1970) which set the tone for much of the expansion of leisure services locally in the 1970s. Leisure was dubbed the most 'modern' of public services by Wilson himself, which

was met with cross-party support and eventually led to the Sports Council's quango status under the Heath administration, its policy slogan, adopted from the Council of Europe: 'Sport For All'.

In general terms, relative living standards rose during the period of Fordism (Painter, 1994; Stoker, 1989). Personal disposable incomes increased, inflation was modest, unemployment low, and the majority of people were well housed (Kennett, 1994). Therefore, for most people the ideological commitment to equality and welfarism was compatible with the 'lived' experience locally.

However, more than one million claimants were not adequately covered by National Insurance, inadequate benefits were leading to inadequate standards of living for those dependent on them. Poverty was interpreted in absolute terms; those without work were supported by the welfare state, and predominantly consisted of old, sick, disabled and unemployed people (Room *et al*, 1993). The 'rediscovery' of poverty which occurred during this period, principally through the publication of *The Poor and the Poorest* by Brian Abel Smith and Peter Townsend (1965), suggested that 14% of the population were living in poverty in 1960. The Child Poverty Action Group was also founded at this time and has developed into one of the most influential pressure groups in British politics (Oppenheim and Harker, 1996). Rowntree's standard no longer reflected the needs of a more affluent society characterised by growing inequalities in opportunities rather than just incomes, and with different needs and expectations.

A dramatic expansion of leisure service provision came after the reorganisation of local government in 1974 and the White Paper for Sport and Recreation (1975) which identified sport and recreation as 'one of the community's everyday needs' and 'part of the general fabric of the social services' (DoE, 1975). The Sports Council also recognised the importance of these activities, stating that "sport and recreation are not luxuries, they are an essential part of life" (1974: p. 3). This trend was also reflected in the arts White Paper *A Policy For the Arts: First Steps*, which, although stopping short of cultural democracy, eventually widened the horizons of Arts Council to funding community arts. The remit of the National Parks Commission was also widened beyond the National Parks to the countryside as a whole under the 1968 Countryside Act, renaming it the Countryside

Commission. One of its key new functions was provision for countryside recreation, although many of its conservation and economic responsibilities remained (see Glyptis 1993).

Stoker (1989) stated that local authorities participated in the general expansion of state activities during the Fordist period, which saw local authority expenditure in England and Wales increase from £2,161m in 1930 to £12,253m in 1975. Within this expansion, their role shifted from being an instrument of capitalist industrial development, to the 'midwife' of the welfare state (Stoker, 1989). The role of leisure in this expansionist period was not evident until the mid 1970s. The increase in the provision of municipal sports halls in the five years between 1973 and 1978 from 30 to 350 and swimming pools from 500 to 850 during the same period, indicated the scale of local authority investment in this new service at a time when such provision was not mandatory, although boosted by the abolition or amalgamation of many small local authorities in 1974.

Henry (1993) identified the most important reason for this expansion as being a corporate management ideology which underpinned the design of the whole system. Stewart (1989) identified three dominant principles in local government operations during the Fordist period:

1. functionalism (the division of organisations around particular tasks and responsibilities);
2. uniformity (provision of services to a common pattern); and
3. hierarchy (organisations involving a large number of tiers).

Therefore, local government clearly reflected the structure of the private sector at the time, and thereby the economic and cultural domination of private capital. Leisure departments established in the mid 1970s were symptomatic of the ethos of providing large-scale solutions to large-scale problems. The often unwieldy departments, typical of Metropolitan Boroughs, encompassed a breadth of service provision spanning cemeteries to swimming pools and the remoteness of the decision making process raised criticisms relating to their unresponsiveness (Stoker, 1989). Indeed, the expansion in facility provision did not lead to an increase in the breadth of representation of users. The typical leisure centre user remained male, white and middle-class, with access to private transport (Gregory, 1979;

Grimshaw and Prescott, 1978; Collins, 1979; in Henry, 1993). Across the board concessions, designed to keep prices low and discount price as a factor of non-participation, merely resulted in many members of higher socio-economic groups taking advantage of cheap leisure which they could afford to pay more for. Sport For All was not being realised. This was mirrored even more strongly by the audiences for publicly funded arts activities.

4.2 Leisure Policy and the crises of Fordism

By the time the crises of Fordism set in, the welfare framework was already being criticised for being economically unaffordable and inefficient by the New Right and parts of the Left, due to the perceived inability of the system to redress social inequalities. Persistently high levels of unemployment, spiralling rates of inflation and the restrictions imposed by the forced IMF loan in the mid-1970s highlighted the crises within Fordism and the need to restrict public spending and artificially inflated demand (see section 3.3).

During this period of crisis, it became evident that Fordist mass consumption and the general increases in living standards, disposable income and improved conditions of work, had combined to produce a 'leisured poor' (Kaplan, 1975) combining low paid workers, the long-term unemployed through economic restructuring, and unskilled young people who hardly got a foothold in the labour market. In the face of persistently high rates of unemployment, leisure activities began to be incorporated in definitions of poverty and low quality of life (see Townsend, 1979; Mack and Lansley, 1985). The crises of Fordism highlighted the growing disparities and inequalities in society, expressed most graphically in the urban riots of the early 1980s. Explanations of poverty began to take a pathological perspective, characteristic of the moral underclass discourse (MUD), evident in the statements of Mrs Thatcher's mentor, Keith Joseph (1972). Joseph referred to a 'cycle of deprivation' or 'transmitted deprivation' where poor parenting lowered aspirations and the disadvantaged environment of families and communities became internalised in the children as they grew up, hence generating a further round of poor parenting. This approach formed an integral part of the debate surrounding the emergence of an

'underclass' in the UK (discussed in detail in section 2.3) and influenced welfare policy during this period as attempts were made to break this 'cycle of poverty'.

There were strong continuities between the Callaghan and the Thatcher governments of the early 1980s, with an increasing realisation of the economic significance of leisure and its use as a tool for controlling social unrest. This 'authoritarian populism' emphasised a reduced role for the welfare state but continued to promote social order, combining growing neo-Liberal economic policy with neo-conservative rhetoric.

The inner cities became the focus of national policies to break the cycle of poverty because of their high concentrations of deprivation, unemployment, crime and general fear of serious social unrest e.g. the creation of Education Priority Areas, the Urban Aid Programme, Community Development Projects, Inner City Programmes. These schemes were described as ill thought-out and inappropriate, and their achievements as minimal (see Loney *et al*, 1983). The provision of leisure services in the form of 'recreational priority areas' were a significant element of the Urban Programme at this time (receiving £18m in 1981). The greater sums of money channelled through the Urban Programme, however, funded *ad hoc* provision and allocations were made with little or no reference to the Sports Council (Coghlan and Webb, 1990). No such diagnosis or remedies were targeted at rural areas, though some EC programmes founded structural funds to support agricultural communities.

By 1979 the Sports Council's initial slogan of Sport For All became translated effectively into 'sport for the disadvantaged' and 'sport for inner city youth' (Houlihan, 1991). The Sports Council's Annual Report for 1980/81 stated it would "continue to work on the social front in relation not only to the unemployed, but also areas of urban and rural deprivation and with schemes for ethnic minorities and the retired" (1981: p. 4). The Action Sport programmes, some of which survive, were promoted by Dennis Howell, and attempted to contribute through the provision of sports leaders in inner city areas. By 1983/4, sports leadership in the inner cities and schemes for the unemployed were the third largest area of Sports Council spending (£1.4m) behind the administration of governing bodies of sport (£2.4m) and the Sports Council National Centres (£2m). The other target

groups of Sports Council policy were youth (aged 13-24) and older people, through the "50+ All to Play For" campaign.

Indeed, target groups became the focus of Sports Council policy during this period, shifting away from the universality of Sport For All. The selection of target groups was undertaken "because they are at points of major challenge in life patterns or because they lack opportunities for participation" (Sports Council, 1983: p. 8). Therefore there was increasing recognition of inequalities in sport and recreation participation and the need to target deprived groups as well as deprived areas, although there was no specific reference to poverty in Sports Council policy at that time. There was a clear neo-conservative concern for social control and the use of sport and recreation as a policy tool, especially in volatile inner city areas and housing estates with high levels of youth unemployment and crime.

Local authorities felt the immediate effects of central government policies to control high unemployment, inflation and the restrictions imposed by the IMF loan, as the need to reduce public expenditure became of paramount importance. Despite the introduction of rate-capping, penalties for over-spending authorities and an emphasis on strict budgetary targets, local government remained virtually intact (Stoker, 1989), though the power of municipal trade unions was significantly weakened. Decades of responsibility for service provision and its significance as an employer, resulted in the retention of considerable power. Local governments reacted variously with resistance, acceptance and promotion of restructuring, or attempted to reshape the enforced changes for their own benefit (Henry, 1993). Those that reacted with resistance came into direct conflict with central government. Such moves led to the restructuring of leisure departments described in more detail in section 4.3 (Collins, 1997).

This resistance to attempts to control local government from the centre combined with frustration at Labour's ineffectual parliamentary opposition, led to the emergence of what has been labelled as the New Urban Left (Henry, 1993; Stoker, 1989) (see section 2.5). This movement centred on relatively young Labour local authority members, especially in large cities, who rejected militancy based solely on traditional class politics in favour of multiple forms of championing disadvantage including racism, sexism, disability and

economic disadvantage. The New Urban Left actively used cultural politics as a tool to tackle inequalities, but also as a form of hegemony designed to remove the dominance of capital, as part of a wider political battle with central government.

Stoker (1988) identified two major categories of New Urban Left strategies which directly applied to leisure. The first was direct intervention in local economies and service provision; Henry (1993) identified Leisure Card schemes as an example of this as 'enhancing' traditional forms of leisure provision. Another example of this was the GLC's cultural strategy to support small- and large-scale community and minority cultural events in order to promote cultural diversity. The second category was related to the democratisation of local government and increasing responsiveness and accountability by breaking the diseconomies of scale of large bureaucracies and encouraging more local area management and public participation.

Therefore, as the post-war consensus was broken by world economic recession and persistently high domestic unemployment and rates of inflation, Fordist crisis tendencies finally emerged. The overall increase in living standards during this period was reflected in the increase in public leisure provision and the growth in expectations of a new 'leisured poor', led to the inclusion of leisure activities in definitions of poverty. The increased level of expenditure on leisure services of the mid-1970s remained intact, although with greater emphasis on regulating escalating inner city social unrest with specifically targeted projects. Indeed, a shift began to occur from Fordist concerns for redistribution (RED) to the identification of deserving and undeserving poor people and the acceptance of individual moral responsibility (MUD).

4.3 Leisure Policy and Provision After Fordism

Thatcherism saw the systematic dismantling of many Fordist structures. Corporatist practices were abandoned and the 'nanny' welfare state was attacked through marginal reductions in its size and power. The aim was to create a flexible state, responsive to individual needs. The abandonment of Keynesian economics in favour of monetarist policies accelerated the restructuring of British industry with an increased emphasis on

encouraging growth in the service sector. Trade Unions were subjected to successive legislation restricting their powers, and the majority of nationalised industries were privatised. The financial services, whilst benefiting from privatisation of the nationalised industries, became the focus of attention for monetarist policies, deregulating the market and relaxing tax requirements.

Despite the perception that a 'trickle down' affect would occur from new growth sectors to stagnant ones, and to economically disadvantaged people, traditional class divisions were reshaped and deepened as the gap between the core and peripheral work forces widened (Henry, 1993). Only the more extreme cases of poverty were caught by the welfare safety net, as the emphasis shifted to individual responsibility under the assumption that economically disadvantaged people would, in a sense, be 'dragged up' by accumulative growth. The Thatcherite hegemonic project produced new forms of social and economic exclusion and class dislocation (Kennett, 1994). The emphasis on the individual as part of this ideology brought with it a new explanation of poverty and policy responses to it based on the concept of a morally corrupt underclass and the need to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor (see section 2.3).

Leisure policy and provision was part of what some commentators refer to as the Thatcherite hegemonic project, that left a legacy of leisure policy which reflected the transformation from the 'culture of welfarism' to that of the 'enterprise culture' (Bramham et al., 1993; Henry, 1993). The provision of leisure as a welfare right was replaced by an emphasis on the potential economic productivity of leisure, especially in terms of regenerating cities and in creating a more flexible provision of leisure services. Ravenscroft (1993) identified the paradox of the Thatcherite ideology which was based on rolling back the state and advocating the virtues of the market whilst actually increasing the power of central government "thus giving the impression of creating choice whilst effectively denying it to large sections of the population" (1993: p. 34).

Thornley (1991) suggested that it is prudent for the state to attempt to increase its central power if it is establishing an economic system likely to produce discontent, with consistently high unemployment and an increase in the gap between the rich and poor. At national policy level, this trend was also evident within the leisure quangos during this

period. The political appointments of leading business figures such as Palumbo to the Arts Council was part of a drive to increase individual organisational responsibility for raising funds through activities such as sponsorship, rather than relying on grants. A similar change occurred within the Sports Council with the appointment of New Right sympathisers such as Sebastian Coe and businessmen like Rodney Walker and Lord Simon of BP. Incentive grants replaced revenue funding for the Arts and governing bodies of sport to encourage the pursuit of commercial sponsorship. In relation to countryside recreation, the dominance of economic issues over those of a social, aesthetic or conservation nature resulted in the continued marginalisation of the Countryside Commission in favour of a 'business lobby' in the form of the National Farmers Union and the Country Landowners Association over issues such as public rights of way and freedom to roam, and English Nature in matters of conservation (Henry, 1993).

In this context, leisure providers have had difficulty in quantifying their productive output in social terms, and have failed to establish themselves as part of the core welfare services (Stabler and Ravenscroft, 1994). Indeed, leisure has never really, or possibly could ever be proven as a basic human need. Thus it can be argued from an anti-collectivist perspective that the best form of provision is through the market place and voluntary action (see section 2.5). The concept of leisure hinges on ideas of individual choice for which collective provision could be inappropriate. This in turn increases the vulnerability of leisure provision as a public service when compared to more basic human needs such as housing or education. Leisure provision occupies an uneasy position between the ideologies of the market and the welfare state and has difficulty in fulfilling the latter objectives due to its non-statutory status and the intangibility associated with attaining its multi-dimensional economic and socio-political goals (Coalter, 1990b; Stabler and Ravenscroft, 1994). Gratton and Taylor (1991) highlighted the problem of defining and measuring the outputs in a service such as sport, as there is great difficulty in specifying the relationship between outputs and inputs.

However, as already discussed, leisure did not receive the same level of reduction in funding as other services during Thatcher's first term in government (Bramham *et al*, 1993). One of the primary reasons for this was its use in response to the urban riots of the early 1980s. Glyptis (1989) highlighted the persistence of a duality in the provision of

leisure opportunities, paralleling provision for enjoyment with the belief that it can "contain urban problems, build a sense of community and...overcome class and other social inequalities" (Glyptis, 1989: p. 42).

Moreover, in addition to this duality of purpose in leisure provision, the Sports Council identified "two distinct markets for sport" at the end of the 1980s in its strategy *Into the 1990s...* "the larger being comprised of generally affluent people who are in work, healthy and well educated, the smaller being people who are generally less healthy, often unemployed and concentrated in urban and rural areas with a poor economic base" (Sports Council, 1988: p. 3). This highlights two important factors. Firstly there was reference to 'sports markets' which reflected increasing concern with the economic dimension of sport and recreation provision. Secondly that two separate markets existed, one containing the rich or well-off, and the second consisting less healthy people, often unemployed and living in deprived areas. It is important to note that this second group was not directly referred to as the poor, and that their situation was perceived in relation to the more affluent group highlighting an inequality in participation. Fundamentally, it must also be emphasised that these groups were regarded as separate and not part of the same 'market'.

Indeed, the strategy went on to state that "the former group provides considerable opportunities for the private and voluntary sectors, while the public sector must play a leading role in meeting the needs of the latter" (Sports Council, 1988: p. 3). This was a clear call for local government to take responsibility for providing leisure opportunities for the poor, without actually identifying them as such. The implication was clearly that the welfare state should act as a safety net for the less affluent whilst those that could afford to should participate privately. Although the recognition of the 'less affluent' as a target group was positive and the policy response may have made sense in economic terms by meeting demand through the market place, as well as discouraging 'free riders', it was socially divisive.

The restructuring of local government during the 1980s shifted leisure provision still further away from the ideals of welfare reformism. A primary aim was to increase labour productivity, and change the pattern of consumption by opening up local government to the competitiveness of the market, and also by using flexible labour and capital management

techniques more suited to the provision of services. The use of flexible structures, information technology, and the (compulsory) contracting of services (CCT) reflected trends in the private sector. The belief was that private sector companies could undercut local governments in the provision of services due to their capital intensive organisation, use of new technology and methods of intensive labour management (simultaneously breaking the strangle holds of municipal unions) and in their more imaginative and energetic marketing. A split in service provision occurred where the Client (local authority) retained political control whilst the Contractor focused on managerial efficiency (Stabler and Ravenscroft, 1994). Only a handful (8%) of the contracts went to commercial operators, but the competitive requirement reformed the structure and ideologies of the direct provision work forces of the other 90% (Collins, 1997), leading to an emphasis on economic efficiency and effectiveness rather than social equality.

The aim to provide services which were more responsive to customer needs through CCT and Mr Major's *Citizens Charter* brought public leisure services into the competition of the wider market place, and subsequently increased the importance of price (Whitehouse and Gerlach, 1991: p. 9). It is difficult to apply general economic principles to the pricing of public sector leisure services as prices are not determined by levels of demand and supply. The need to consider social and not just economic factors within the values of 'recreational welfare' has traditionally meant that prices have been kept low to enable everyone to participate.

However, universal subsidies generate artificially high levels of demand among groups who could afford to take responsibility for their own consumption, and had failed to substantially attract the disadvantaged groups they were designed for (Gratton and Taylor, 1985; CLR, 1993). The Audit Commission (1989) highlighted the irony of the perverse effects of across the board subsidies where many poorer people paid to subsidise the leisure activities of the affluent through their rates/council taxes.

However, CCT contracts were largely non-developmental, and in general, failed to specify welfare-related performance targets or to measure performance against political priorities (Bovaird, 1992; Coalter, 1995; CLR, 1993). More recent research by Sport England revealed that participants at facilities such as leisure centres were still disproportionately

white, middle-class, car owning male (Sport England, 1999c), although Mintel (1996) suggested this imbalance has reduced as activities for women have grown. Research suggests that demand for leisure services is relatively elastic and that a large proportion of users would be able and willing to pay more to use facilities than they do (Gratton and Taylor, 1994). This highlights the potential for prices to be increased for certain groups in the community in order to contribute to subsidising concessions for disadvantaged groups. There has been an increasing need to identify leisure service users as a diverse and segmented market, with different needs and expectations to be targeted and charged for appropriately in a social as well as an economic sense. Sports development work was clearly attempting this, but has been partly, if at all translated into pricing and marketing policies (Audit Commission, 1999).

The general restructuring of local government provision of services and the welfare system has produced what has become recognised as a two-tier welfare state (Henry, 1993; Ravenscroft, 1993; Stoker, 1989). The 'core', comprises predominantly the 'core' work force, who can afford not to participate in the 'welfare market' but do so nonetheless. Ravenscroft (1993) referred to this tier as the 'leisure gainers' who can afford increased prices for leisure services. The second tier are 'peripheral' with low and insecure incomes moving in and out of poverty, unable to afford to participate in this welfare consumerism who are reliant on the 'no frills' provision or the welfare safety net. These are the 'leisure losers' who become excluded due to their inability to participate (Ravenscroft, 1993). Stoker (1989) identified this situation as blurring the boundary between public services provided on the basis of need, and private services allocated on the basis of ability to pay.

The justification of local government intervention in the market in order to provide leisure opportunities for the leisure 'losers', to some extent depends on a belief that leisure is a human need and a right of citizenship. As described in Chapter 2, in defining poverty from a redistributive perspective, leisure can be justified as a human need in contemporary society, and as a significant source of inequality. Ravenscroft (1993) placed leisure within Maslow's hierarchy of needs and concluded that the higher needs of self-esteem and self-actualisation are associated with leisure activities which are more individualistic and oriented towards market-based provision. The policies of Thatcherism represented a capitalist form of social justice and a shift towards these higher needs as a reward for those

who achieved financial success and participated in the Thatcherite hegemonic project, and excluded those who could not afford to participate as a penalty, marginalising them still further. Those who could not afford to pay were denied representation in the processes of increased accountability and responsiveness of local service provision. Ironically, these welfare services were established primarily for these disadvantaged groups and it is they who are in most need of them.

However, there must be a case for justifying the public provision of leisure activities in the light of the Fordist consumer culture which produced the (unemployed/redundant) 'leisured poor', in order to meet the higher needs and expectations they have developed in an advanced capitalist society. The assumption that low income groups only have low order needs and that their inability to participate in self-actualising activities such as leisure should be used as a penalty for economic inactivity, seems to reek of a fundamental social injustice and to be a tool for justifying the reduction of public expenditure on subsidies and increasing central control.

Coalter (1990b) emphasised the importance of distinguishing between 'wants' and 'needs', and to allocate resources effectively through targeted policies, considering those who cannot pay the full market price. Viebla (1986) questioned the applicability of marketing techniques designed to increase individual choice to collective welfare consumption:

Local government is not simply about providing 'services' to 'customers'...it is concerned with a broad notion of citizenship, which is a political rather than a managerial or market concept (Viebla, 1986: p. 112).

This was reinforced by Coalter (1990b) who asserted that local government is charged with protecting the rights of citizens and making collective provision for the good of the community. Local government recently has taken on an 'enabling' role, emphasising the need to understand communities' needs and problems, and to be responsive to them, and to foster appropriate private, voluntary and commercial actions. Enabling the pursuit of free choice has replaced direct collective provision (Association of County Councils, 1992; White, 1992). Leisure services, as with other public services, had been provided for people rather than with them, and this paternalistic provision did not encourage the responsibilities

that citizenship should involve (Corrigan *et al*, 1988). The recent image of the citizen has been that of passivity, of consumerism, particularly amongst the groups referred to as 'leisure losers' earlier, rather than that of active involvement (Coalter, 1999b). As Bramham *et al* (1993) concluded, in an advanced society, there is still a need for some form of public life or public culture accessible to all citizens.

