



Exit from and non-take up of public services

A comparative analysis: France, Greece, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Hungary

[GLOSSARY]

EXNOTA consortium

Spanish contribution to the glossary
about non-take-up of social benefits in Europe
Concepts used in Spain to refer to the "Non-Take-up" and "Exit from".

1. **No-cobertura – renuncia al deracho**
2. **Exclusión**
3. **Cobertura**
4. **Impacto**
5. **New poverty**

1. No-cobertura – renuncia al deracho

English: Non-take-up; exit from

French: Non recours ; défection

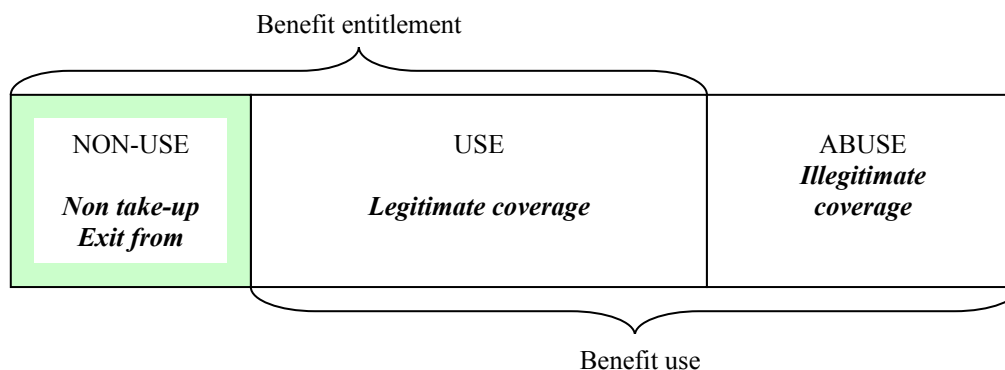
There is no explicit and social consensus in Spain around the concepts of *non-take up* and *exit from*, as they have been defined in the EXNOTA Project. There is not even an agreement, among the experts in social policies, around precise concepts to refer to such phenomena. These are the reasons why we had to conceptualize the concepts specifically for the current research. However, an implicit mention to topics related the "*no-cobertura*" (*non recours, non take-up*) and "*renuncia al derecho*" (*défection, exit from*) is frequently found in the literature. Sometimes, these concepts are expressed in a specific way, even under different names, as we will explain.

It is commonly supposed that those who have the right to receive a public service will end up using it indeed. Otherwise, if they do not use the right, it is because it is not worth for them, or they have a most attractive alternative, as may happen when choosing a private school or private health assistance. There is an assumption of the existence of *rational subjects*, subjects that would know how to / can choose among a number of alternatives, with no impediments, such as institutional or any other type. Because of this issue, the question of non take-up does not seem to be a question worth to be researched.

Meanwhile, there is abundant literature around *abuses* in benefiting from public resources and services, such as people receiving unemployment wages without fulfilling the requisites, or that simply do not deserve them because they do not make an effort to search for work. Other abuses described in the literature are around politicians and company owners that traffic with certain benefits in order to obtain votes or to put down their workers (minimum benefits, agrarian workers subsidies), hoax suits in Justice courts, and more.

Finally, there are also references to the *non-use* of public services, but probably with much less frequency than those referring to *uses* and *abuses*, as is shown in the attached Chart 1. For the public administration, it is more gratifying to propose the *use* that is done of the public services and the growing tendency of *users* than to refer to the unpleasant issue of the people who do not access or simply have no knowledge of the existence of these resources. Below is a brief summary of the way in which the smallest square of Chart 1 (shaded), the *non-use* of public benefits, is captured in the literature and in the interviews performed.

Chart 1
THE USE OF THE CONCEPTS "USE", "ABUSE" AND "NON-USE"
OF THE PUBLIC RESOURCES IN THE POLITICAL AND ACADEMICAL
DISCOURSES



Among the most used concepts to refer to the non-use of public services, we can emphasize three, "exclusión" (exclusion) "cobertura" (coverage) and "impacto" (impact) covering the following space as regards the previous chart.