Henry and Bramham (1987) identified three elements of the meaning and mechanisms of community recreation provision:

1. meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups;
2. decentralisation to local units of provision; and
3. community self-determination and participation in decision making.

As far as leisure developments under CCT were concerned, there was a marked movement away from these elements. Citizens have increasingly become defined as consumers, neglecting the fact that under the two-tier welfare state there are citizens other than those who chose or can afford to be consumers (Clarke and Stewart, 1986). The exclusion of marginalised groups whose compliance and participation is not necessary for economic success, is an unacceptable situation. It must be realised that flexibilisation, target market differentiation and responsiveness to demand should also be applied to the provision of services to disadvantaged groups, and that this is perhaps more important than for any other group in the community.

4.4 The Major years: policy continuation under new leadership

The growth of the British economy in the mid-1980s was demonstrated by the increase in GDP by 14.5% and public revenue by 37%, combined with a static rate in public spending growth (21%) which comprised increases in health and community care (12%), education (8%) and law and order (4%). The major reduction in public spending came through housing (down 40%) and defence (down 9%). Local authority expenditure on sport and recreation in England increased from £516m in 1986/7 to £781m by 1989/90 (34%) (Hansard, 1992 in ADC, 1993). In 1988 tax rates were cut from 60% to 40% for the upper band and to 25% at the bottom. Between 1983 and 1990 3 million new jobs had been

created and were increasingly filled by women (an increase of 15% in labour market participation), but were typically low paid, part-time service jobs.

However, as described in Chapter 2, not everyone benefited from this period of economic growth. By 1992, 25% of the population lived in poverty, an increase of 16% since Mrs Thatcher came to power in 1979 (DSS, 1997). This was combined with an increase in the gap between the rich and the poor with the poorest 10% experiencing a fall in real income of 8%, whilst the richest 10% increased their incomes by 68% (1979-1994/5) (DSS, 1997).

Indeed, during this period certain crises tendencies had re-emerged, especially increases in inflation caused by the uncontrolled boom period and increased availability of credit for consumers. High interest rates saw an increase in mortgage rates by 15% that left many people in negative equity as house prices began to fall. Subsequent cuts in public spending hit business profits hard. Coupled with these economic problems were the notoriously unpopular poll tax, which resulted in widespread non-payment and rioting, and the division within the Conservative Party over Europe. The latter issue contributed heavily to the demise of Mrs Thatcher and Mr Howe's condemning speech in the House of Commons.

The eventual resignation of Mrs Thatcher after a divisive Conservative Party leadership contest, saw the succession of John Major as Prime Minister. His personality and style of leadership marked a distinct change from the authoritarianism of Mrs Thatcher, and in his first New Year speech he described the vision of Britain as an opportunity society. However, the economic crisis continued as the world experienced deep recession in the early 1990s. The British economy contracted by 2.5% as investment fell and unemployment reached 3m (up to 10.4% in the north of England), the highest level since 1986. Positively, inflation fell from 9.3% in 1990 to 4% in 1992, but interest rates remained above 10% in order to support the pound's ill-fated entry into the ERM and mortgages defaults increased as house prices plummeted. However, with an election due in 1992, public spending was maintained, thus increasing the public deficit. In 1991/92, estimated local authority expenditure on sport and recreation for England was £1.05bn, an increase of 26% (£269m) from 1989/90, and of 51% from 1986/7 (CIPFA, 1993).

Despite these factors, John Major was a popular leader, perhaps due to his low key, modest image and his ability as a consolidator after ten years of Mrs Thatcher, as well as the political 'success' of the Gulf War, all contributed to victory in the 1992 general election for the Conservatives. Economic growth and neo-liberal economic policies were still championed as the key to overcoming social problems. The position of the Conservatives was made stronger by the Labour Party's continued association with left of centre politics, the trade unions and the working classes which were declining in number (Labour received 52% of its vote in the 1992 election from manual workers).

However, the election honeymoon period was short-lived as 16 September 1992 became known as Black Wednesday. The continued rises in interest rates necessary for the pound to keep in line with the Mark was unsustainable and led to the devaluation of the pound and Britain's exit from the ERM. This shock resulted in a considerable lack of confidence in the government's management of the economy, a factor so important under the Thatcher administrations. Despite this, the devaluation actually turned the corner of the recession, encouraging foreign investment in cheaper British exports. Inflation continued to fall, and by early 1993 interest rates were down to 7%. Public spending increased by 36% from 1990 to 1994 and the number of people claiming unemployment benefit increased by 45% during the same period, fuelling claims of welfare dependency and 'benefit traps' (see Chapter 2). In 1993 the budget deficit stood at 6.4% of GDP, double what it had been for 1992 and nine times the 1991 level. Subsequently VAT was placed on fuel, a particularly unpopular policy among the elderly, and National Insurance contributions were increased. A series of political problems ensued for the government, including the Matrix-Churchill affair, the BSE cattle crisis, the cash for questions scandal, and general sleaze among some Conservative Party members. The issue of Europe continued to divide the Party and the Maastricht Treaty caused an increasing split between Euro-sceptics and pro-Euros, and was a major issue in the leadership challenge in 1995 which John Major survived.

The fast failing popularity of the Conservative Party was reflected in the local elections in 1993 where they attained only 31% of the vote. The challenge of New Labour was strengthened under the leadership of Tony Blair as they attempted to shake off left-wing associations with a new policy direction aimed at claiming 'middle-England' under the slogan of 'New' Labour (see Chapter 5 for a detailed description).

One of John Major's campaign team commented that he was the happy combination of continuity in policy without the style (in Evans, 1996). Indeed, without an ideological position which could be identified as 'Majorism' there was a great deal of continuity in policy between the Thatcher and Major administrations. The privatisation project continued including the ports, electricity boards, British Energy, the water boards, British Coal and British Rail. Whilst CCT continued, local government came under attack again with an attempt to remove the tier of shires in England, replacing them with Unitary authorities. This was enforced in Wales, but 32 of the 39 English shire councils were kept, while certain large towns were to be taken out of the shire system to act as individual units, under the recommendation of Local Government Commission chaired by John Banham.

According to the Association of District Councils document *Towards Unitary Authorities: sport and recreation* (1993), mechanisms and structures for the delivery of sport and recreation provision were not to change significantly through the unitary system, as district councils were deemed to be at the sharp end of provision and thus better able to react to new trends, needs and expectations in comparison to county councils. The two main requirements for sport and recreation departments applying for unitary status were the undertaking of an audit of facilities, buildings and expenditure by the district, county, parish and private and voluntary sectors, which would lead to the creation or the review of a sports and recreation strategy (as outlined by the Audit Commission, 1989) (Association of District Councils, 1993). The Association of District Councils went on to state that the following underrepresented 'client' groups would be more carefully targeted:

- ❑ young people;
- ❑ school leavers;
- ❑ women;
- ❑ ethnic minorities;
- ❑ retired people;
- ❑ people with disabilities; and
- ❑ those whose access to recreation is limited by financial circumstances or absence of transport.

It was expected that “most district councils in effect will build upon schemes such as Leisure Cards, packaging bus travel and leisure centre fees” and that outreach work would become more prevalent (Association of District Councils, 1993). Clearly poor people were supposed to be included in the last, rather ill defined, category of those whose access is limited by financial circumstance *or* absence of transport. Exactly who would fit in this group is unclear, perhaps including people experiencing more financial hardship than normal, or those who do not own a car? There was, however, encouragement for Leisure Card Schemes, although this was linked specifically to packaging bus travel with facility discounts, and appears to be a rather off-the-cuff recommendation made without reference to any research. In short, unitary status was not supposed to alter former district council sport and recreation department structures or operation.

Legislation against the trade unions continued and support for the service sector increased the flexibility of the workforce still further. This culminated in the 1993 legislation which allowed workers to choose which union they joined or not to join any if they wished. Meanwhile, unemployment remained high and ‘workfare style’ policies including forced job seeking (Job Seekers’ Allowance) and means tested benefits were extended. It was at this point during the early/mid 1990s that publications on poverty and social exclusion began to highlight the increases in the number of poor people in Britain since 1979 and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor (see Chapter 2).

John Major’s concerted effort to form a distinct identity for his government came with the introduction of Charters. These were established to set the standards for public service delivery, placing customers at the centre of the process and emphasising quality. All of the major services (rail, gas, water, electricity, telecommunications) had a Charter imposed and a *Citizens’ Charter* was also established in an attempt to make government more responsive. The Next Steps agencies were also expanded in the civil service and by 1995 102 existed, containing 60% of civil servants. Contracting out of government services also continued, amounting to £1bn in work and the loss of 26,000 civil service jobs.

The introduction of Benefits Agencies (1991) aimed at harmonising the system and increasing its effectiveness saw increases in delays in payments, inflexibility regarding claimants’ change in circumstance and an overall continuation of a confusing, stigmatising,

administratively oppressive and alienating system (Kempson, 1996). Benefit take-up was still low, with families missing out on as much as £20 per week and failure to take up Family Credit as high as 29%. This was compounded by the inability of low income groups to take advantage of credit facilities.

The lack of central government commitment to anti-poverty initiatives in general was evident within leisure policy in the 'one-nation' Conservative rhetoric of the *Sport: Raising the Game* White Paper (Department of National Heritage, 1995) which arose as two broad issues served to raise the political profile of sport:

1. the supposed decline in school and school age sport; and
2. lack of international sporting success (Coalter, 1999a: p. 24).

In relation to these two issues, Coalter (1999a) highlighted the growth in general sports participation between 1977 and 1986 by 34%, which was followed by a reduced rate of growth in the late 1980s and then a levelling off in the period until 1996. However, these figures hid the growth of individualised activity (swimming, keep fit, cycling, weight training) all of which are flexible in terms of when training and participation can take place, are largely non-competitive, and are related to a more general concern for health and fitness. This was coupled with a fall in squash and badminton participation rates, as two important 'pair' activities, and no, or little, growth in the traditional team sports.

Raising the Game (DNH, 1995) (the first White Paper on sport since 1975) reflected the concern for these trends, concentrating on school sport, and establishing principles for the development of sports clubs in partnership with schools, and established a basis to ensure participation continued after school and was to be 'life long'. The programmes implemented (principally through the Youth Sport Trust and the National Coaching Foundation) were TOPS programmes for pre-school to secondary school age, Champion Coaching, the Young People and Sport Task Force, Team Sport Scotland and Youth Sport Northern Ireland.

No reference was made to encouraging participation amongst disadvantaged groups (other than the disabled) as focus was placed on increasing participation amongst young people and raising the standard of national sporting performance (Collins, 1996). This reflected a

continuing trend in Sports Council policy dating back to the beginning of the 1990s when school aged children, performance and excellence, women, and later the disabled and ethnic minorities, were selected as target groups, leaving behind concerns for the inner cities and areas of deprivation (Sports Council, 1991).

Moreover, the restructuring of the Sports Council into the English Sports Council and UK Sports Council, the British Institute for Sport and the shift to National Lottery funding produced an increase in new facility development, but no specific policies for disadvantaged groups or any guarantees that they are benefiting from this development. Even where priority areas have been established for Lottery Funding, applicants have to make a 20% contribution rather than 35% to the proposed scheme, this did not ensure that enough schemes would be operational in areas of deprivation or would be accessible for poor people.

The leisure policy vacuum with regards to the poor continued and there was no mention at the national level in England and Wales of policies aimed at the poor or deprived areas until 1999 (see Chapter 5). Ironically, it was in Scotland, the area where virtually no research into poverty has been undertaken, where the Scottish Sports Council (1998) in *Sport 21: Nothing Left to Chance* made the first steps to policy action for the poor. This strategy document not only identified urban poverty and deprivation as one of the “major barriers to participation for a significant group of people in Scotland today” but also acknowledged the “need for positive discrimination for remote rural and island communities” (1998: p. 21).

In summary to sections 4.1 to 4.4, and referring back to the concepts discussed in Chapter 2, clear shifts have occurred in the transition from the Fordist era. The paternalist Fabian/Utopianism of the mid 1970s, characterised by supply-led intervention in the direct provision of local sport and recreation facilities came at a point of crisis in the Fordist era. The inability to maintain public expenditure levels and spiralling inflation and unemployment levels signalled the need for change.

The emergent New Right within the Conservative Party led by Mrs Thatcher embarked on the restructuring of the British economy and society. The combination of monetarist free-

market economic policy replaced Keynesian demand management and combined with neo-conservative rhetoric, focused on the choice and responsibility of the individual. A concerted effort was made to 'roll back the welfare state' from a distinctly 'anti-collectivist' perspective, reallocating many of the functions of government to a variety of agencies and the private and voluntary sectors.

However, within the local leisure policy sphere during the early 1980s, resistance to expenditure cuts by Labour (and in particular New Urban Left) controlled authorities, and a central neo-conservative concern for social control at a time of urban unrest, saw the retention and actual increase in public expenditure on sport and leisure. The 'reluctant collectivist' perspective was also reflected in the provision of concessions and the emergence of Leisure Cards for recreationally disadvantaged groups.

Local authority leisure services were, however, subjected to neo-liberal policy in the form of CCT, but as stated above, few contracts were won by private companies. Despite this, the structure and culture of provision changed, as more emphasis was placed on economy and efficiency than effectiveness. This signified a move to more commercial sector objectives, shifting the balance within the reluctant collectivist position away from social concerns. Local authority leisure services had to be more efficient and accountable for their actions.

The succession of John Major as Prime Minister saw a change in leadership style, but a definite continuation of policies. The Major years were also characterised by increased use of neo-conservative rhetoric, reflected in the *Raising the Game* White Paper which focused on improving national sporting performances, traditional games and school sport, and away from concerns for disadvantaged groups.

Moreover, the dramatic increase in inequality between the rich and poor during the period after Fordism was also reflected in participation at municipal leisure centres. Although, as stated in Chapter 2, socio-economic groupings are an inadequate surrogate for representing poor and socially excluded people, Table 4.1 Shows how the AB group has doubled its use since the 1960s, while the DE group has remained virtually static despite a temporary jump

in the 1970s and the C2s have fallen by 7%. Since the 1960s the gap in use between AB and DE groups has increased from 13% to 32%.

Table 4.1 Average municipal sports centre attendance from previous surveys.

	Professional/ Employers & Managerial	Intermediate & Junior non manual	Skilled manual C2 %	Semi-skilled/ Unskilled manual DE %
	AB %	C1 %		
Surveys in 1960s	20	44	27	7
Surveys in 1970s	26	29	26	17
Surveys in 1980s	20	52	17	8
Surveys in 1990s	40	33	20	8

(Sport England, 1999c)

Sport England stated that:

Whilst positive progress has been made in attracting more women, older age groups, part-time workers and the retired to sports centres...less progress has been made in attracting people from different socio-economic groups (1999c: p. 40 unpublished).

Indeed, from Sport England's survey of users (155 centres) and programmes/ management practice (330 centres), 72% of sports hall users were classified as ABC1 when they comprise 50% of the total population. Moreover, whilst pool use was more popular within C2 and DE groups, AB groups still dominated overall use (47%).

In addition, men (55%) still visited municipal sports centres more than women (45%) and while ethnic minorities were well represented in halls (5.3% users compared to 5.2% of the population), they were under represented in pools (2.8%). Therefore, while some variation existed between pools and halls, and certain groups had increased their visits, the average user was still more likely to be male, white and from a high socio-economic group.

The same study found that only one in four of users was taking advantage of concessions at sports centres and they were more likely to be Senior Citizens. While this survey did not differentiate between card schemes and other discounts, these findings must call into question the overall effectiveness of discount systems and the fact that most local authorities appear to have failed to encourage sport facility use amongst potentially poor and socially excluded people.

As the context of leisure policy and provision has been set amidst wider political, economic and social changes, the following section will attempt to paint a picture of Leisure Card Schemes during this period after Fordism.

4.5 The emergence of Leisure Card Schemes 1980-1993

Leisure Cards Schemes emerged within the shifting economic, political, social and cultural structures described above. However, no research has specifically been undertaken to chart the historical development of Leisure Cards, and data is difficult to obtain as many local authorities do not keep detailed records. However, it is possible to piece together data from different sources that provide an overall impression of Leisure Card management during this period (Collins and Randolph, 1993 unpublished; Eady, 1994; Foote, 1995 unpublished; Local Government Anti-Poverty Unit (LGAPU), 1996 unpublished) and combine them with initial findings from this study's survey and the case of Leicester City's Passport To Leisure scheme. The case study provides detailed historical data charting the history of the scheme from 1985 to the early 1990s.

Of the secondary sources, Foote (1995) is the most complete, comprising a survey of all local authorities in 1995 focusing on changes to Leisure Cards after the implementation of CCT in 1989. Collins and Randolph (1993) provided detailed analysis of 24 schemes in their research for Cardiff City Council (now Cardiff County Council), while Eady (1994) produced a Sports Council factfile designed to help local authorities in setting up and managing a LCS, although this seemed to be based on limited primary data, drawing on Collins and Randolph and research undertaken by certain local authorities (e.g. Swansea City Council). The LGAPU undertook a survey of Leisure Cards in 1995, in reference to corporate pricing policies and the inclusion of these schemes in anti-poverty strategies. 75 schemes responded to the short questionnaire, and although the results were unpublished, the data was kindly made available to be included in this study.

Eady (1994) stated that Leisure Cards were preceded by concessionary user schemes based around discounts for target groups at facilities which emerged in the 1970s, with the

realisation that providing facilities alone was not enough to increase participation rates, highlighted earlier in this Chapter. These concessions comprised a “huge assortment” varying between, and often within authorities making them very difficult to classify and coherently research (1994: p. 1). Eady (1994) speculated that these schemes were initiated for the right reason, but were not always particularly effective in reaching target groups. The introduction of Leisure Card Schemes served to co-ordinate these various concessions and discounts offered by municipal facilities within authorities. However, many early Leisure Cards were introduced and “left to their own devices” with limited awareness of the scheme amongst officers and the public (Eady, 1994: p. 2).

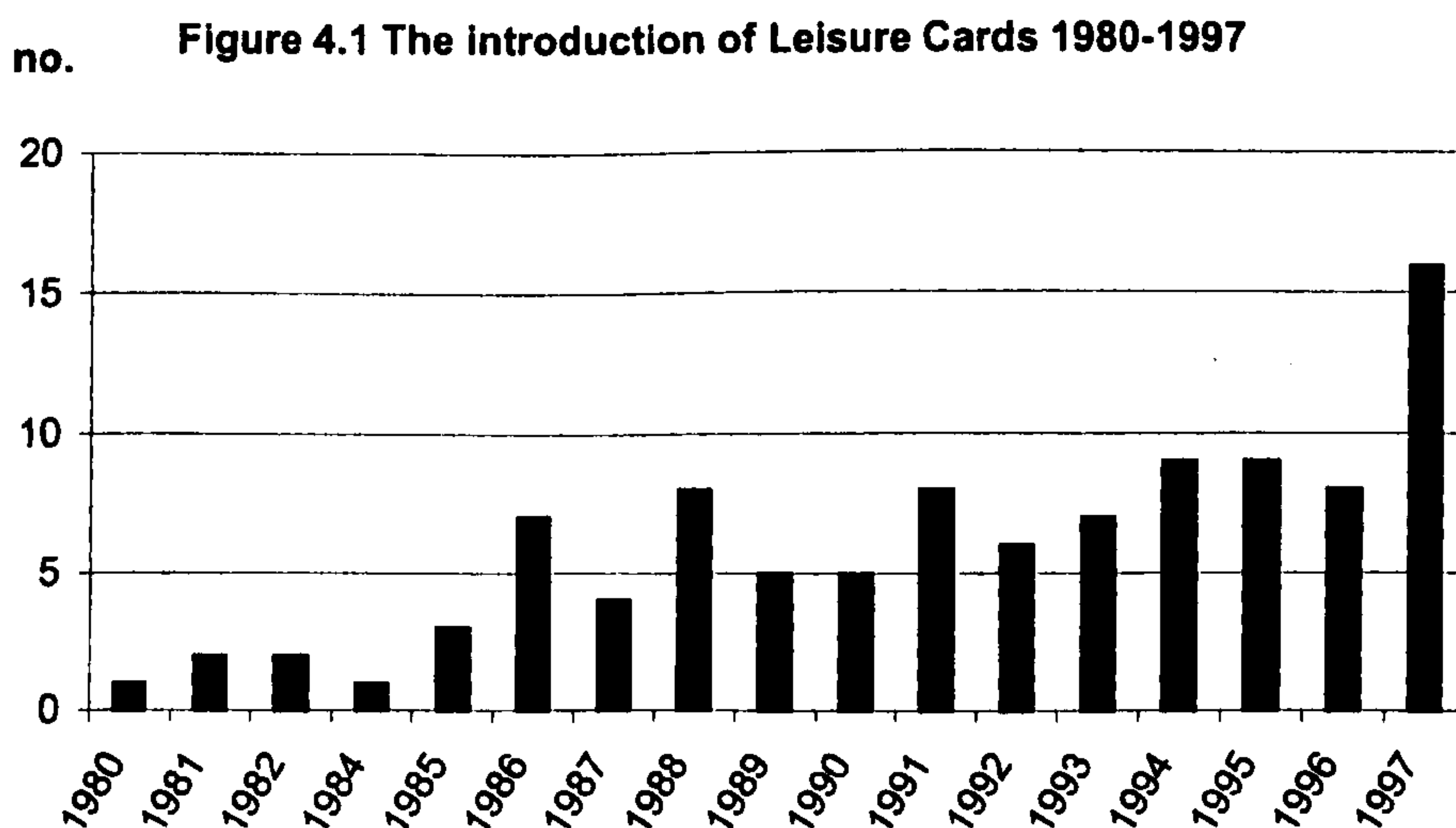
Indeed, Eady went on to claim that Leisure Card Schemes “have... been growing progressively less effective at delivering the objectives that match the philosophy that underlies them” (1994: p. 2). This referred to the inability to accurately measure the outcomes of providing leisure services for the recreationally disadvantaged and the tenuous position they assume within the public sector. Eady (1994) proceeded to provide advice to local authorities on how to manage their Leisure Cards effectively, but without identifying the specific problems experienced by operators at the time, which was better documented by Collins and Randolph (1993). The following sections aim to provide a more complete picture of Leisure Card provision from the early 1980s to 1993.

4.5.1 Leisure Card Schemes: patterns of introduction

In terms of when Leisure Card Schemes were introduced, Figure 4.1 (AT1*) shows the steady increase in the rate of introduction by the authorities responding to the national survey phase of this study, during the 1980s and early 1990s.

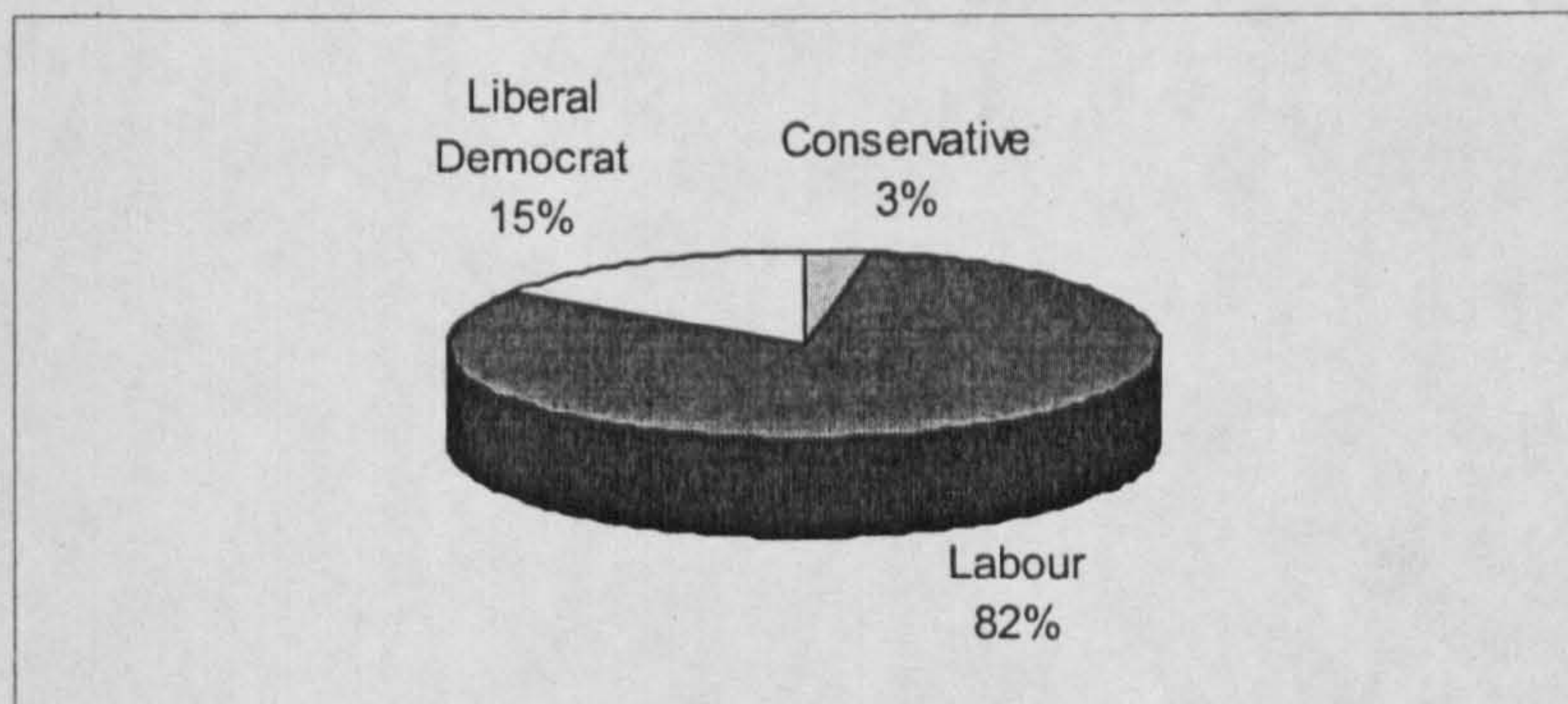
* All of the data for the graphs from the national survey and case studies are contained in tables in Appendix IV. Each table is referred to with an abbreviation e.g. the data for figure 4.1 is in appendix table 1 (AT1)

Nonetheless, between 1980 and 1989 only 33 of the responding authorities had introduced a Leisure Card Scheme; this had increased to 101 in the seven years to 1997. 1997 represented a boom year for the introduction of cards, although of the 16, it was estimated that many were re-launches of older schemes. This was supported by data from Foote's survey (1995) which revealed that 67 of the 132 responding schemes were introduced before 1989, twice the number found by this study in 1997. Considering the likelihood of common respondents to the two surveys, it is probable that many of the respondents to the early study have subsequently relaunched their Leisure Cards in a new format e.g. adding target groups and/or tiers of discount rates, changing the image of the scheme.



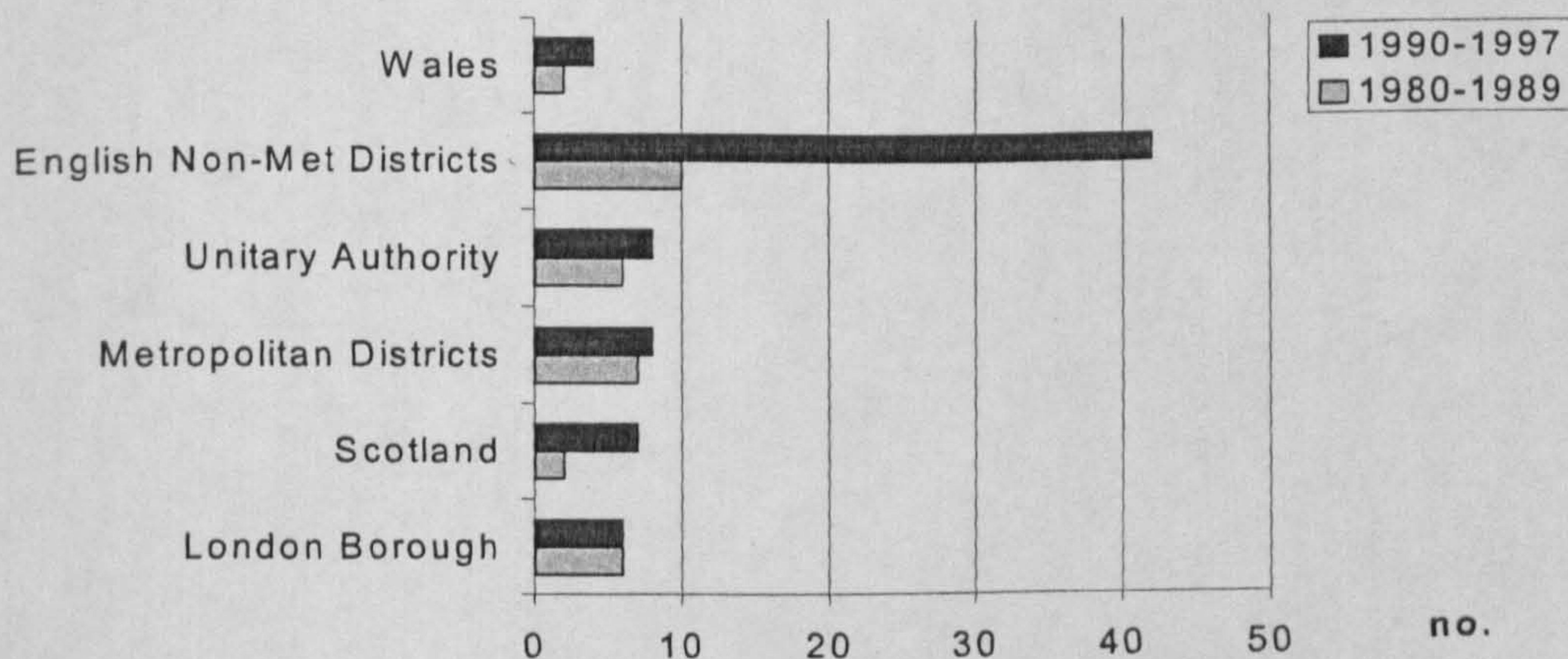
Of the 33 schemes introduced between 1980 and 1989, 13 were in London or Metropolitan districts (with a further six in what are now Unitary authorities), ten in English non-Metropolitan Districts, and only two in Scotland and Wales respectively. Moreover, nearly half of these authorities had more than 200,000 inhabitants. As Figure 4.2 (AT2) below clearly shows, Leisure Cards were introduced into predominantly Labour controlled authorities (82%), with Liberal Democrats (formerly SDP/Liberal Alliance) a distant second (15%), which was nonetheless high in proportion to political control at that time, contrasting with the Conservative authorities' 2% of the sample. Therefore, between 1980 and 1989 Leisure Cards were introduced, above all, in large, Metropolitan, Labour controlled authorities.

Figure 4.2 Political control of local authorities introducing Leisure Cards 1980-1989



The rapid growth in the introduction of cards between 1990 and 1997 occurred in a wider range of authority types. Figure 4.3 (AT3) shows the explosion of LCS introduction in English non-Metropolitan authorities as well as increases in Scotland and Wales, while the London, Metropolitan and Unitary authorities remained relatively static. This was also reflected in the fact that 67% of these authorities had populations below 200,000.

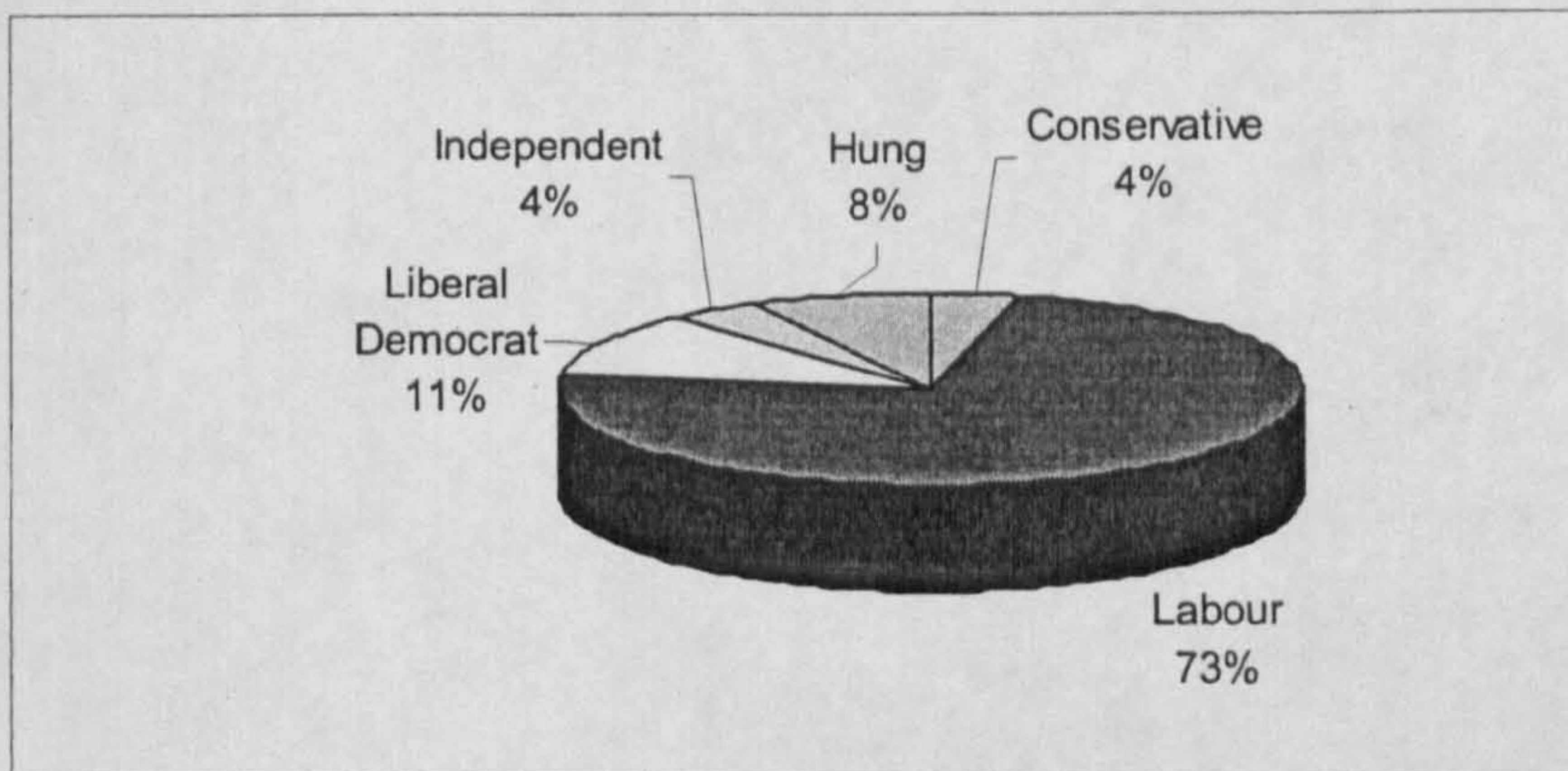
Figure 4.3 Introduction of Leisure Cards by local authority type 1980-1997



The political control of authorities introducing cards between 1990 and 1997 was also slightly more diverse. Figure 4.4 (AT4) shows the growth of introductions in hung and independent local authorities, with decreases in those under Liberal Democrat and Labour control. However, again this must be interpreted in terms of the overall control of

authorities by political parties, especially in the light of significant Labour gains in the 1993 local elections and then the landslide of 1997.

Figure 4.4 Political control of local authorities introducing Leisure Cards 1990-97



Therefore, a diffusion of LCS occurred in Great Britain, from the major Metropolitan cities in England to the shires. The constant factor is that Leisure Cards have been introduced more rarely under Conservative control, demonstrating that they are a phenomenon which has developed and grown against the political tide of that era, continuing to flourish with the emergence of New Labour.

4.5.2 Objectives

Foote (1995) stated that 83% of Leisure Cards were operated with social objectives. However, he also identified an increasing proportion of schemes introduced after 1989 operating cards with commercial objectives (69% after 1989 compared to 29% before). It must be noted that Foote included promoting/encouraging use at facilities as a social objective when it also has clear financial implications. Despite this trend, the results from the 1995 survey indicated that commercial objectives were not being implemented at the expense of social objectives and that a 'mix' of the two was more common. It is difficult to attribute this increasing concern for commercial factors directly to the introduction of CCT in 1989, but it is likely to have been an influential factor.

These findings are reflected in Collins and Randolph's earlier study (n=24), with the most common objective being to serve the disadvantaged (19), followed by a mix of commercial/managerial objectives, such as the need to merge/rationalise existing discount schemes (9) and to fill off-peak capacity (9).

Focusing on one of the case studies, Leicester City Council was a Labour controlled Metropolitan authority, and the aims of the Passport To Leisure (PTL) scheme in 1985 when it was established, "were to be far more wide reaching than the previous schemes" and more specifically to:

- ❑ ensure that disadvantaged groups resident in the city have access to Council facilities at a reasonable cost;
- ❑ make recreational activities possible for those with low incomes who reside in the City;
- ❑ attempt, by negotiated discount, to minimise the effects of loss of income;
- ❑ issue a concession identity card to members of disadvantaged groups listed above;
- ❑ enable and encourage those disadvantaged through poverty to take part in leisure with those who have a more reasonable level of income;
- ❑ increase the use of municipal facilities during both peak and off-peak periods;
- ❑ unify the current concession schemes offered by the City Council; and
- ❑ increase the take-up of this scheme by offering an attractive range of concessions (Leicester City Council, 1985).

Therefore, the aims were mixed, but balanced in favour of those with a social and welfare basis, with a concern for 'damage limitation' in terms of loss of income. Poverty was explicitly mentioned and defined principally by lack of income, and the priority was clearly to enable these people access to leisure facilities and activities by providing discounts. Moreover, there was a commitment to social inclusion and integration, through encouraging the poor to participate along side those with "more reasonable levels of income" rather than adopting a two-tier approach through off-peak restrictions, or encouraging those who could afford to participate in the private sector to do so. However, this objective clearly had to be balanced against the desire to increase off-peak use, although it is important to note that the scheme did not restrict cardholders' use of facilities. From a managerial perspective, the opportunity was also taken to unify and

streamline the existing concession schemes and to cater for increasing diversity in leisure needs by offering a variety attractive concessions, eventually to involve the commercial sector.

4.5.3 Target groups

Foote (1995) identified the three most commonly targeted groups by Leisure Card Schemes were the disabled, followed by the unemployed and then low income households. Although it is not clear how this last category was defined, it must have included means tested benefit claimants (Income Support, Housing Benefit, Community Charge/Council Tax rebate). Collins and Randolph (1993) found exactly the same three groups were targeted by all of their respondents. It is important to note that of these three groups, both the unemployed and the disabled do not necessarily contain people living on a low income. This raises the issue of whether people were being offered price discounts who may have been able to afford to pay full price. In this situation, members of these target groups who may be recreationally disadvantaged in other ways than lack of disposable income, e.g. physical access in the case of the disabled, or the stigma attached to an unemployed person presenting a UB40 when entering a sports centre to obtain a discount, were being encouraged to participate through perhaps unnecessary price reductions. This directly contradicts the findings of Gratton and Taylor (1994), Coalter (1999b), CLR (1993) and Kay and Jackson (1991) whose evidence argued for shortage of time as the main barrier to participation, necessitating the use of other methods to overcome this.

The membership of these target groups to a Leisure Card Scheme can provide a marketing database, enabling targeted, direct marketing, but only if updated computerised records are kept and if sufficient resources are available to undertake the marketing process. As we will see in the following sections, this was not the case during this period.

Until 1985 there had been a number of leisure based concession schemes operated by Leicester City Council aimed at the following groups:

- ❑ unemployed people (e.g. Leicester Stars scheme);
- ❑ disabled people;
- ❑ 16-17 year olds in full-time education; and
- ❑ youth training scheme trainees.

This reflected the target group approach to the 'recreationally disadvantaged' advocated by the Sports Council at the time, although these concession schemes were mainly available at off-peak periods (varying according to facility and activity) and were dual purpose, reflecting both economic and social concerns:

- ❑ boosting usage figures of facilities at slack times; and
- ❑ encouraging low cost participation by those disadvantaged in momentary terms in the various activities at the facilities.

However, it was decided that this was a divisive method of enabling disadvantaged city residents to access municipal leisure facilities and to amalgamate these concession schemes into a Passport to Leisure, and to increase the number of people eligible to participate in the scheme and reach a larger proportion of residents. The main form of research was a consideration of various schemes operating in other cities, particularly Birmingham and Sheffield.

Department of Employment Benefit Office data, 1981 Census data and Leicestershire Health Authority estimates were all used to estimate that there were possibly 100,000 residents (nearly 50%) in the city who were eligible for the scheme, including those claiming means tested benefits. Although limited poverty data was available at that time, Census data and benefit claimant levels were used, and no other research was undertaken into the needs and wants of the card's target market. Indeed, there was no consideration of other causes for members of the community not participating other than lack of income. Nor was there any documented evidence of targets for the scheme, neither financial nor in terms of membership take-up. The emphasis seemed to be on making participation cheaper for existing users and reflected the paternalistic ethos of providing *for* the community rather than *with* it.

The eligibility categories were extended to the following groups after the pilot, "which it was felt would achieve most benefit" thus diversifying and widening the target market:

- unemployed;
- disabled;
- 16-17 year olds in FT education;
- YTS trainees;
- Senior Citizens;
- single parents;
- low paid workers receiving state benefits; and
- unwaged or low waged dependants of those above.

These groups were broader ranging than those previously targeted by concessions and included groups that extended beyond state benefit categories e.g. dependants, Senior Citizens, disabled, 16-17 year olds in full-time education, single parents, and the unemployed. As a result, the target market for the card included traditionally low participation groups (as defined by the Sports Council) and therefore people who were not necessarily living on a low income, although some may have been at great risk of poverty e.g. the unemployed and single parents. By providing these groups with a discount, the perceived derived social and personal benefits from participation outweighed the potential risk of increased numbers of free-riders and resultant loss of income.

The implications for OAPs living on city boundaries within the catchment areas of the leisure facilities, but who were not citizens of the City, were particularly harsh. This raised the general question of whether city, Borough and District council boundaries should be enforced through Leisure Cards. Indeed, this situation was compounded by the price of the card to non-city residents, which at £10 per year, must be regarded as expensive when it was offered free to city residents. The situation may arise when two streets fall into the catchment area of the same municipal facility and residents of one are eligible for a free card, whereas residents of the other which falls into a neighbouring authority have to pay £10.

In 1991 disabled members were also issued with a *Leisure Pass Plus One* which enabled the member to take a partner/parent or friend/carers with them at a discounted rate, which

was also expanded to include all disabled people under 16. Special schools and residential homes were targeted for on-site registration. Age Concern established regular registration sessions. Single parents proved to be a difficult group to target despite liaison with a single parents action group, as they appeared to prefer applying under a different category (Leicester City Council, 1992). This is a good example of the need to liaise with relevant community groups and include them in the publicity and registration processes and also the double counting caused by eligibility under more than one category.