Chart 2
CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CONCEPTS USED IN SPAIN WITH THE
CONCEPTS OF NON TAKE-UP AND EXIT FROM (RIGHTS)

THE CONCEPTS OF THE EXNOTA PROJECT

NON USE No-cobertura /Renuncia al derecho Non recours / Défection Non take-up / Exit from	USE	ABUSE
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EXCLUSIÓN (EXCLUSION)

Not satisfied need Not entitled	Not satisfied need Entitled	INCLUSION
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COBERTURA (COVERAGE)

NO COBERTURA Not entitled	NO USO Entitled	COBERTURA Entitled	ABUSO Not entitled
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IMPACTO (IMPACT)

NOT EFFECTIVE	EFFECTIVE	PERVERSE
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There are other concepts that, in a direct or indirect way, gather partial dimensions or concepts of *non take up* or *exit from* rights. Among them we will refer to two, one very well spread, the “new poverty”, and other less spread, the “waiting lists”. The concept of *new poverty* comes as a way to try to categorize in distinct manners the poverty situations or precariousness related to lack of resources, rights and benefits in order to enjoy a dignified life. The *waiting lists* concept refers to the *frictional non take up* due to the administrative delays on giving out the resources, rights or public benefits.

2. Exclusión

English: Exclusion

French: Exclusion

The concept of "exclusión" is the most used in official speeches about poverty and inequality, and opposes the concept of inclusion. The non-use of public services would in this case correspond to a way of "exclusión" (*not to receive* education, health assistance, pensions, economical benefits and more) but "exclusión" covers much more dimensions, such as being unemployed or the lack of a personal attitude and aptitude to overcome difficulties¹.

Anti-exclusion policies developed in Spain must be understood in a wider context of an international dimension, where there is a growing concern about the problems related to inequality and poverty. The start-up is, as indicated in the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, the verification of "an evident contradiction that must be remedied and overcome: in the world the prosperity increase for some is taking place, accompanied by an increase of extreme poverty for many people"².

In 2001, after the rallies against capitalist globalisation initiated in Seattle, Washington, the World Bank *Fight against Poverty* report recognises the same contradiction "Our world is characterized by great poverty among abundance. Out of six thousand million inhabitants, 2,800 million -almost half- live with less than \$2 per day, and 1,200 million -one out of five- live with less than \$1 per day (...) This situation of misery persists in spite of the major improvement of human conditions, when more has been achieved over the last century than over the history of mankind. Prosperity, international contacts and technological capacity are greater than ever, but the distribution of income has been extraordinary unequal." The Millennium Summit, in 2000, proposed the decrease of poverty to half by year 2015. Nevertheless, other Summit of world leaders promoted by United Nations in September 2004, states that the degree of fulfilment of the goals set in the Millennium Summit is "deceiving" and that without urgent actions, those will not be achieved by 2015.

In our nearest political context, the European Councils of Lisbon and Nice (June and December 2000) proposed that the *promotion of Social Integration* would be an essential axis of the European economic strategy for the coming decade. The Union pretended "to turn into the economy based in the most competitive and dynamic knowledge in the world, capable of growing in a sustainable way, accompanied by a quantitative and qualitative growth of jobs and a greater social cohesion"³. In Nice the European Social Agenda was passed, defining general objectives as an impulse for the Social Europe, urging the member states to develop operational and assessable National Plans against social exclusion in less than six months.

¹ CORTÉS L and LÓPEZ O. *España y el desarrollo social. Balance y propuestas ante los compromisos de la Cumbre de Copenhague 95*, (Spain and Social Development. Balance and Proposals for the Agreements of the Copenhagen Summit 95). In CÁRITAS ESPAÑOLA and INTERMÓN, "Monográfico de la revista Documentación Social, nº 115", Madrid 1999, page 25.

² BANCO MUNDIAL, *Informe sobre el Desarrollo Mundial 2000/2001*. Lucha contra la pobreza (WORLD BANK. Report on World Development 2000/2001. The fight against poverty). Ed. MundiPrensa, Madrid, 2001, page 3.