Eady (1994) and the Local Government Anti-Poverty Unit (LGAPU) (1996) developed categories for Leisure Card Schemes which were based on the groups targeted, providing an important distinction between the varieties of schemes operated nationally (see Chapter 1). Concession only cards targeted specific recreationally disadvantaged groups; multi-tiered schemes target numerous groups amongst the population as a whole, including the recreationally disadvantaged as only one tier of discounts; residents' cards targeted the whole population of a local authority indiscriminately. From the LGAPU survey, 36 (64%) of the 75 Leisure Card Schemes operated concession only cards, 28 (37%) were multi-tiered schemes and 11 (15%) were residents cards. It was not possible to ascertain from the limited LGAPU study whether the objectives of the types of scheme varied, e.g. if concession only cards were driven more by social objectives than commercial, and *vice versa* for multi-tiered schemes. Multi-tiered schemes include concession target groups as only one tier of a wider scheme and this has implications, not only for the objectives of the scheme, but also the allocation of resources, marketing and pricing of the card and the discounts. These issues are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

4.5.4 Activities/Facilities

Little data was available regarding the scope of activities and facilities covered by Leisure Cards during this period. Both Collins and Randolph (1993) and the LGAPU survey revealed that municipal sport and recreation facilities were those most commonly included, along with other services such as cultural events and libraries, but with few providing discounts at facilities from other departments. However, just under half (47%) of LGAPU respondents provided discounts at commercial venues.

This was reflected by Leicester's Passport To Leisure which provided discounts at predominantly municipal sport and recreation facilities as well as what was initially a small number of commercial operators. Indeed, it was not until 1991 that new discounts were offered and the scheme rapidly expanded into the commercial sector, including taxis, Caribbean carnival events, a golf driving range, funfairs and Leicester City Football Club. By March 1st 1994, the establishment of further partnerships had resulted in over 100 venues offering discounts for card holders including cinemas, pubs, restaurants, hairdressers, florists, local grocers, financial organisations etc. This demonstrates the potential involvement of the private and voluntary sectors in Leisure Card Schemes, a trend which the results of the LGAPU survey confirmed (1996).

4.5.5 Pricing

73% of respondents to the Local Government Anti-Poverty Unit survey charged for their cards. 86% of multi-tiered card operators charged, with £2 as the median, £4.35 the mean. 64% of concession only cards charged £2 as the median and £1.66 as the mean, considerably less than the multi-tiered schemes, and 50% of the residents cards cost £1. However, it must be noted that these figures, especially those for the multi-tiered schemes, hid a broad range of prices for the various tiers offered. In terms of the level of discount available to cardholders, Collins and Randolph (1993) found that 14 of their 24 respondents offered up to a 50% reduction, although this did not necessarily include all activities, with 10 respondents restricting use to off-peak times. Several schemes had very complex pricing structures, varying their discounts according to activities, facilities and time of participation. Discounts for the commercial sector varied according to individual venues and ranged between 15% and 30%.

Limited information was available regarding the initial pricing of Leicester's Passport To Leisure, although the priority was clearly to provide an appropriate discount level to target groups and to simplify existing discount pricing structures whilst minimising loss of income. The card was issued free to all those eligible and entitled them up to 50% discounts at municipal sport and recreation facilities (initially excluding indoor court sports) for individual activities, as well the card being able to be used as a deposit on equipment and for admission charges to the centres. Some theatres and private sports facilities also agreed to offer discounts and this was identified as an area for future

development. As the Passport To Leisure was established prior to CCT, Leicester City Council was entirely responsible for subsidising the scheme.

4.5.6 Management and operation

Collins and Randolph (1993) found that ten (of 24) respondents made cards available at municipal offices and participating venues, and some used a variety of locations including tourist information offices, libraries and post offices. Most cards were issued for a year and required a photograph of the cardholder. Renewal of cards was generally undertaken on a rolling basis to avoid the excessive workload of a single renewal date. One in three Leisure Cards had no full time staff dedicated to them, while ten had 1, 2 or 2.5, and they estimated a Leisure Card Scheme required an extra member of staff for every 6,500 members. In terms of finance, 8 schemes had no separate budget, whilst those that did varied from £900 to £150,000 p.a. (the latter including between 4 and 7 salaried staff).

Foote (1995) found that 26% of schemes had increased the initial charge for their cards but 13% indicated an increase in concessions since introducing CCT. However, Foote concluded that Leisure Card operators had not made drastic changes to their schemes although, as mentioned above, more schemes had adopted commercial objectives. An important factor was how (if at all) schemes were written into CCT contracts. As legally binding documents, changes to the scheme would require potentially expensive and substantial changes to the contract. Indeed, Leicester's Passport To Leisure was established before CCT and was written into the CCT contract, but remained under the direct control of the Client. When interviewed, leisure officers stated that if the scheme had been introduced after CCT, then it would have been operated differently under the influence of CCT requirements. Effectively the scheme remained 'protected' from major change and the contract even served to legally establish the structure of the scheme, especially with regards to the requirements of the facilities to offer discounts, market the scheme, accept applications etc. This reflected the trend identified by Taylor and Page (1993) in Foote (1995) who stated that concessions and Leisure Cards were the most protected element of local authority leisure services.

The management of Leicester's Passport to Leisure could be described as developmental and relatively *ad hoc* after its introduction as a pilot scheme in October 1985 with a four

week advertising campaign and a two week registration period. Eight facilities became designated registration points and extra staff were employed for the initial two week period. 1,945 members were registered during these two weeks and applications continued to be received. By March 1986, 6 months after its launch, the membership total had increased to 3,545. This was disappointing as 10,000 had been expected. Memberships were due to expire at the end of March 1986 but were extended to the end of March 1987. In addition, the measures listed below were undertaken to increase take-up.

- ❑ The number of registration points was increased to 35 by including all sports centres, neighbourhood centres, information bureaux and some housing offices.
- ❑ Neighbouring authorities were invited to participate by purchasing cards at £10 a head.
- ❑ Unit pricing on court games was introduced, allowing a PTL reduction.
- ❑ The De Montfort Hall (theatre/concert venue) and more theatres were included.
- ❑ Promotions were aimed at target groups with specific posters.
- ❑ Temporary cards were issued at the time of application, eliminating waiting time for full card.
- ❑ Cameras were purchased for the busiest centres providing photographs free of charge (Leicester City Council, 1987).

These measures showed a recognition of the need to maximise the number of registration points in order to make joining as easy as possible. Offering a variety of activities and segmenting the market through targeted marketing activities, indicated realisation that the Passport To Leisure membership categories had diverse and specific needs, as with any other market. The inclusion of cameras demonstrated sensitivity to potential members' tight budgets as four passport photos could cost around £2, increasing the cost of membership.

By 1987 membership was 6,791, and a part-time clerk had been employed to administer the scheme. Indeed, by early 1988 membership had more than doubled to 14,000 and staffing resources had to be increased in order to cope with the increased administration and to computerise the scheme's records. It was realised that unless a statistical analysis was made, managed development was impossible.

Due to the large increase in members during 1987 it was decided to issue membership for a full year from whenever the application was made (except for Senior Citizens- issued for 3 years, and for students- issued until September each year to coincide with school terms). This was designed to avoid unnecessary and large numbers of renewals at any one time.

In June 1988 Oadby and Wigston became the first neighbouring authority to join the scheme and the District was charged £10 per member; 201 members registered. Leicester City Council realised that many of its facilities were used by Leicestershire County residents, and it had received a number of complaints, particularly from Senior Citizens who had been required to pay full price since March 1987. Harborough, another Leicestershire district, joined the scheme in June 1989 with a charge of £3 for their residents with a subsidy of £7 per card by the District Council. The issue of 'County members' continued, as Blaby District Council joined the scheme in September 1990 but only offered the card to disabled residents and people aged over 60. The full cost of £10 per card was met by the applicants. Charnwood, and Hinckley and Bosworth District Councils both refused to participate, despite two parishes within Charnwood making enquiries about membership for their residents.

By March 1989 membership was 16,535, allotment rents had been included in the scheme and all registration centres had cameras. In May 1989 the Carer Card was introduced to entitle the carers of disabled members to accompany them at a discounted rate. At this time membership categories were also updated in line with changes to state benefits i.e. Family Credit and Income Support. In 1990 membership was extended to people claiming poll tax rebates and all 16 and 17 year olds to encourage more use of facilities by this age group. Soar Valley School was the first to be visited to enrol all school leavers with 150 members registered in two mornings.

Membership continued to increase, and reached 21,675 in 1992. The main reason for this was a focused campaign on registering 16 year olds in their schools and direct mailing to people of retirement age in conjunction with an initiative to issue them with travel tokens. The increased scale of the scheme resulted in an increase in human resources allocated to the scheme. The equivalent of 2 full time staff were responsible for issuing cards, and in

October 1992 an Assistant Development Officer was appointed to further increase membership through outreach work.

Not until April 1992 was the issue of cards computerised, which ensured that records were constantly up to date and reduced backlog. The pledge in the customer charter introduced in 1991 of issuing Card within 10 days was now possible. As a result, the issue of temporary cards ceased, which were previously used to bridge the gap between the time of application and the receiving the 'official' Passport To Leisure.

4.5.7 Marketing

Unsurprisingly, considering the limited budgets, resources for marketing Leisure Cards were scarce, with 11 of the 24 respondents doing little or no paid advertising (Collins and Randolph, 1993). Some schemes with larger budgets still only attributed a small proportion to marketing due to high administration costs, but 4 Leisure Cards claimed to do 'a lot' of marketing. The most common form of marketing was leafleting, followed by advertisements in the local newspaper and posters in leisure centres. 8 schemes used outreach methods to attract non-users, going out into the community to various community associations, whilst other respondents did very little.

Initial mediums of advertising for Leicester's Passport To Leisure included:

- ☐ local radio and TV; and
- ☐ leaflets and posters distributed to all City Council facilities, libraries, benefit offices, youth clubs, schools, social services, and disabled organisations.

An intensive promotional campaign was planned to re-launch the card in March 1987 at the time of the first renewals. This campaign included:

- ☐ street banners
- ☐ local radio
- ☐ local newspapers
- ☐ the Leicester City Council's Link magazine
- ☐ posters; and
- ☐ leaflets.

As a result of the March promotion, 10,000 new members registered and a further campaign at the City of Leicester show (held at August Bank Holiday) was followed by a rolling programme of promotions at neighbourhood centres, when free photographs were available.

Again memberships had been extended for another year, until March 1988. A 'Passport to Leisure Day' was held to publicise the need to renew membership. All sports centres offered a free activity for renewing members and all registration centres were equipped with cameras. Those members recorded on computer were notified by letter that the Day was taking place. Advertisements were also placed in Council's 'Link' magazine, the 'Leicester Mercury' and on local radio. Street banners were again used, and posters were flashed with 'renew your PTL now' stickers. Despite the publicity, only 420 people renewed their cards on Passport To Leisure Day, which must be regarded as a failure, demonstrating the ineffectiveness of fixed date renewals.

Throughout the summer of 1989 discounts were offered to Passport To Leisure cardholders at county cricket matches and a registration point was set up at the ground at Sunday matches. Passport To Leisure sponsored the game between Leicestershire and the touring Australians, with a lucky numbers draw being held to allocate tickets to Passport To Leisure cardholders for that match. The number of members registered was small but the attendance of members was deemed to have been a successful public relations exercise (Leicester City Council, 1989). This link with the County Cricket Club continued and in June 1990 over 1,000 children were invited to watch the West Indies play Leicestershire as part of another sponsorship deal, and at Christmas 1991 a competition was held for members for hampers through the 'Link' magazine.

Moreover, in recognition of Leicester's ethnic diversity, posters were translated into five languages, and the Leicester Show and Navratri festival were provided with registration facilities and the *Leisure Pass Plus One* card was publicised through contacting relevant groups and agencies.

4.5.8 Monitoring

In the Local Government Anti-Poverty Unit, only 69% of 'concession only' card schemes stated that they undertook some form of monitoring, most commonly involving use of services and the numbers of cardholders, with only two monitoring area of residence of members. Of these schemes, only one used swipe card technology, seven used barcodes/electronic tills, while the majority used some form of information technology. All of the multi-tiered schemes that responded to this section of the questionnaire (15) undertook some form of marketing from breakdowns of membership categories (10), services used (9) to area of residence (3) and socio-demographic analyses (3). The majority used 'new technology databases' (11), while only 2 used networked swipe cards, bar codes (2) and only one electronic tills. Residents cards were monitored much less, just over 50% undertaking any monitoring at all, with few using new technology. These findings are broadly consistent with Collins and Randolph's study (1993).

A research project, undertaken by Leicester Polytechnic for Leicester City Council in 1988, emphasised the need for more publicity, more information for the public and a more extensive package of user benefits to overcome the scheme's sports oriented image, which could restrict its appeal to women, older people and those 33% of adults who did not regard themselves as 'sporty' (Allied Dunbar National Fitness Survey, 1992). The commercial sector remained relatively uninvolved, neglecting the wider leisure aspect of the card.

In terms of renewals, April and May saw a large number of applications, and by September 1988 6,500 people had renewed their memberships while an additional 4,000 applied for the first time. This still represented a renewal rate of less than 50%, although a proportion of these may have been because Senior Citizens did not need to renew, and some students were no longer eligible.

It was not until December 1989 all records that had been kept manually were computerised and analysis of figures was possible. Membership stood at over 16,000 plus 400 from neighbouring districts. The take-up rate was improved from 17% to 21% because the estimated number of people eligible for the card was reduced from 100,000 to 80,000 due to people being covered by more than one category. The scheme was reviewed quarterly

for the attention of the Leisure Services Committee as well as the officers. This was inline with Collins and Randolph's (1993) attempt to demonstrate the membership take-up of thirteen of the responding schemes, which was hampered by the inability to accurately identify target populations due principally to double-counting of people eligible for a card under more than one category. However, for schemes operating a two-tiered structure, a take-up rate of 25% for the population as a whole seemed typical, although this required 5 or 6 years of marketing.

The 25,000th member joined Leicester's Passport To Leisure in April 1993 and membership continued to increase, and the success of the scheme was measured by 'the number of members recruited and retained', but the number of members was only 25% of those eligible, although this reflected the percentage of the total population which used leisure facilities (Leicester City Council, 1994). At this point, the main aims of the scheme were to maintain the 25,000 members and to further increase participation by them, and so the drive for new members ceased. It was realised that 'success in terms of increased use at facilities is difficult to measure without a computerised point of sale facility' (Leicester City Council, 1994). The scheme also aimed to increase the number of private partnerships within the scheme.

4.6 Conclusion

It is clear then, that Leisure Cards with their primarily social objectives and concerns for including economically and socially disadvantaged people in leisure pursuits, emerged and grew against the political tide of the era. These schemes provided clear examples of local government intervention in the market place to reduce the price of participation for selected target groups, the majority of whom were recipients of state benefit of some form.

Indeed, Leisure Card Schemes were established initially by Labour controlled Metropolitan authorities many of which were in direct conflict with the Conservative central government over restrictions on public spending. Leisure Card Schemes were also largely protected from the introduction of CCT and attempts to increase efficiency through implementing more flexible commercial structures and practices. Therefore many of the objectives of CCT, such as increasing efficiency, economy and effectiveness, seem to have

had little impact on many Leisure Card Schemes protected by authorities with a strong commitment to social objectives and maintaining discount levels for disadvantaged groups.

Moreover, not only did Leisure Cards not seem to comply to New Right policies, they also did not share the concerns of the *Raising The Game* White Paper. While the latter was preoccupied with excellence and improving national performance in team games, Leisure Cards were providing discounts to disadvantaged groups in recreational and predominantly individual sports activities such as swimming and in some cases commercial leisure activities such as the cinema.

The overall picture of Leisure Card Schemes during this period was one of *ad hoc* and sporadic development, more consistent with the Fordist ideal-type model of expectations defined in Table 3.5 than what might be expected during the period of restructuring described in sections 4.2 to 4.4. Leicester's Passport To Leisure card provided a good example of the pioneering nature of these schemes, acting in isolation, not only within the local authority, but also in terms of the limited contact with other operators and the absence of published research to compare performance, practice, and to aid in the development of schemes. The approach adopted seemed to be highly pragmatic and consistent with the 'reluctant collectivist' model described in Chapter 2. This was also reflected in the initial commitment to social objectives and to enable those who could not afford to participate to do so via discounts.

However, the lack of information technology involved in the administration and monitoring of the schemes limited their marketing activities, which were analogous to that of a homogenous product market. Directly linked to this were problems caused by the lack of monitoring particularly in terms of data collected on take-up by target groups, use at facilities, and the renewal of memberships. Undoubtedly this hampered performance, and subsequent attempts to evaluate the achievement of social and even commercial objectives. Many of these problems were rooted in the lack of independent budgets for the schemes and a general scarcity of resources.

However, as stated at the beginning of this section, the secondary data sources gathered from previous research provide a general overview of Leisure Card provision in Great

Britain to 1993/94. While the survey by Foote (1995) produced quantitative data about the distribution of Leisure Card Schemes, their objectives, target groups, prices and certain management practices, there was no empirical evidence on *how* objectives were set, research was undertaken, prices were set, nor *how* Leisure Cards were managed on a day to day basis, marketed, monitored nor the problems encountered by operators. Indeed, Foote only recorded effects perceived by managers. Moreover, none of the existing research provided any convincing evidence as to the performance of Leisure Cards and the achievement of their predominantly social objectives.

The following chapters will further outline the analysis of Leicester, together with the schemes of Cardiff and Oxford, both established after CCT, and will provide a brief analysis of Brighton and Hove Borough Council which continued to operate traditional concessions. In combination with the national survey this provides a picture of Leisure Card Schemes in 1997/8 in the context of emerging New Labour politics at both national and local levels and considers the implementation of a new policy for the management of local government service, Best Value.

Chapter 5

The Growth of Leisure Cards: 1993 to 1997/8

This first part of this Chapter provides an account of the emergence of New Labour, its rise to power, and local policy in the period from 1993 to 1999 in order to provide a contextual background for the findings from this study which analyse the development of Leisure Card Schemes during this period. This is followed by a detailed analysis of Leisure Card Schemes in 1997/98, comparing and contrasting the findings of Chapter 4 and considering the overall situation for schemes in the face of New Labour policies, especially for the introduction of Best Value.

5.1 The rise of New Labour

The reform of the Labour Party began after the election defeat of 1993 and the replacement of Neil Kinnock as leader by John Smith, who set in motion many of the policy changes continued by Tony Blair after the former's untimely death in 1994. According to Levitas (1998), the discourse of New Labour was consolidated in 1995 and 1996, drawing on both stakeholding *and* communitarianism, and established the Party's position as the 'third way' between the New Right and the 'old Left'. The commitment was to economic efficiency and social justice. A crucial moment in this period was the ratification of new Clause IV of the Labour Party constitution which removed the phrase 'common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange'. Instead, there was a commitment to provide a framework within which the private sector could make profits, create employment and work in partnership with the public sector in the delivery of public services (Falconer, 1999). This signalled a movement away from questions of equity of distribution, of social and political emancipation, of higher standards of economic and social life and the improvement of working conditions (Levitas, 1998). Moreover, New Labour no longer gave priority to working with the trade unions.

The Third Way is described as left of centre, centre-left, the radical centre, or just the centre, and has been instrumental in the reform of the Labour Party, (see Giddens, 1998 and Table 3.3). Positioning New Labour in preparation for the 1997 election was crucial so as to offer an alternative to the Thatcher/Major governments while retaining traditional

Labour support. New Labour identified Thatcherism solely with neo-liberal free market economics and thus could appear left of the political centre by stating that reliance on markets alone was socially damaging, divisive, inequitable and inefficient. The acceptance of the inevitability of globalisation and specifically global markets, was constantly cited by New Labour as one of the major reasons why national government was confined in its capacity to intercede in the market place and thus limited its responsibility for continued economic insecurity. The message from New Labour was distinct from that of the New Right and the 'old Left' in that it did not seek to limit markets but recognised they needed to operate within a fair framework of rules with a degree of regulation. The values of a strong society and an active community were expounded, emphasising the interdependence of rights and responsibilities for citizens. Therefore, the embedded market and strong society replaced the New Right's naturalisation of markets and Thatcher's famous claim that there was no such thing as society, only individuals.

The Road to the Manifesto (Labour Party, 1996) emphasised the 'New' in New Labour and was transferred to visions of a 'New' Britain, a young and modern society looking to the future, not the past. Sound bites were a dominant feature of the high profile New Labour marketing machine, with supporters who would 'save and invest' (Powell, 1999). The image of the 'old Left' was shaken off and criticised for being statist, corporatist, hostile to markets and in the pockets of the trade unions. Even the Marxist influence on 'old Labour' was criticised and rejected as a narrow, class-based view of society which offered nothing to the current pluralist society (Mandelson and Liddle, 1996; Blair, 1996). Old-style collectivism was replaced with New Labour's commitment to a social democratic tradition, but with a new 'economic hard edge' to its thinking (Blair, 1996). Blair went further in denying the need for government to manage the conflicts of capitalism by calling for people to "forget the past. No more bosses versus workers. You are on the same side. The same team. Britain united" (Blair, 1996 Party Conference speech, in Levitas, 1998). Levitas (1998) described this as a consensual world where economic efficiency goes hand in hand with social justice and conflict is the outcome of outdated attitudes (not structural relations) and can be resolved by people being "fair, sensible and responsible" (p. 115). If the principles of the New Right were efficiency, accountability and freedom, then New Labour retained the first two but replaced freedom with fairness.

Job insecurity became a focus of the Party's rhetoric as it 'stalked the land' with security being 'life's most precious commodity', yet the majority of the population was insecure (Blair, 1997). The priority was to be given to security, skills, flexibility and work re-organisation, thus increasing employability. New labour's discourse was already moving towards Social Integration Discourse (SID) and secure paid employment as a means of both integrating those socially excluded and those at risk, whilst achieving goals of economic efficiency through a polyvalent workforce.

Moral overtones were most evident in New Labour's concept of a strong community based on rights and responsibilities as they aimed to rebuild a sense of mutual responsibility (Labour Party, 1996). This discourse was heavily influenced by the work of Etzioni (1995; 1997) and Gray (1995; 1997), for whom strong families were at the centre of a strong community instilling discipline and mutual respect in children and fostering a support network between family members. This was translated directly into the Party's manifesto which stated that the breakdown of family life damaged the fabric of society. From this perspective, the breakdown of the family (especially poor parenting) contributed to the breakdown of communities, which led to a breakdown of law and order (Labour Party, 1996 p50). Other factors contributing to this process were poverty, deprivation and unemployment, with Jack Straw, Home Secretary, stating that "the best way of cutting crime is to give people jobs" (*Newsnight* interview 14th April, 1997 in Levitas, 1998).