³ CONSEJO ECONÓMICO Y SOCIAL, *La pobreza y la exclusión social en España: propuestas de actuación en el marco del plan nacional para la inclusión social* (Poverty and Social Exclusion, Action Proposal under the influence of the National Plan for Social Inclusion) CES, Madrid, 2001, page 5.

The "*National Action Plan for Social Inclusion in the Kingdom of Spain*", passed in a Minister's meeting and presented to the European Commission in June 2001, as it was planned, diagnoses Social Exclusion in Spain, and defines the goals, priority actions and budget monies for the biannual term 2001-2003 (now the 2003-2005 Plan⁴ is running). The "exclusion" these plans try to face is defined as *multifactor* and *multidimensional*; in other words, it cannot be explained by one only cause, and in fact has multiple manifestations, often very linked one to each other.

Specifically, the diagnosis of the Spanish government points out three causes: the employment crisis, the social fragmentation and the limitations to wellness policies, also relating these factors to "the changes happening in the three fundamental wellness-providing institutions, which are the market (based in exchange), the family (based in reciprocity) and the Government (based in redistribution)"⁵.

This diagnosis of social "exclusion" has the advantage of exceeding the traditional economy-based point of view of *poverty*, just pointing out quantitative indicators of inequality according to families' income. The new concept of *exclusión* is understood as a accumulation of disadvantages, measured in terms of privations in regards to a collection of goods and resources that are considered minimum or basic for social "inclusion". Among these goods we would find having a job or some kind of insertion income, benefiting from family links, access to housing, education, health, social benefits and the participation or active implication in social matters. Nevertheless, the discourse and policies under the umbrella concept of *exclusión* are far from neutral, but rather have a genesis and follow strategic goals beyond the immediate effect of its intervention over "excluded" groups, as they do not focus in the reasons that provoke inequality and "exclusión". While framing the intervention in certain social groups, and not in the processes where problems are originated, we fall in the risky situation of stating from the beginning a "political" cutback of social reality, which voids the possibility of "other" alternative views.

⁴ GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA (Spanish Government), *II Plan nacional de acción para la inclusión social del Reino de España, 2003-2005*, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales (Labour and Social Affairs Ministry), Madrid, 2003. www.cermi.es/Texto/especiales/IINPAIN03052003.asp

⁵ GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA, *I Plan nacional de acción para la inclusión social del Reino de España, Junio-2001/Junio 2003*, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, *Anexo I: Diagnóstico sobre la situación de la exclusión social en España* (Annex I: Diagnosis on the situation of Social Exclusion in Spain), Madrid, 2001, page 3.

3. Cobertura

English: Coverage

French: couverture/assurance

The concept of *cobertura* (coverage) / *no-cobertura* (non coverage) is applied to a number of public benefits, especially for unemployment allowances, but also for health assistance, pensions and other benefits. Nevertheless, most of the times *cobertura* (coverage) refers to the existence of a *legal frame* for the access or non-access to those benefits. Therefore, the controversy is about the how wide or how narrow is the range and clarity of laws and regulations in order to cover the rights and needs of the people.

The *cobertura del paro* (unemployment benefits), as the term is meant in Spain, has broad bibliography⁶ about it, and its evolution is directly related with the changes in the labour legislation: with the *cobertura* (coverage) improvement after a General strike in 1988, the worsening of the *cobertura* after the reforms of 1992-1993, etc. However, the concept refers to the legal coverage, or in other words, about widening or narrowing the requirements for those trying to qualify for the right, not about whether people entitled to the current right use it or not.

⁶ See CEBRIÁN et al, "*Protección social y acceso al empleo*" CES, Madrid, 1996; and TOHARIA, "El sistema español de protección por desempleo" (The Spanish System of Unemployment Benefits), *Papeles de Economía Española* #72, Madrid 1997, pages 192-213.