5.2 Local government anti-poverty action

The concentration by central government on tackling the causes of poverty and the general lack of commitment to alleviating its problems during the late 1980s and early 1990s, forced local authorities into action. The activities of some Labour-controlled authorities in the mid-1980s provided examples of 'local socialism' under the New Urban Left, and the approach of 'building from the bottom' in order to solve the problems of poverty with the involvement of poor people (Blunkett and Green, 1983). However, acts of 'local socialism' were not compliant with Thatcherite hegemony and efforts to curb public spending, thus fuelling central-local conflicts.

Indeed, the dramatic decline in local government involvement in the provision of welfare services, stringent restrictions on local public expenditure and policies designed to limit their decision-making power left local authorities with a limited role in dealing with the problems and the lived experience of poverty for individuals. The most recent developments in this area came in the form of local anti-poverty strategies, which were established in many Labour-controlled authorities, but have spread nationally. In 1995, 52 authorities had established anti-poverty strategies in England and Wales and an estimated further 70 were considering adopting one (Local Government Management Board (LGMB), 1995). Of the local authorities responding to this study in 1997, 33% had anti-poverty strategies (70 local authorities).

These strategies require research into defining exactly who are local poor people, how many there are, and where they live, in order to design activities and initiatives to meet the specific needs of this diverse group. The most successful strategies involve corporate co-ordination and ownership (Ball, 1996; Balloch and Jones, 1990; LGMB, 1995). According to research by the Local Government Management Board's (1995), cross-departmental co-operation can provide a diverse range of initiatives combining to meet the varying needs of target groups, and can be included as part of wider economic and social regeneration strategies. Despite this, only 35% of authorities operating of Leisure Cards responding to this study's national survey included their schemes in anti-poverty strategies.

Through a corporate, cross-departmental approach, the role of local authorities as enablers is re-emphasised, involving the voluntary and commercial sectors in providing opportunities for disadvantaged groups in community-building exercises. The Local Government Management Board went on to stress the need for the performance of anti-poverty initiatives to be monitored regularly and the objectives of each strategy re-evaluated whenever necessary.

Balloch and Jones (1990) identified how the pressure on local authorities to economise could lead to the reorganisation of services with a heightened corporate awareness of the significance of their roles in anti-poverty strategies. Moreover, they predicted that continued pressure applied by central government on local authorities to tackle the causes of poverty in the long-term may lead to a disregard for the everyday problems experienced

by poor people. This in turn could lead to a growth in social unrest and a re-emergence of the social problems of the early 1980s, particularly in problem housing estates.

5.3 New Labour in government: 1997-1999

The 1997 General Election victory by New Labour broke 18 years of Conservative government in Great Britain, and although it is still too early to assess the impact of the new administration, certain policies and processes of reform have been set in motion, especially within the welfare state and local government. It is therefore necessary to take a brief overview of policy since 1997, focusing on those that have affected leisure policy and the provision of leisure services locally.

It is important to note that the 1997 election campaign was fought on New Labour's commitment not to raise the income tax for the entirety of the first parliamentary term and to adhere to Conservative spending limits for the first two years in office. Although designed to reassure upper and middle class voters that they were not going to be taxed more under a Labour government, these policies have been described as a "self-imposed straight jacket" and a possibly unnecessary one in the light of the landslide election victory (Levitas, 1998: p. 129). More broadly, this demonstrated a rapid move from equality and redistribution to a mix of market based and socially authoritarian policies, a movement away from redistribution.

In an interview in the *Guardian*, Chancellor Gordon Brown demonstrated this point by stating that "the Blair government...is not a force for a more equal society" (2 August 1997). Therefore traditionally socialist policies for reducing inequality and poverty through redistribution were rejected. Instead, the causes of poverty were to be tackled directly rather than alleviating its affects through increasing benefits. The focus of this approach was on education, education and education... to coin one of Mr Blair's most famous sound bites, and getting people back into the paid workforce. This echoed the EU emphasis on work as the main way of combating exclusion (SEDEC, 1998). David Blunkett stated that "poverty cannot be an excuse for failure. It is poverty of aspiration and not poverty of income which prevents a child from taking full advantage of their talent" (25 February,

1997). Equality was recast in the language of the 'third way' as equality of opportunity and empowerment rather than dependence (Giddens, 1998; Le Grand, 1998; White, 1998).

Indeed, Gordon Brown tried to infer that inequality was only unjust when it affected the poor, and the rich were not to be penalised for their earned rewards (1997, *ibid*). Blair stated that he did not mind Britain having more millionaires so long as they benefited the community, which effectively legitimised the growth in inequality which had occurred during the Conservative administrations (*Observer* 21 December, 1997 in Lister, 1998). Risk taking and entrepreneurialism were encouraged as necessary to private profit making (Mandelson and Liddle, 1996).

Oppenheim (1998) claimed that Brown redrew Labour's map of inequality, placing emphasis on primary redistribution of endowments rather than secondary redistribution through taxation and benefits. While claiming that there was always need for the latter, the former was a longer-term strategy that tackled the causes of inequality. Contrasts can be drawn with the New Right's meritocratic society of an 'open road rather than an equal start', but it was still not clear how these 'opportunities' were to be redistributed (Lister, 1998).

Lister (1998) stated that a paradigm shift from equality to social inclusion had occurred in thinking about the welfare state. According to Giddens' Third Way (1998) equality was defined as inclusion and inequality as exclusion. However, Levitas (1998) and Lister (1998) both identified that this version of inclusion was based on employment in paid work and that other interpretations can be made which extend into social relations, cultural integration, spatial exclusion (Healey, 1998; Berghman, 1998; Room *et al* 1995). Indeed, by this 'third way' logic, if equality of opportunity is equal to inclusion; and inclusion is achieved mainly through paid work; then paid work equals equality of opportunity. Although the introduction of the minimum wage was introduced to secure a minimum level of income for low paid workers, there was still no guarantee of the quality of paid work and whether it involved employee rights, suitable working conditions or long term security.

Moreover, this paradigm shift to social inclusion has involved a redefinition of citizenship for the Labour Party to “the rights we enjoy reflect the duties we owe” (Clause IV of the Labour Party Constitution). This was reinforced by Giddens’ ‘motto’ of “no rights without responsibilities” (1998: p. 65). Again this fell onto the middle ground between collective welfare rights of ‘old style’ social democracy and the individual rights and responsibilities of the New Right.

New Labour produced two main sets of policies for addressing social exclusion after abandoning redistribution: the New Deal (welfare to work initially for young and later for middle aged people) financed by a windfall tax on excess profits by the former public utilities, launched in July 1997; and the Social Exclusion Unit established in the Cabinet Office, launched in December 1997. According to Levitas (1998), the former was designed to reduce spending on benefits, while the latter was driven by issues of social order, both having elements of Social Integration and Moral Underclass discourses (see section 2.3).

The New Deal focused on paid work; Brown stated that “the core value is work” and that “work offers self-esteem and inclusion” (cited in Levitas, 1998: p. 145). Blair identified the poor as a “workless class” which should be brought back into society through paid work (1997, in Levitas, 1998). Three groups were targeted as part of this ‘workless class’: young unemployed people aged 18 to 24; the long-term unemployed; and lone parents. Benefit claimants were ‘encouraged’ to seek and take paid work through a combination of methods which involved limiting eligibility for benefits and providing incentives such as ‘topping up’ low wages with in-work benefits e.g. Working Family Tax Credit. Powell (1999) described this as attempting to balance the carrots and sticks of the welfare state, involving education and training underpinned by elements of compulsion and arguably low benefits. Welfare to work was in reality welfare to work *with* welfare.

The Social Exclusion Unit was presented as a flagship policy, differentiating New Labour from the previous governments. It was part of the Economic and Domestic Affairs Secretariat of the Cabinet Office and had twelve full and part-time members from the police, business and voluntary sectors, the civil service and academia, as well as a network of ministers from relevant departments to guide and present the unit’s work. Its aim was to break the vicious circle of interaction between social problems by improving the

understanding of the key characteristics of social exclusion, and the impact of it on government policies. The approach was to involve as many actors as possible to bring about joined up solutions to joined up problems.

However, despite a broadly redistributionalist (RED) definition of social exclusion, the underlying discourse within the Social Exclusion Unit was situated between Social Integration (SID) and Moral Underclass (MUD) discourses (Levitas, 1998; Lister, 1999). Apart from the emphasis on cost cutting through solving the expenditure problems associated with the socially excluded, justification was given for avoiding redistribution policies: "we will have achieved that result (a more equal society) by many different routes, not just the redistribution of cash from rich to poor" (Mandelson cited in Levitas, 1998: p. 149). Ruth Lister and Robert Moore wrote to the *Financial Times* to criticise what they called a false dichotomy between welfare to work and solving the problems of poverty, and that the government was attempting to tackle social exclusion with one hand tied behind its back, that hand being the one that redistributes income through taxation and public spending.

Moreover, people identified as a priority by the Social Exclusion Unit were on the fringes of the labour force, and those who were a potential social risk. The latter was the focus of the Unit's first publication on the worst neighbourhoods in Britain.

5.4 Neighbourhood renewal: the role of sport and the arts

Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998) claimed that the Urban Programme which began in 1969, then the Urban Development Corporations and Task Forces in the 1980s, and the Single Regeneration Budget in the 1990s, on the whole, had failed to achieve their objectives. The reasons for this included:

- ❑ the absence of effective national policies to deal with the structural causes of economic decline;
- ❑ a tendency to 'parachute' in solutions from outside an area; and
- ❑ too much emphasis on physical renewal instead of better opportunities for local people.

The Unit's report went on to claim that "problems have fallen through the cracks between Whitehall Departments, or between central and local government" (1998: p. 9). At the local level it was claimed that nobody has been responsible for pulling things together, and there was an identified need for a 'joined up response to a joined up problem'. The emphasis was placed on preventing problems, not just solving them. In addition, place-targeted policies had also failed, with the 'trickle-down effect' never felt by the excluded neighbourhoods. In fact, the tendency had been for those who can move out to do so, being replaced by more vulnerable or volatile residents. Short-term attempts to 're-include' the excluded were replaced by direct investment and attempts at long-term community based governance and management of resources.

In the forward to the Social Exclusion Unit's report, Tony Blair stated that "over the last decades the gap between the 'worst estates' and the rest of the country has grown", and that the goal of the Social Exclusion Unit is to bridge that gap with strategic action which is no longer "imposed from above". The strategy itself combined national policies with area based programmes (see Social Exclusion Unit, 1998).

The report also laid the foundations for a national strategy for tackling excluded neighbourhoods in an attempt to fill the potential gaps which were identified earlier. The programme involved 18 cross-cutting teams from 10 Whitehall Departments, involving outside experts and is based around five themes:

- ❑ getting people to work;
- ❑ getting the place to work;
- ❑ building a future for young people;
- ❑ access to services; and
- ❑ making the Government work better.

It is the fourth of these objectives 'access to services' which is of direct relevance to leisure policy. A newly created *Action Team 10: Arts and Sport*, led by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport was to report by April 1999 on:

- ❑ best practice in using arts, sport and leisure to engage poor neighbourhoods, particularly those who may feel most excluded, such as disaffected young people and people from ethnic minorities; and
- ❑ how to maximise the impact on poor neighbourhoods of Government spending and policies on arts, sport and leisure.

The results of this report were published by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) PAT10 in *Arts & Sport* (1999). It must be stressed from the outset (which is something the report itself does not do) that this document was produced for England only. The report drew heavily on existing examples of 'good practice', making recommendations for the principles that should be applied to community development work and the bodies involved in this process. The basic assumption made by the report was that "participation in the arts and sport has a beneficial social impact. Arts and sport are inclusive and can contribute to neighbourhood renewal" (DCMS, 1999: p. 5). This statement is immediately questionable, and should surely read '*some* arts and sport are inclusive', as the performance and elite level activities in sport and arts are by their nature, exclusive. Moreover, not all participation based sports and arts activities are inclusive if they are not operated with that objective, or are not operated effectively. It must therefore be assumed that the report was concerned with the *potential* of sport and arts to be inclusive.

However, the DCMS report went on to establish an uneasy link between the social benefits of sport and arts and the development of talent, with these benefits to be "widely spread and the pool of talent to be as wide as possible" (1999: p. 5). This was followed by the assertion that arts and sports had a key role to play in the regeneration of neighbourhoods, harking back to the policies of the early/mid 1980s and Glyptis' (1989) identification of a dual role for sport and recreation.

Indeed, people were identified as consumers of sport and arts, either as spectators or participants, and that by consuming these 'products' certain social and individual benefits can be accrued. Throughout the report these benefits were mentioned (without reference to any research findings other than the case research) as: personal inspiration and insight; community identity and pride; creative expression; co-operative teamwork; physical exertion; giving individuals social and organisational skills; bringing out hidden talents; self-respect, self confidence and a sense of achievement; greater self-esteem and mental well being. Four focus areas were identified where sport and arts could help improve communities' 'performance', i.e. in health, crime, employment and education.

These priorities revealed a concern for social order in reducing crime, and for the economic potential of sport and arts in job creation and equipping people with skills to find

a job. This reflects the social integration discourse discussed in Chapter 2, where social inclusion is achieved principally through paid employment. From this perspective sport and the arts can tackle the causes of social exclusion (DCMS, 1999: p. 28). The leisure and tourism industries were described as “rapidly growing and creative” (*ibid*, p. 28), acting as positive role models, bringing economic benefits such as employment and equipping people with transferable skills, whilst also helping to develop personal confidence, flexibility and self-reliance. Sport and arts were also identified as lending themselves to collaborative arrangements, the development and expression of a sense of community, and in developing self-reliant organisations. Moreover, as sport and arts held “widespread interest, including amongst the socially excluded” (*ibid*, p. 31) they can equip individuals with various skills and produce benefits to the individual such as improved self-confidence.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport identified several barriers that needed to be overcome if the full benefits of sport and arts could be spread amongst deprived neighbourhoods. Many existing schemes were criticised as paternalistic in providing *for* rather than *with* people, as being ‘parachuted in’ from outside, as short-termist, were perceived as peripheral, lacked information on their impacts and outcomes, and were operated with poor or no links between organisations. The only consideration of barriers to the individual were that ethnic minorities and the disabled required special, systematic arrangements to be made for them.

In order to overcome these barriers, the DCMS recommended the application of a number of principles to schemes and programmes which overall aimed to establish a more ‘joined up’ approach to organising and delivering projects:

- ❑ valuing diversity;
- ❑ embedding local control;
- ❑ supporting local commitment;
- ❑ promoting equitable partnerships;
- ❑ defining common objectives in relation to actual needs;

- ❑ working flexibly with change;
- ❑ securing sustainability;
- ❑ pursuing quality across the spectrum; and
- ❑ connecting with the mainstream of art and sport activities.

Recommendations were also made to all bodies involved in arts/sport regeneration. This included all government departments, the New Deals agencies, local government, lottery distributors, the Arts Council for England, Sport England and specifically the DCMS. With respect to local authorities, the following recommendations were made:

- ❑ Concentrate on the four indicators of health, crime, education and employment.
- ❑ More geographic (ward by ward) assessment of provision.
- ❑ Better analysis of expenditure and outputs.
- ❑ Cross-disciplinary working teams based in neighbourhoods.
- ❑ Concentrate on young people.
- ❑ Seek to improve value for money from their assets/facilities by ensuring the widest feasible use of them (DCMS, 1999).

However, whilst the report focused on geographic deprivation, it also contained a section on *Groups at particular risk of social exclusion*, recognising that social exclusion could occur regardless of place of residence. Ethnic minorities, women, the lowest socio-economic groups and the elderly were recognised as low participation groups in sport using GHS data (1996). Whilst some consideration was given to why women participated less than men, (Kay, 1995), and to the issues of health and mobility amongst the elderly, it has been concluded that lower socio-economic groups tended to participate less but with no indication of reasons why.

Indeed, the DCMS (1999) report then stated “the PAT, however, concentrated on ethnic minority groups and on those with disabilities. These groups are both more generally at risk of social exclusion” (1999: p. 66). Not only was no reference made to any research supporting this argument, the evidence from Chapter 2 identified poverty as being central to social exclusion, as did the Social Exclusion Unit. No mention was made of poverty throughout the report. Means-tested state benefit claimants, who comprised mainly the

unemployed, those unable to work through illness or disability, the elderly with no private pensions, and many of the dependants of these claimants were all ignored by this report. This was made all the more strange as the report by Collins *et al* (1999) *Sport and Social Exclusion*, which was the main sport research report contributing to the overall DCMS document, identified poverty as a central barrier to participation.

Therefore, while the DCMS report was a positive policy statement that recognised the role of sport and arts in tackling not only the effects of social exclusion, but also its causes, the concept of social exclusion itself was not analysed with any rigour in relation to these essentially leisure based activities. Indeed, with the concentration on regenerating neighbourhoods through the leisure industries and reducing crime rates, little appeared to have altered since Sports Council policy in the early 1980s. The focus was placed on ethnic minorities and disabled people without consideration of the effects of poverty, or recognition that it lay at the heart of social exclusion. Indeed, the most positive part of this document may be the commitment of the DCMS to fund long-term research into the processes and outcomes of projects, which will hopefully produce the depth of understanding into the leisure behaviour of the socially excluded which is currently lacking.

Moreover, the report reflected the Moral Underclass Discourse (MUD) with a tendency towards social control within the Social Exclusion Unit which was also evident in their focus on truancy and the need to change the culture on workless estates. Social integration (SID) approaches were woven into this discourse with claims that “work brings a sense of moral order that is missing from the lives of many unemployed young men” (Harman cited in Levitas, 1998: p. 151). In the same speech, Harriet Harman went on to describe “the common currency of the giro” in one of her constituency’s estates, painting a dark picture of crime, fear and a lack of family values where whole families were disconnected from the world of work.

These moral underclass overtones were reinforced by Demos (its Director, Geoff Mulgan, being a key influence behind the Social Exclusion Unit). While adopting a similarly broad definition of social exclusion as the Social Exclusion Unit (including exclusion from participating in leisure), there was a strong focus on the need to make people claiming

benefits accept the responsibility to look for work as cultural (Perri 6, 1997 in Levitas, 1998). There was also no concern with inequality, rather the loss of access to life chances and ladders to self improvement.

5.5 The Value of Sport

Sport England published *The Value of Sport* in 1999, the first major sports policy document since New Labour came to power. It asserted that sport must compete for scarce resources and "face up to the challenge of justifying in more tangible ways why public money should be invested in it" (Sports England, 1990a: p. 1). The approach adopted in the document was pragmatic, using scientific evidence "backed up by practical examples of what works on the ground" (*ibid*, 1999a: p. 1). Sport England claimed that the 'new social agenda' introduced by the Labour Government meant that sport had to seek ways to strengthen its position "within a broader cultural and social policy framework" (p. 2). One of the main public policy themes that the document claimed will impact on sport was "a commitment to tackle social exclusion by overcoming the vicious cycle of multiple deprivation and poverty experienced in some of our poorest neighbourhoods" (*ibid*, 1999a: p. 3). Other themes included improving quality of life incorporating environmental, social and economic concerns, a broader philosophy of sustainable development within a wider definition of culture, and community based regeneration. In order to achieve this, the term 'joined-up' approach occurs again, as does 'partnership' between lottery distributors and local organisations, as well as recognition of the need to develop decision making and accountability to Regional Development Agencies, Regional Assemblies and Regional Cultural Consortia. The introduction of Best Value as part of the modernisation of local government was also identified as having an important impact on sports provision.

Indeed, Sport England stated that "the themes running through Government social policy are consistent with those that have underpinned sports development for years" (*ibid*, 1999a: p. 3). This was justified by the claim that equity and social inclusion were implicit within 'sport for all', that the benefits sport brings are multi-dimensional, and that as sport had long been the 'public face' of local authorities, it had often been at the forefront of initiatives "to empower and consult with local people" (*ibid*, 1999a: p. 3).

The value of sport was divided into four main areas: global and international importance; economic value; social value; and environmental value. The social value of sport included participation, the value of volunteers, youth crime, health, young people and education, and community regeneration. Drawing mainly on GHS sports participation statistics, women, older people, those from low socio-economic classes, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities were identified as low participatory groups. The document then stated how it will “address social exclusion directly”, focusing mainly on geographic areas of deprivation:

- establishing in some of our most socially and recreationally deprived neighbourhoods ‘sport action zones’ which will receive enhanced lottery funding and combined capital and revenue support;
- co-funding with partner local authorities a number of ‘Pathfinder’ projects supported by Single Regeneration Budgets to promote sport in deprived areas through innovative partnerships; and
- the establishment of a ‘small projects’ lottery fund targeted at small organisations which have traditionally found it difficult to obtain financial support. Priorities will be given to organisations which benefit young people, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and women and girls (Sport England, 1999a: p. 14).

In addition, the Active Schools, Active Communities and Active Sports programmes were designed to encourage partnerships and effective working between sports providers. Sport England also called for sport to ‘fight its corner’ in meeting the challenge of Best Value, impacting on various Government initiatives such as Health Action Zones, Healthy Living Centres, Healthy Schools and After School Clubs, ‘Pathfinder Areas’, New Deal for Communities programmes, seek funding from the Single Regeneration Budget and the European Social Fund, and to participate in the regional bodies that will be established.

Sport England clearly embraced the New Labour policy agenda and all its associated terminology and ‘buzz words’ such as ‘joined-up’ approach, partnership, social exclusion and inclusion, modernising local government and Best Value. The purpose of these documents was clear: to fight sport’s corner. The desire, which due to overemphasis verged on desperation, was that sport should not be left behind and lose out on valuable

resources. Questions could be raised, however, over the extent to which concepts such as social exclusion have merely been 'picked up' without detailed consideration in a sporting and wider leisure context, effectively jumping on New Labour's policy agenda band wagon. However, *The Value of Sport* identified that poverty and multiple deprivation were at the heart of social exclusion which is crucial in understanding the role which sport can play in tackling this issue. Unfortunately, as identified in Chapter 2, the only data available on participation amongst potentially poor groups was the inadequate socio-economic classifications from General Household Survey (GHS) samples. More positively, low participation target groups *and* target areas consisting mainly of deprived neighbourhoods and 'problem' council estates, were identified for allocating resources and programmes.

5.6 Best Value

As identified in *The Value of Sport*, the introduction of Best Value was of great significance to the provision of leisure services by local authorities and therefore to the management and operation of Leisure Cards. In preparation for Best Value, and in response to the Government's policy agenda, Sport England produced *Sport and Best Value Case Studies* (1999b), to provide guidance for local authorities. In addition, the Audit Commission published *The Price is Right?* (Audit Commission, 1999), bringing into question the charging policies of local authorities before the statutory introduction of Best Value which is reviewed in section 5.7.

Best Value was at the top of the government's agenda for the 'modernisation' of local government, and by 1999 it had published 12 principles of Best Value (June 1997) provided initial policy details, Green and White Papers (Spring/Summer 1998) (DETR) and a Bill (1999) to make Best Value statutory in England and Wales on 2 January 2000. However, Best Value remained undefined, and "is a complex and evolving concept" (Boyne, 1999 p2). The government has been criticised for not providing enough guidance for local governments, and that much of the responsibility for clarifying and developing had been 'passed over' to them (editorial in *Local Government Chronicle* Oct 1998 in Boyne, 1998). Sport England used the following working definition of Best Value in *Best Value in Sport Case Studies* (1999b: p. 7):

Achieving continuous improvement in the cost and quality of services through adherence to the 4 C's: challenge, consult, compare and compete.

Challenge

The basic question service providers should ask themselves is: why are they providing the service? This involves an assessment of how community needs have changed and will continue to do so, evaluating new methods of meeting those needs in the light of examples of best practice, and particularly in consideration of all partnership opportunities (Sport England, 1999b).

Consult

The involvement of the community in the decision making process was emphasised by Sport England. The methods of consultation were authority specific, varying from service to service but would need to be demonstrable throughout the decision making process.

Compare

Comparison will be undertaken through the development of local and national performance indicators and the Government stated that local authorities should set quality targets over five years that are consistent with the top 25% of all authorities at the time of setting them. The process of 'benchmarking' was also implemented, which enables continuous improvement through comparisons with high performing organisations, learning from them and setting improved standards based on the acquisition of this knowledge (Shetty, 1993). The process of comparison should also include the private and voluntary sectors according to Sport England.

Compete

One of the 4Cs is more equal than the others as competition dominated the White Paper (DETR, 1998b). The DETR described competition as "an essential management tool for securing improvement, and an important means of demonstrating in a transparent way that best value is being obtained" (1998b: p. 20). While Sport England claimed that Government guidance was unclear over the role of competition in Best Value, the legislation dictating which services must be competitively tendered was removed.

However, local authorities will be expected to demonstrate the principle of fair competition and that “they are delivering services in the most advantageous way” (Sport England, 1999b p. 8). The Government placed emphasis on establishing effective partnerships and that “services should only be provided in-house where this can be justified on the grounds of efficiency, effectiveness and economy” (*ibid*, 1999b: p. 8). In the event that this cannot be justified the Government will enforce competition. Best Value is underpinned by the concept of contracting out, but the legal obligation is removed and the notion of partnership between sectors is promoted. This gives local authorities more scope to protect the rights of local authority staff and consider issues of equal pay, staff training opportunities and minimum pay levels when contracting out or forming partnerships, which was not possible under CCT.

With regards to the need for comparison between local authorities, Sport England has produced a set of performance indicators for sports halls and swimming pools (Sport England, 2000). One of the three key categories of indicators was access and is directly related to the role of Leisure Cards. There were three main indicators and nine ‘others’ which are listed below.

Main indicators:

- ❑ % of visits by 11-19 year olds (divided by % of catchment population aged 11-19).
- ❑ % of visits from DE social groups (divided by % of catchment population in DE social groups).
- ❑ % of visits by black, Asian, and other ethnic groups (divided by % of catchment population of these groups).

Other indicators:

- ❑ % visits by 20-59 year olds (divided by % of catchment population aged 20-59).
- ❑ % visits by people aged 60 or over (divided by % of catchment population aged 60 or over).
- ❑ % visits that were first visits.
- ❑ % visits with a discount card.
- ❑ % visits with a discount card for ‘disadvantage’.

- ❑ % visits by females.
- ❑ % visits by disabled people (under 60).
- ❑ % visits by disabled people (over 60).
- ❑ % visits by unemployed people.

The priority target groups in terms of access were therefore young people (11 to 19 year olds), people from the lowest socio-economic groups D/E, and ethnic minority groups. Access for the lowest socio-economic groups and ethnic minorities was identified as a high policy priority for combating social exclusion. Again, this demonstrated the application of the term social exclusion to target groups without consideration of the concept itself, nor the importance of poverty. Chapter 8 will highlight alternative methods of measuring the achievement of social objectives for local authorities using Leisure Card Schemes.

Indeed, amongst the 'other' indicators are two which relate directly to discount card schemes, one of which sets a performance indicator for cards for 'disadvantage'. It must be assumed that these indicators refer to Leisure Card Schemes, although no reference was made to any of the previous research such as Foote (1995) or Eady (1994). It was not clear whether or not these indicators were to serve as measures of comparative performance for Leisure Card Schemes, or were for the use of hall and pool managers. If they are to be used in the measurement of Leisure Card Scheme performance, the following Chapters and especially Chapter 8, will reveal that these schemes are complex and require the development of more sophisticated evaluation methods. Leisure Cards are often corporately owned and involve cross-sector discounts, providing wider managerial benefits such as the detailed membership and usage information. The performance of these schemes is inextricably linked to issues of management practice and investment in resources, which must be taken into consideration before comparisons can be made with other operators.

Overall, Sport England (1999b) considered the introduction of Best Value as an opportunity rather than a threat, and that local authorities should embrace it or be left behind. This 'embracing' of Best Value will be easier for those demonstrating good practice in terms of having established objectives and targets within a coherent local sports strategy. Moreover, Sport England stressed the need for sport to be included in the corporate objectives of local authorities. *The Value of Sport* (1999a) document, discussed

earlier, made the case for sport's valuable contribution to the quality of life of individuals, communities and society as a whole. This was reinforced by the Local Government Association in *Enriching People's Lives* (1999).

The role of sport in making an impact on poverty was acknowledged in policy terms by Sport England, along with issues related to social exclusion such as equity, equality and related concerns for crime, social cohesion, job creation, social and economic regeneration and community development. The 'mix' of these issues combines social and economic roles for sport.

Indeed, Sport England (1999b) went on to identify 'those on a low income' as a priority 'target' group in this cross-cutting agenda, for whom resources were to be dedicated to:

- ☐ young people;
- ☐ the elderly;
- ☐ ethnic minorities;
- ☐ people with disabilities; and
- ☐ those on low income.

In response to this cross-cutting agenda, and as advocated in other New Labour policy documents, a 'joined-up' response was called for within local authorities involving cross boundary working and multi-agency partnerships. This integrated approach was advocated by Sport England to cope with the large amount of work involved in establishing and operating Best Value, especially as no new money would be made available.

Sport England realised that no two authorities were alike in terms of demographics, geography, resources and facilities, proximity to competitors, management practice and culture and political philosophy. However, it was recommended that authorities ensure that:

- ☐ the rationale for enabling and/or providing sporting opportunities is clearly articulated and is part of an overall strategic plan;
- ☐ the benefits of sport are quantified;
- ☐ resources are prioritised across the diversity of sport;
- ☐ consultation with the wider community is carried out cost-effectively;

- ❑ performance measures are quantifiable for each service area;
- ❑ benchmarks are determined that compare like with like;
- ❑ the energy of the whole sporting community is harnessed through effective and long lasting partnerships;
- ❑ client and contractor roles are re-designed and integrated;
- ❑ facility managers and Sports Development Officers work together; and
- ❑ competitiveness is demonstrable (Sport England, 1999b: p. 20).

Therefore, as Midwinter and McGarvey (1999) stated, Best Value was a process rather than a product, involving a search for continuous improvement based on a pragmatic approach, and the promotion of cultural change within local authorities. As it was about to be introduced at the beginning of 2000, nobody appeared to know exactly what it was and there was a “certain wooliness about it” (Midwinter and McGarvey, 1999: p. 93). They also stated that Best Value stood testament to the *ad hoc* nature of policy development and formulation, initially developed by the English Association of District Councils, Metropolitan Authorities and County Councils. Filkin (1997, a&b) predicted that Best Value will develop in many different ways as local authorities seek mechanisms and procedures to deliver quality public services in a more efficient and effective manner.

5.7 The Price is Right?

The issue of local authority pricing is of obvious importance to Leisure Cards (see Chapter 2). With a view to the impending implementation of Best Value in all English and Welsh authorities, the Audit Commission published *The Price is Right?* (1999) in which it advocated the targeting of subsidies at ‘top priorities’ and recovering more of the costs of lower priority services through charging and the income generated from charges can be reinvested in facilities and services, thus improving them. Charges were also identified as having the potential to achieve corporate policies through ‘joined up’ action. The example provided by the Audit Commission involved simplifying access to concessions and increasing take-up of services charging can help tackle social exclusion as part of an anti-poverty strategy. Other action involved avoiding under-pricing in order to generate surplus income, and using creative techniques such as concessions, discounts and eligibility

criteria to encourage take-up amongst target groups. The Audit Commission also advocated the introduction of a charge to increase the perceived value and quality of the service. More fundamentally, the report called for a review of council charges to dispel the myths and assumptions that influenced past decisions.

Indeed, from fieldwork in 20 local authorities, the Audit Commission found that while reviews of charges were common place, they were 'very limited' and based on little information. Standard practice involved taking last years price and increasing it by the rate of inflation. Little or no consideration was given to existing use of services or the effect changes in charges would have. The focus was placed on costs and income targets as the basis for price setting. The result was that prices were often set inappropriately, with low income groups paying prices they could not afford or not participating at all, while others were paying less than they were willing or able to afford (Audit Commission, 1999). The use of customer surveys was described as 'intermittent', and where data was available on use, many managers were suffering from 'information overload' (Audit Commission, 1999: p. 22). In the absence of monitoring and evaluation an 'information vacuum' existed which was filled with 'myths and misconceptions' about how to charge, and in some cases authorities were copying others' charges.

Moreover, the setting of objectives for charges was not widespread, with a particular lack of financial objectives and that "councils are unlikely to get the best out of charges unless they are clear about what they are trying to achieve from them" (Audit Commission, 1999: p. 27). Charges were recognised by the Audit Commission as powerful tools that can "facilitate or deny access to services, change resident and user behaviour, or enable service managers to develop and improve the service in response to users" (1999: p. 30). According to the Audit Commission, one of the key cross-cutting policy issues charges could help tackle was social exclusion. However, the following barriers stood in the way of this potential:

- ❑ lack of clear objectives;
- ❑ limited understanding of users and the market;
- ❑ little awareness of the power of charging; and
- ❑ poor quality decision making.

These were interrelated but were based upon a fundamental lack of joined up action, with much charge setting occurring in isolation within departments, rather than corporately. Many low income groups were given the 'run around' when attempting to claim the concessions they were entitled to, dealing with different departments, different sets of rules, requiring various proof of eligibility, involving numerous different forms to complete. There was evidence, for example, that concessions were not joined up with social exclusion and anti-poverty strategies. Moreover, policy objectives were not being turned into tangible targets across all 'target groups' identified in leisure contracts.

The Audit Commission recommended that clear objectives and targets should be set for charges and that the effects on use should be monitored and evaluated regularly. One of the methods identified to achieve this was "through a computerised leisure pass scheme which breaks down use by facility and time of day" (Audit Commission, 1999: p. 50).

The rise of New Labour to power saw the abandonment of 'Old' Labour's commitment to national ownership and redistribution through high taxation and public spending. A key part of the manifesto for the 1997 general election was the commitment not to raise income tax levels during the first term of government so as to attract the vote of 'middle England' and change the Party's image. Moreover, traditionally strong Party links with the trade unions were severed, adding to claims of distinct policy continuation from the New Public Management ethos of their Conservative predecessors (Falconer, 1999).

Indeed, many of the 'new' policy developments under New Labour, such as the New Deal which extended means-testing of benefits, the minimum wage, as well as the introduction of the Social Exclusion Unit are examples of essentially workfare policies focusing on social integration through paid employment (SID). New Labour has therefore contributed to the establishing of what Jessop (1994) identified as a Schumpeterian Workfare State, with a commitment to supply-side management, free market capitalism and an acceptance that social inequality cannot be redressed through indirect income redistribution (Dean and Melrose, 1999). However, this apparent continuity has been accompanied by a policy commitment to social inclusion and to end child poverty, demonstrating a clear break from the Thatcher and Major administrations.

Along with 'workfarism', an essential part of the 'third way programme' is the modernising of government, both centrally and locally. Evidence from the Social Exclusion Unit/PAT10 group, Sport England and the Audit Commission demonstrated that sport and the arts had a clear role to play in this process, especially in the implementation of Best Value at the local level.

Indeed, Sport England was attempting to put the case for sport's potential role in the New Labour Policy agenda, which was also reflected in the DCMS report on sport and the arts. The Third Way language of New Labour has been adopted, especially in calls for a 'joined up' approach within central and local government, and the establishment of 'partnerships' between agencies and sectors, particularly in reference to the introduction of Best Value. Moreover, one of the central themes in which sport and the arts were to have a role in tackling was social exclusion. A social integration discourse (SID) was evident in the focus on the potential of sport and the arts to create jobs and training for people as part of the regeneration of deprived areas. This was mixed with moral concerns for crime, social control and breaking cycles of deprivation within families.

However, *The Value of Sport* did describe the benefits of participation for individuals, which was echoed in the DCMS report, although no cross-references were made between the two. Moreover, poverty was identified as the heart of social exclusion, which was not acknowledged by the PAT10 group. The issue of tackling social exclusion was also evident in the introduction of Best Value, with both Sport England and the Audit Commission viewing it as an opportunity for local authorities, the latter advocating the reassessment of charges and decision making processes to target corporate priorities more effectively.

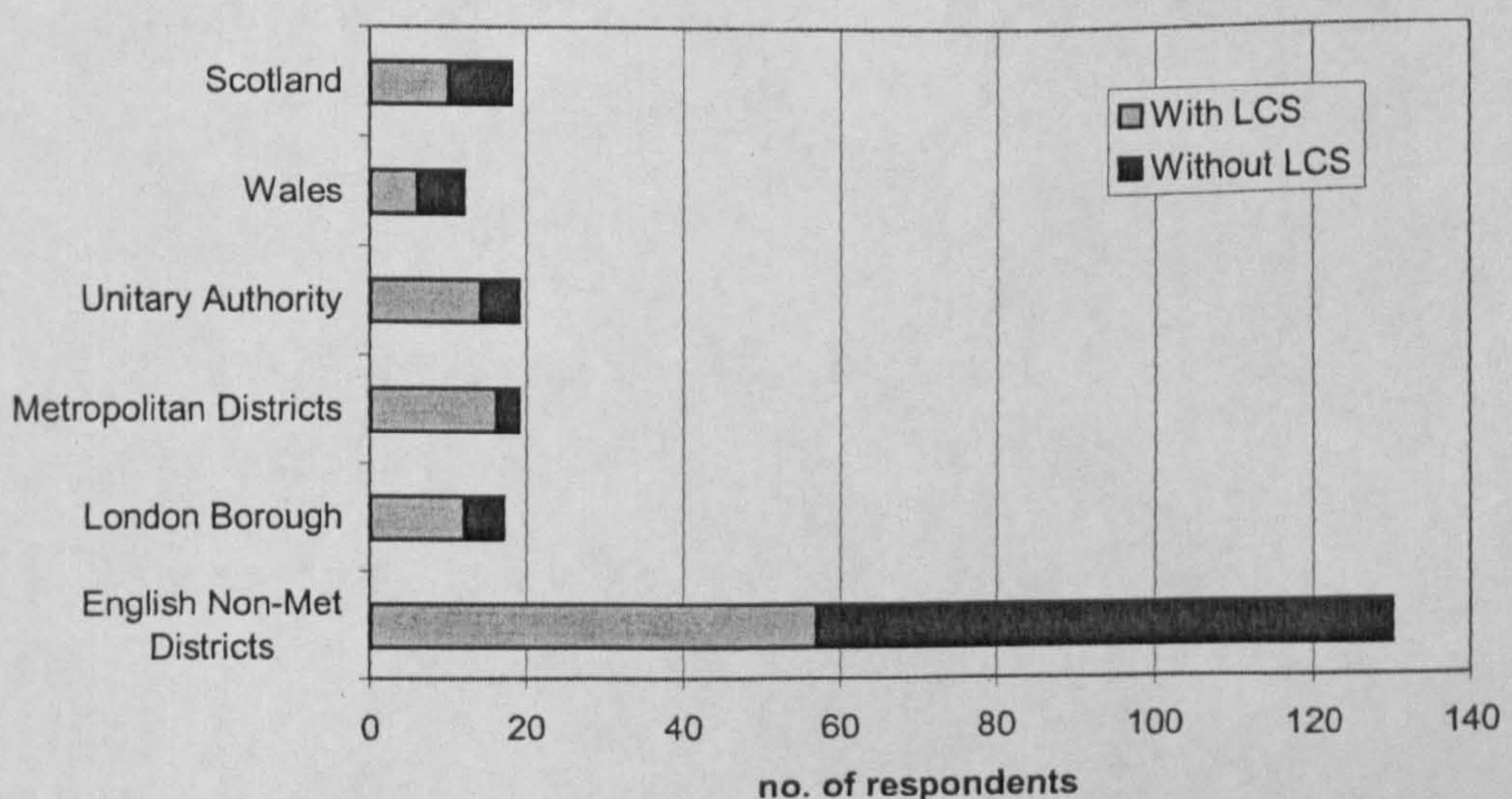
However, while social exclusion emerged as a 'target issue' and low income people as a 'target group', there was still a lack of clarity in defining exactly who this group consisted of and how they were to be targeted. There was a clear danger in the term 'socially excluded' being broadly applied to what were formally 'target groups', combined with a geographic focus on deprived neighbourhoods. The extensive body of research on poverty and social exclusion had not been fully embraced in considering the roles of sport and the arts and a conceptual gap still existed.

The previous sections have therefore depicted the leisure policy and wider political, social and economic context which existed for the inception and duration of this study. The remaining sections in this chapter will describe the pattern of leisure card provision in Great Britain in 1997/98.

5.8 Patterns of Leisure Card provision in 1997/98

Although it was not clear exactly how many authorities operated Leisure Cards Schemes in 1997/98, estimates from CIPFA data (1998), and the On-Line Directory (1997) were of over 50% national coverage, and the response to the survey reflected this, with a slight bias towards Leisure Card representation because they were the focus of this research. Figure 5.1 (AT6) shows that Leisure Cards were more frequently provided by Metropolitan Districts (84%), Unitary Authorities (74%) and London Boroughs (71%), while provision was less likely in Scottish (54%), Welsh (50%) and English non-Metropolitan Districts (44%). However, as described in Chapter 4, a diffusion of Leisure Card Schemes from the larger cities to the generally smaller English non-Met Districts had occurred, resulting in a fourfold increase in Leisure Card provision by the latter.

Figure 5.1 Local authorities with and without LCS: a comparison of authority status



Concession-only cards dominated the type of Leisure Cards offered by local authorities in the Great Britain from this survey with 55% (Table 5.1), compared to multi-tier cards with 41% and Residents' Cards with only 5%.

Table 5.1 Types of Leisure Card

Types of Leisure Card		
	n	%
Concession only	59	55
Multi-tier	44	41
Residents' cards	5	5
TOTAL	108*	

*insufficient information provided by 7 respondents made it impossible to classify their card schemes.

As shown in Figure 5.2 (AT7) there were no notable variations of card types between local authorities of different status except for the domination of concession-only schemes in Wales at a ratio of 5:1. In order to ensure the results of the national survey were representative, Resident's Cards were not included in the quantitative analysis.

Figure 5.2 Local Authority status: a comparison of Leisure Card types

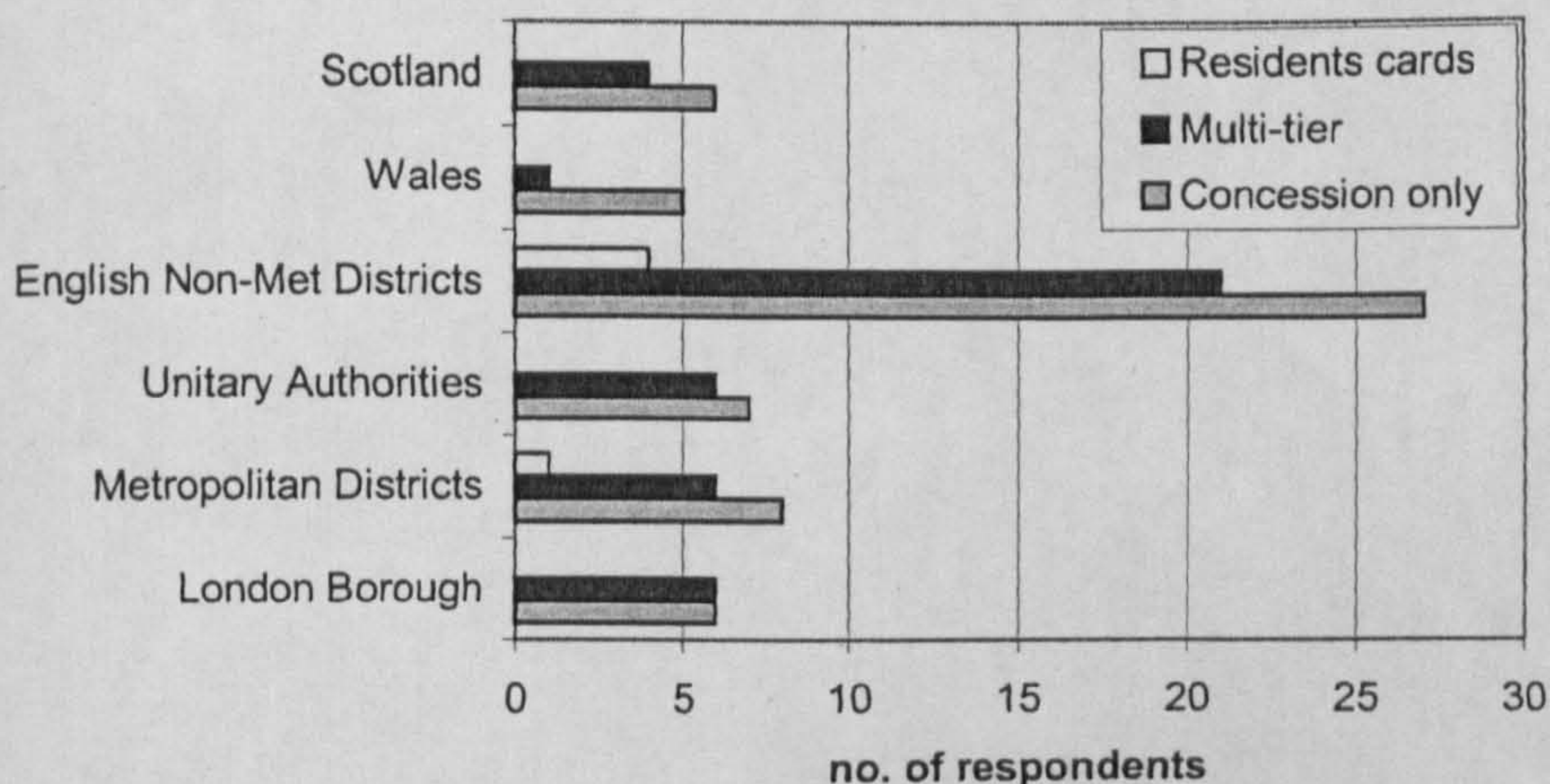


Table 5.2 shows that, according to the ONS (1998) classification of local authorities, respondents from rural authorities were much less likely to operate a Leisure Card (10) than not (33). Interestingly, non-Leisure Card respondents also outnumbered their counterparts in 'prospering areas' (39 compared to 26), despite the fact that Leisure Card Schemes were more prevalent in this authority type than any other. However, in 'maturer areas', 'urban centres', 'mining and industrial areas' and inner London, Leisure Card operators outnumbered non-operators. The ONS classification also revealed that while 137 authorities were classified as rural (25 being smaller Scottish highland councils) and 115 'prospering areas', only 44 were defined as 'maturer areas', 70 as 'urban centres', 74 as 'mining and industrial' and 17 in inner London, therefore the domination of Leisure Cards was more pronounced in these authority types. The average population sizes of rural and 'prospering' areas were also smaller on average than the others, 74,000 and 106,000 respectively, compared to 151,000 for 'maturer', 160,000 'urban centres', 195,000 'mining and industrial' and 202,000 for inner London, indicating that Leisure Card Schemes were more prevalent in areas with high population levels.

Table 5.2 Classification of local authorities: with and without LCS (Office of National Statistics, 1998)

	With LCS		Without LCS	
	n	%	n	%
Rural areas	10	9	33	35
Scotland	0	0	7	7
Coast and country	4	4	18	19
Mixed urban and rural	6	6	8	8
Prospering areas	28	26	37	39
Growth areas	23	22	26	26
Most prosperous	5	5	11	11
Maturer areas	13	12	8	8
Services and education	7	6	3	3
Resort and retirement	6	5	5	5
Urban centres	24	23	7	7
Mixed economies	10	9	6	6
Manufacturing	14	12	1	1

(continued overleaf)

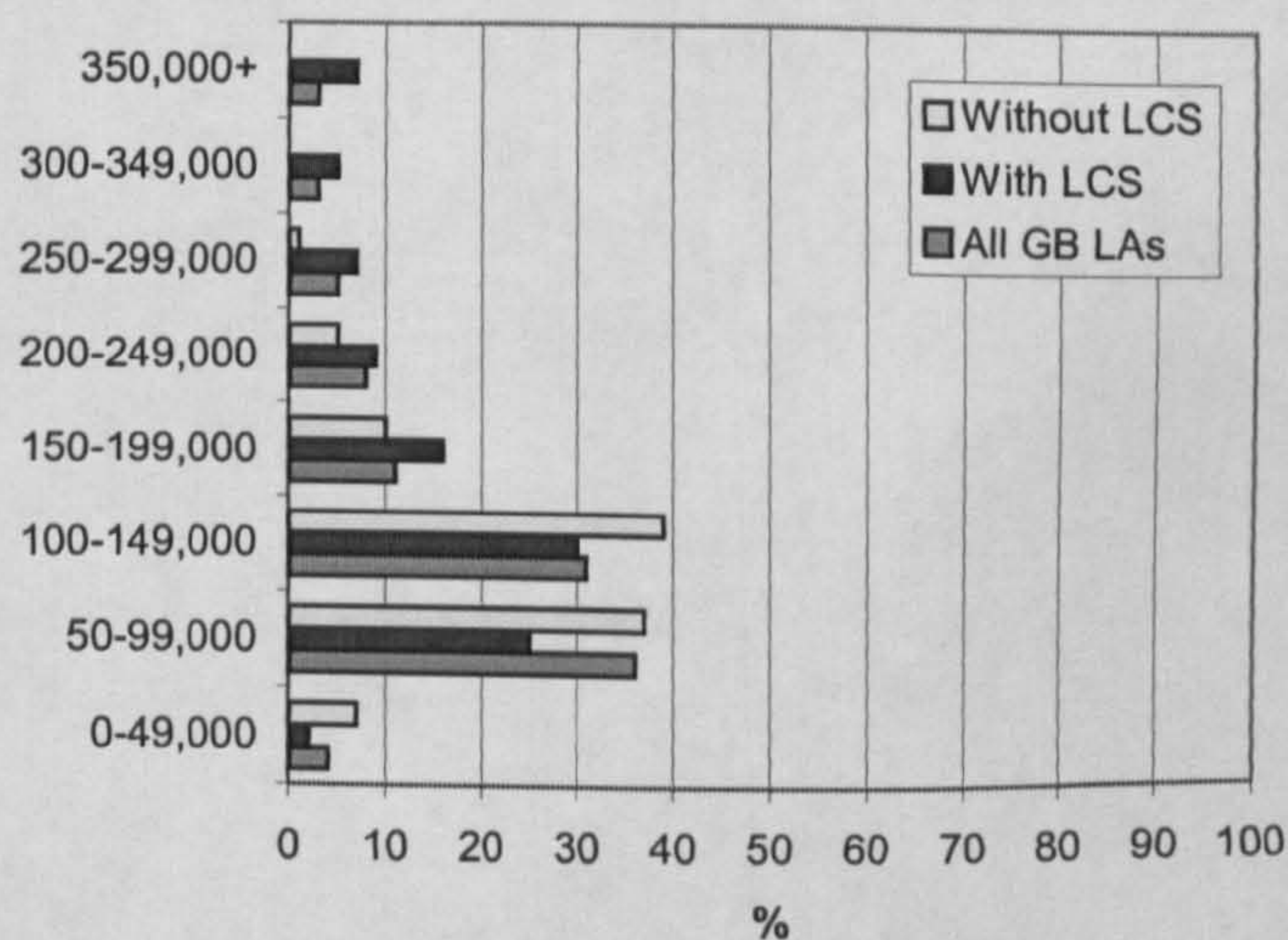
(Table 5.2 continued)

Mining and industrial areas	24	24	8	8
Ports and industry	10	9	4	4
Coalfields	15	14	4	4
Inner London	6	6	2	2
Inner London	6	6	2	2
TOTAL GB	106*		95	

*9 missing due to local government reorganisation

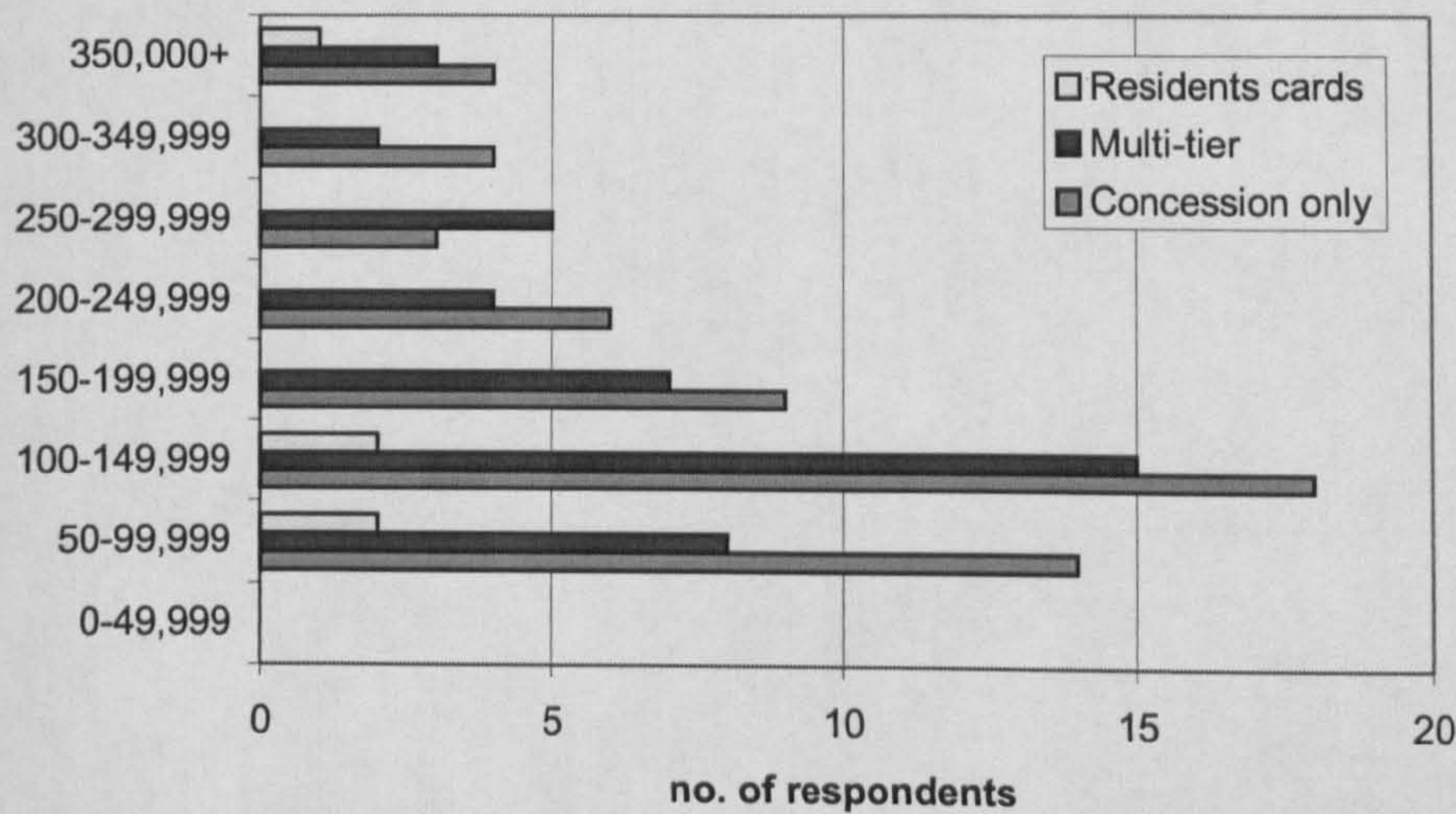
Indeed, Figure 5.3 (AT8) confirm that Leisure Card have been established in larger authorities, 73% with populations in excess of 100,000, of which 36% were London Boroughs, Metropolitan Districts or Unitary authorities (excluding the large Welsh and Scottish districts).

Figure 5.3 Population: a comparison between all GB Local Authorities, with and without LCS



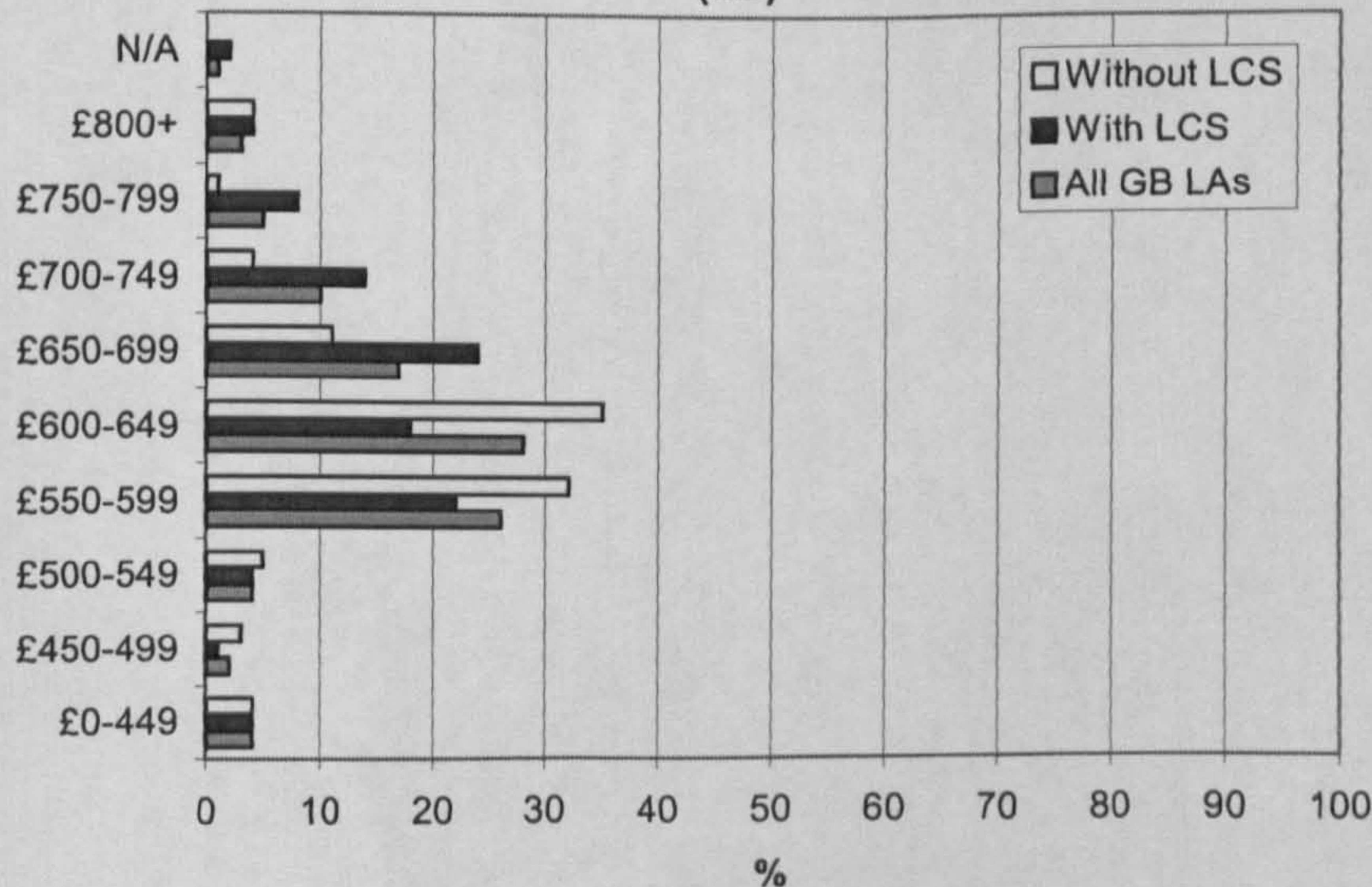
Concession-only schemes appeared to be more common than multi-tier schemes in smaller authorities with populations of between 50,000 and 99,999 (Figure 5.4 and AT9). However, there was a relatively equal balance between the two in larger authorities between 100,000 and 149,999 and of 150,000 or more. Residents Cards were evident in varying authority sizes and were not confined to those with larger populations.

Figure 5.4 Population of authorities operating Leisure Cards: a comparison of Leisure Card types



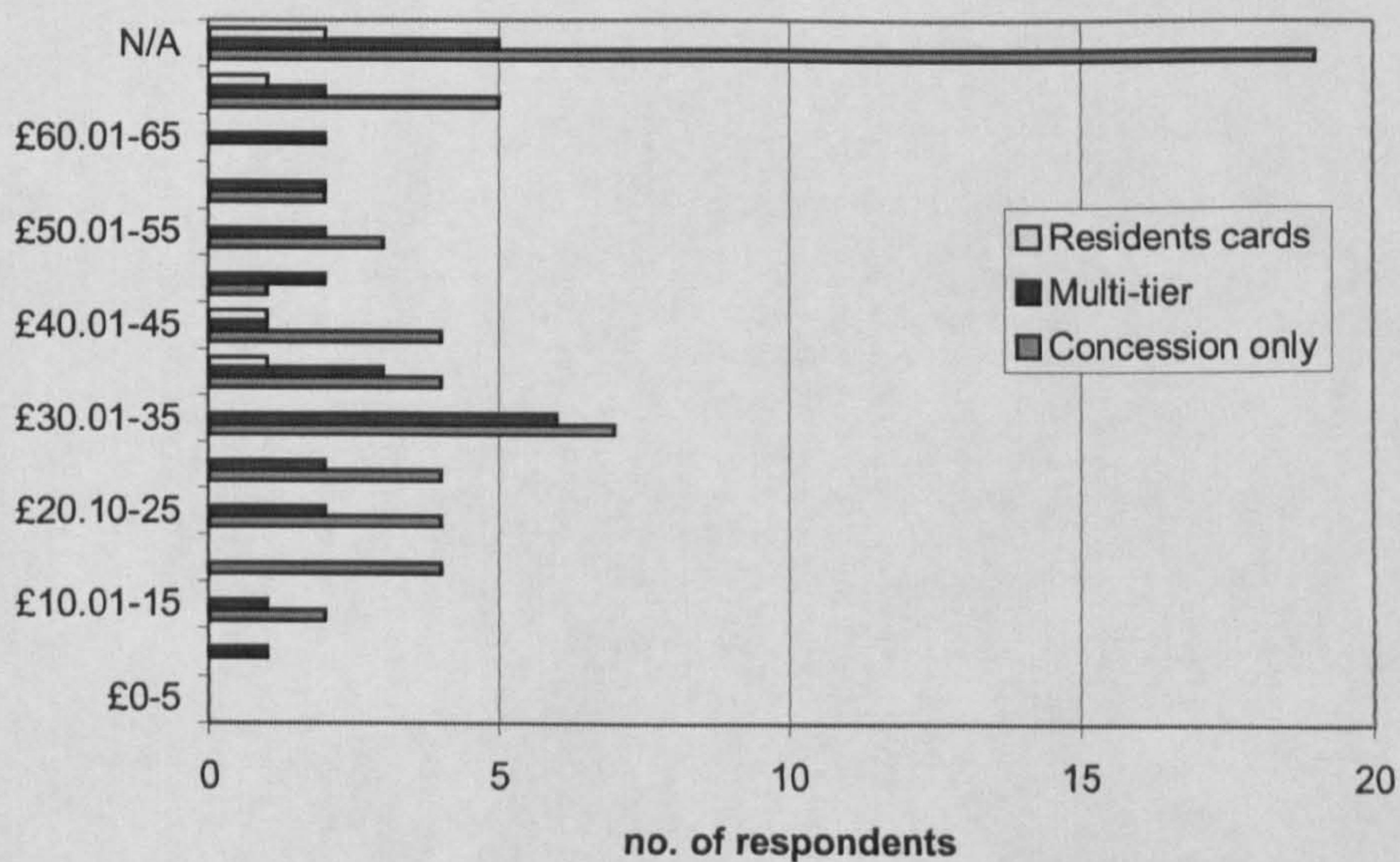
In terms of leisure spending per capita, Leisure Card operators were more likely to be higher spenders than their counterparts as 40% of authorities with a scheme spent more than £30 per capita per year compared with only 28% of authorities which did not (Figure 5.5, AT10).

Figure 5.5 Net Expenditure per capita on leisure (1997/98): a comparison between all Local Authorities, with and without LCS (GB)



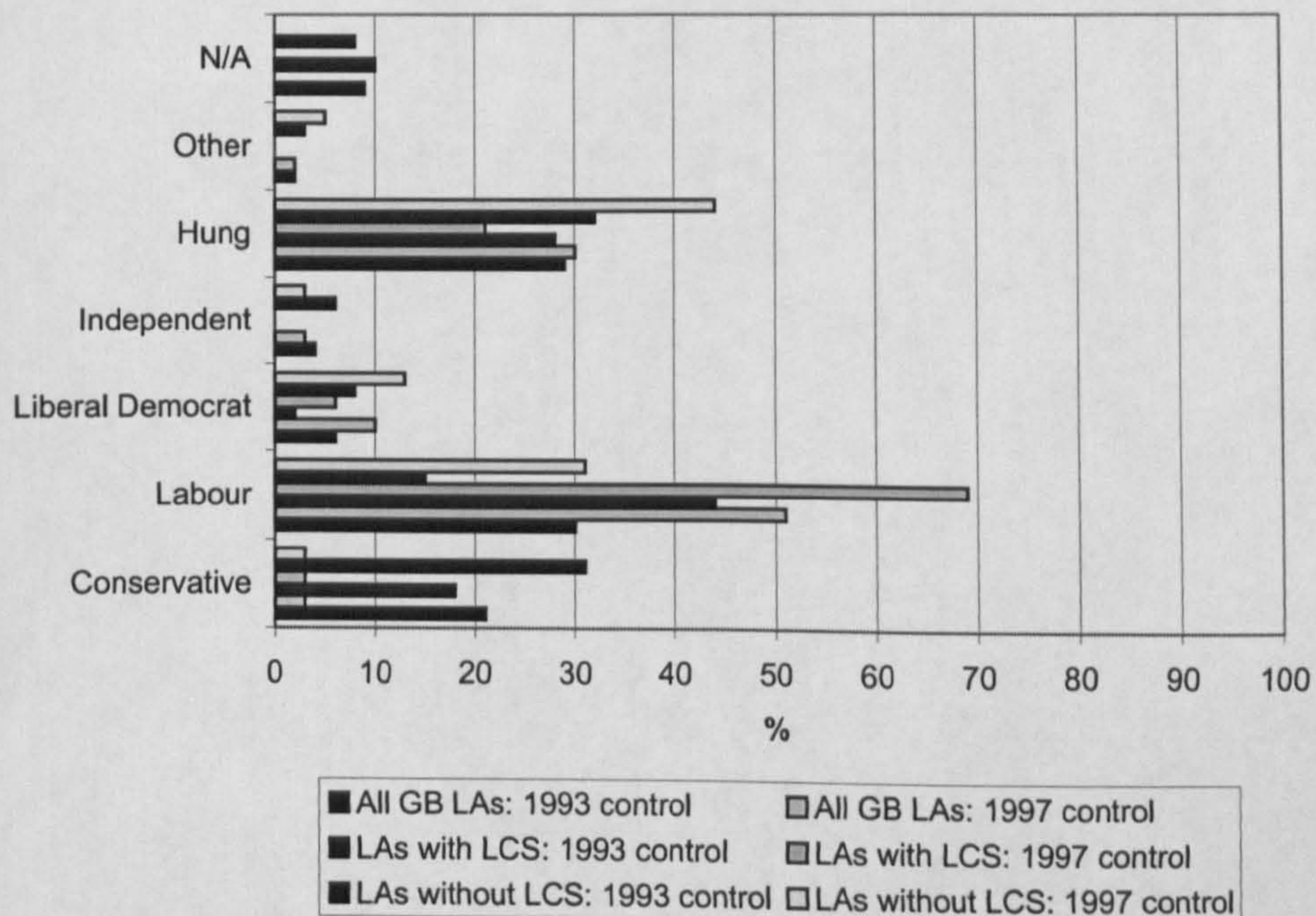
The amount spent on leisure per capita by local authorities followed a close pattern regardless of type of scheme operated (see Figure 5.6 AT11). The modal value was £30.01-£35 per person for both concession-only and multi-tier schemes. There was some indication that those operating multi-tier schemes might be slightly higher spenders, as 25% of respondents spent more than £45.01 per capita compared with 19% of concession-only cards. This was reflected to a limited extent in the satisfaction expressed regarding budgets by card operators, since 36% of multi-tier operators expressed satisfaction compared to 27% of concession-only card operators (see section 6.2 on budgets and pricing).

Figure 5.6 Net Expenditure per capita on leisure: a comparison of Leisure Card types (1997/98)



The dramatic shift in the political control of local authorities to Labour controlled or Labour dominated hung councils between 1993 and 1997 (shown in Figure 5.7 AT12) occurred at the same time as a 'second wave' of Leisure Card introductions and re-launches (described in Chapter 4). Labour controlled 30% of all local authorities in the Great Britain in 1993, compared to 51% in 1997, whilst Conservative control fell from 21% to just 3% during the same period. This resulted in 70% of authorities operating card schemes now being controlled by Labour, compared to 44% in 1993.

Figure 5.7 Political control of LAs 1993 and 1997: a comparison between all GB LAs, with and without LCS

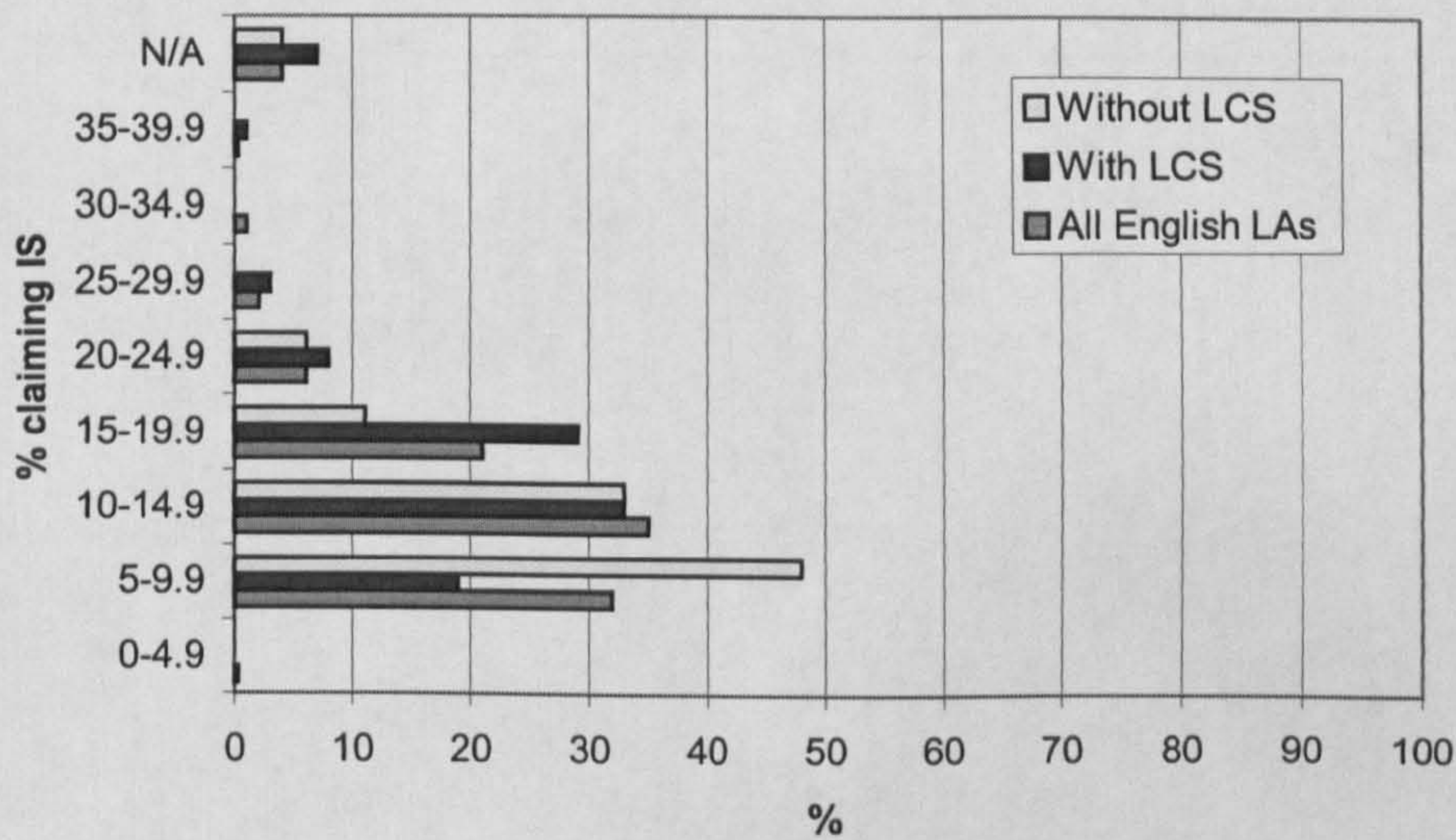


Therefore, the pattern of Leisure Card distribution in Great Britain in 1997/8 was still characterised by the larger Metropolitan Districts and Unitary Authorities, but since 1993 a diffusion had occurred to the smaller English non-Metropolitan Districts, and to some extent Scottish and Welsh authorities. There was a balance between concession-only and multi-tier schemes, which suggested growth in the introduction of the latter and re-launches of concession-only schemes in new multi-tiered formats. The overall increase in Leisure Card provision in the form of a 'second wave' coincided with the shift in local authority control to Labour between 1993 and 1997, and ultimately their general election victory in May 1997. Although the growth in Leisure Card provision cannot be directly attributed to this shift, the historical association with Labour controlled authorities and the introduction of schemes in the 1980s (see Chapter 4), means it was likely to have been a strong contributory factor.

Figure 5.8 (AT13) reveals that English authorities with a higher proportion of Income Support (IS) claimants were more likely to have a Leisure Card than not. Of the authorities

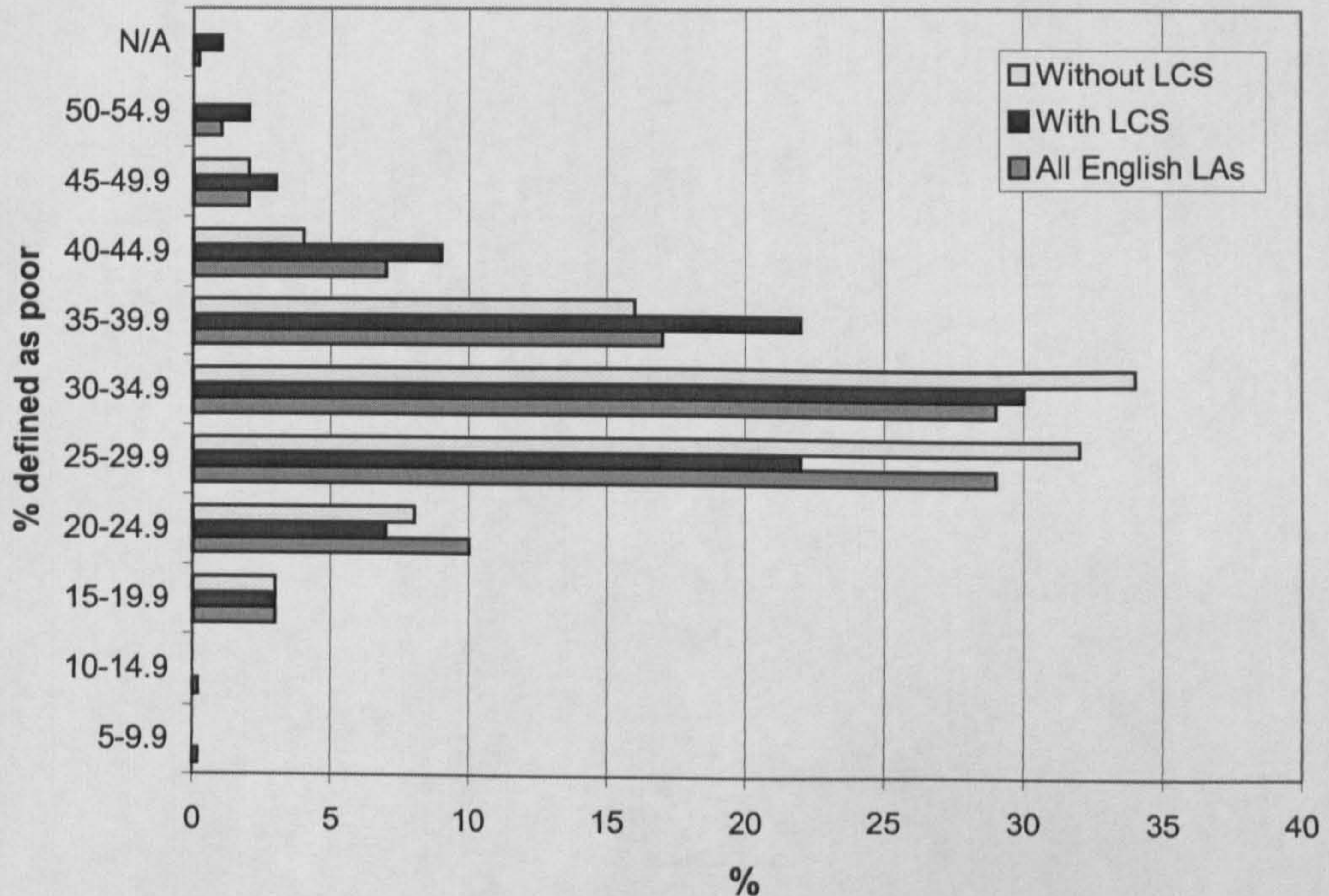
with 15-19.9% of their residents claiming Income Support, 29% operated a Leisure Card compared to 11% that did not. Those respondents without Leisure Cards generally had fewer claimants (mode = 5-9.9%), while of authorities with 5-9.9% of residents claiming Income Support, 19% did not and 48% did not operate a scheme. This indicated that local authorities were responding to increasing levels of poverty, another factor contributing to the 'second wave' of Leisure Card Schemes.

Figure 5.8 Income Support as a % of the population: a comparison between English Local Authorities, with and without LCS



This situation was reinforced by the fact that authorities which operated a Leisure Card Scheme generally had a higher percentage of poor residents (as defined by Gordon and Forrest, 1995 see Appendix I for more detail): 44% of authorities with more than 20% of residents defined as poor had a card, compared to 14% of those which did not, and 31% of all English authorities (see Figure 5.9 and AT14).

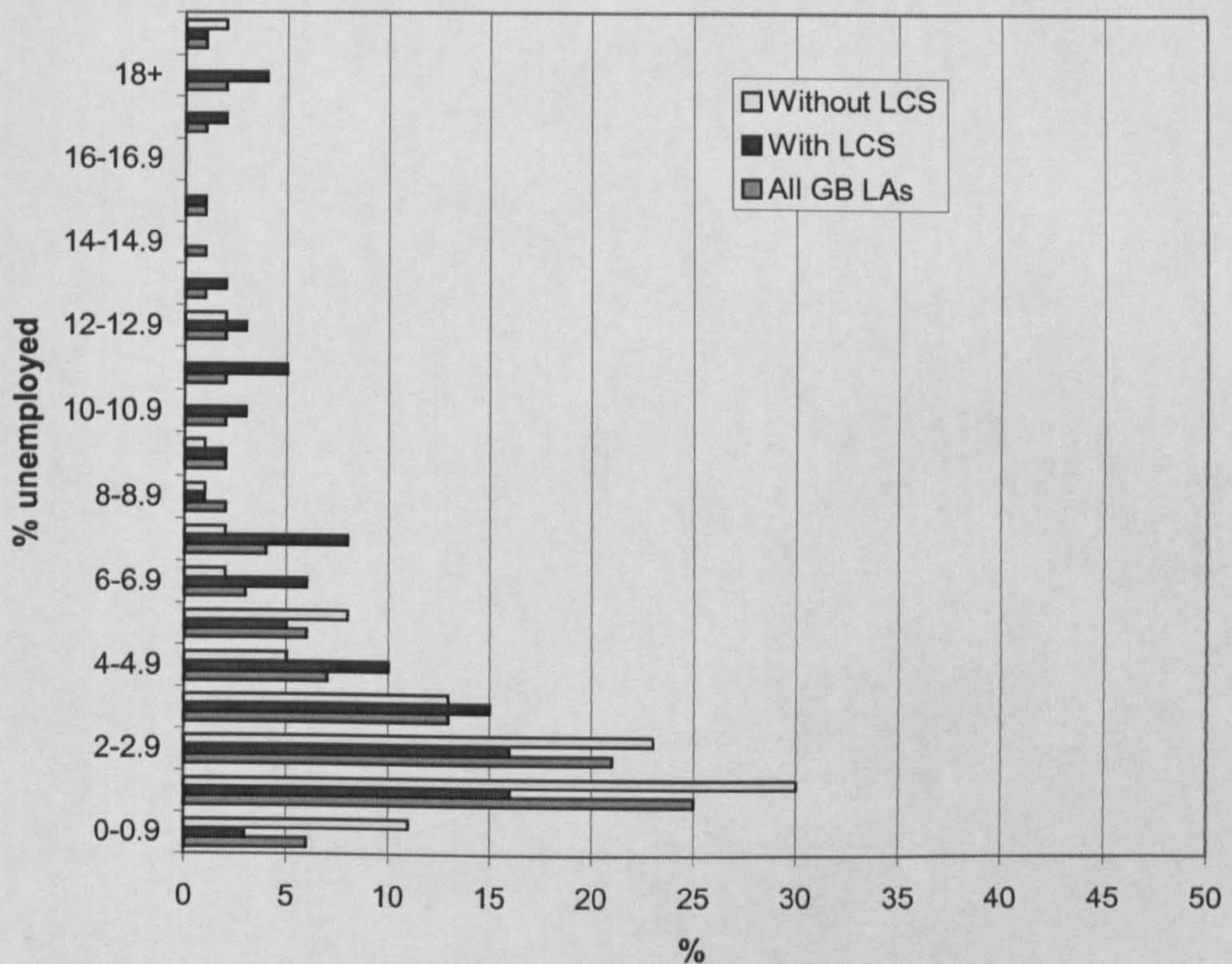
Figure 5.9 % of Local Authority populations defined as poor: a comparison between all English Local Authorities, with and without LCS



This trend was repeated regarding Housing Benefit claimants. The modal value of Housing Benefit claimant levels for all English authorities was 10-14.9% of the population. Of the responding authorities with a Leisure Card, 48% had between 15 and 24.9% of residents claiming Housing Benefit, compared to 15% of authorities without (see AT16).

Unemployment in both authorities with Leisure Cards and those without reflected trends for England (see Figure 5.10 AT15). Again authorities operating card schemes had higher proportions of people claiming benefit. 38% of responding authorities with over 7% unemployment rates operated a card compared to 10% that did not. However, it must be noted that such figures hide substantial but concentrated pockets of acute long-term unemployment which exist in many inner city, rural and de-industrialised communities. Unemployment is an uncertain measure of an individual's economic status, because not being in employment does not correlate neatly with increased levels of poverty or a low level of income (see Chapter 3). For the majority of people unemployment and benefit claiming in general is a transitory state, which is one of the managerial challenges for Leisure Card operators.

Figure 5.10 Unemployment as a % of the population: a comparison between all GB Local Authorities, with and without LCS



In terms of distinctions between authorities operating different types of cards, there was a similar proportion with concession-only and multi-tier cards in authorities where 15-19.9% of the population were defined as poor (according to Gordon and Forest, 1995), but there were more concession only schemes in authorities with higher levels of poverty, 25-29.9% of the population (17% compared to 5%). This implied that authorities where large percentages of the population were defined as poor operated concession-only cards. However, this distinction was not absolute. Although the variation was slight, multi-tier schemes were more prevalent in authorities with higher unemployment rates but there was no distinct variation between card types according to the percentage of the population claiming Income Support.

The area based DETR Index of Deprivation (1998) ranked English local authorities on 12 indicators of deprivation (see Chapter 2 and Appendix I). Of the 100 most deprived local authorities in England, 52 replied to this survey, 41 (79%) of which operated a Leisure Card Scheme. The DETR provided a further level of analysis, breaking the 100 most deprived local authorities down into four categories to highlight different degrees of deprivation (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 LCS coverage in the 100 most deprived local authorities in England (DETR, 1998).

	No. of authorities from 100 most deprived	No. of respondents with LCS	No. of respondents without LCS
Serious deprivation	29	11	3
Significant deprivation	24	11	1
Modest deprivation	23	14	2
Slight deprivation	24	5	5
Total %	100	41	11

Table 5.4 shows that Leisure Cards were in operation in the majority of the most deprived local authorities in England. However, the number of local authorities with slight levels of deprivation operating Leisure Card Schemes (5) was much lower than for the modest, significant and serious levels of deprivation, and was equal to the number not operating one. Indeed, the remaining 57 English local authorities with Leisure Cards responding to this survey were distributed among the 257 outside the top 100 most deprived authorities, compared to 89 without.

The Townsend Deprivation Index (Gordon and Forest, 1995), which used census data on four variables to provide a rank of local authorities similar to the DETR (see Chapter 2 and Appendix I), produced similar results in terms of Leisure Card coverage. Of the 50 most deprived local authorities, 25 responded to this survey, 20 with Leisure Cards, 5 without. Looking at the other end of the scale at the 50 'least deprived', of the 20 that responded, only 5 operated card schemes, whereas 15 did not.

Therefore, Leisure Card Schemes were more prevalent in poorer local authorities, in terms of the proportion of the population defined as poor, claiming means tested benefits,

unemployed and according to area based indices of deprivation. Moreover, there was a very strong correlation between respondents operating a Leisure Card and having an anti-poverty strategy: 48% of authorities with a Leisure Card also had an anti-poverty strategy, compared to only 14% of those which did not. It was not completely clear which was the chicken and which the egg, but only 35% of Leisure Card Schemes were mentioned in their authority's anti-poverty strategies.

5.9 Conclusion

Thus, the introduction and relaunch of Leisure Cards enjoyed a boom in the period between 1993 and 1997/8, especially in the English non-metropolitan districts. After four consecutive Conservative election victories, the gap between the rich and poor had increased by nearly 70%, and one in four people were defined as poor. The lack of central government policy response to the effects of these trends saw an increase in local action amidst growing New Labour popularity and local election victories, principally in the form of anti-poverty strategies, but also in the introduction or relaunch of leisure card schemes. New Labour increasingly committed itself to social inclusion and overcoming poverty combined with the intention to phase out CCT (from which most leisure cards had been protected) and to introduce Best Value with less rigid contractual arrangements and increased commitment to effectively delivering leisure services to local communities.

Moreover, at the central sport and leisure policy level, New Labour's mix of social integration (SID) and moral (MUD) rhetoric had been adopted. Sport England, the DCMS and the PAT10 group, as well as the Audit Commission have all published documents acknowledging and embracing the role of sport and the arts in overcoming social exclusion. Leisure Cards were identified by both the Audit Commission and the PAT10 research report as examples of potential good practice in extending access to disadvantaged groups in local services, as well as playing a wider role in monitoring the achievement of social objectives and setting appropriate prices for local authority leisure services.

Leisure Cards have also become part of the wider growth in customer loyalty cards that are features of nearly all high street stores and which people have become accustomed to using as part of their daily routines. As we shall see, Leisure Cards have also benefited from developments in these customer based information technology systems that produce detailed databases for use in marketing, cost allocation and price setting. The following chapters will draw on the national survey and case studies to analyse the processes of establishing, managing and evaluating Leisure Cards.