4. Impacto

English: Impact

French: Impact

The concept of *impacto* (impact) / *no-impacto* (non impact) of public policies is the closest concept to the EXNOTA Project definitions, as it refers to the level of *knowledge, use* and *satisfaction* of public benefits from the point of view of potential users. In this sense, the "Dirección General de Acción Social del Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales" (Labour and Social Affairs Ministry's Directorate on Social Action) uses expressly this concept in a research project on the impact of Social Services, which has been applied with a number of surveys in Andalusia. The main outcomes related to non-take up and exit from social services are the following.

- 40% of those surveyed have never received information on the social services public system. The bigger the town size, the bigger is the lack of knowledge of social services.
- Almost 20% of Andalusian citizens with need of some kind of help did not search for it, because of the lack of knowledge of the system, because they thought they would not qualify for the benefit, or because of not having the time to take care of it.
- One out of three demands exposed by citizens in primary care social services were rejected.

Applying the research in all the *comunidades autónomas* ("autonomous communities" or regions enclosing one or more provinces) will give us a very accurate picture of non-take up and exit from social services. The concept of *impacto* also includes the use and non-use of the benefits, other interesting issues as the knowledge of the resources, the opinion about them and the users' satisfaction level.

5. New poverty

English: *New poverty*

French: *Nouvelle pauvreté*

The diverse poverty types reflect the difficulties people have to access to a decent and propitious life. This is the reason why traditional poverty and new poverty are an index of the non take up of the right of a dignified life.

This concept breaks up in Spain in the eighties to refer to the new kinds of poverty originated by the Welfare State crisis and the surge of a more socially polarized society. In fact it is a concept already used under the frame of the Programs to fight Poverty⁸ promoted by European Community in that decade and tried to distinguish "new poor" from traditional poor people. "The problem with new poverty is due to a big magnitude social change, a shift which affects society in its whole, and in a special way to the working class. The phenomena named as *new pauperism* in advanced industrial societies, questions the established wheels of the machine between the production order and the mechanisms of social integration from the Welfare State"⁹

The social group more affected by new poverty are those unemployed which percentage was over 20% the workers in those years in Spain. "The long term unemployed, the employee or worker who has lost its job, too young to retire, too old to find another job. The 24 years old still with no stable work, if he or she has ever had a job. The young mother with children, but without housing or employment and does not know how to face her new reality".¹⁰

Recently the concept of "new poverty" has a different meaning and is good for referring to a definition of poverty that goes beyond the mere level of income levels and also includes the personal insecurity level and/or social, political or cultural exclusions of people or groups. Based on this criteria, the United Nations Development Programme, UNPD, has defined new poverty rates of Capacity and of Human Poverty that are good for knowing the percentage of people in the countries who do not access to the rights/basic capacity in order to achieve a dignified life standard.¹¹ 4

From a critical perspective, some Spanish authors criticize the ideological preconceptions of the "new poverty" and propose a need to tackle the structural causes of the growing inequality and social degradation, both in Central and Peripheral countries. "It is more utopian to believe than global capitalism will be able to manage environmental and social problems of the coming years than to propose urgent anti-capitalist reforms able to limit degradation and poverty to make possible a less sinister future in the world community."¹²

⁸ ROOM, G., *La nueva pobreza en la Comunidad Europea: Síntesis de doce estudios nacionales elaborados a petición de la Comisión Europea*, (New Poverty in European Community. Summary of twelve national researches from the European Commission) 1987.

⁹ ÁLVAREZ-URÍA, F., "La nueva pobreza y los actuales retos políticos y sindicales"(New Poverty and current Political and Trade Union Challenges), Various Authors., *La sociedad de la desigualdad*, (Unequality Society) Garkoa, Donostia, 1992, pages. 179-180

¹⁰ GARCÍA-NIETO, J.N., "Nueva pobreza en España", (New Poverty in Spain, magazine *Debats* # 35-36, 1991, page 109.

¹¹ UNPD, *Human Development Report, 2001*, Ed. Mundi Prensa, México, 2001.

¹² MARTÍNEZ, J., "Reformas, desigualdad económica y nueva pobreza" (Reforms, Economical Inequality and New Poverty), Universidad de Barcelona, 2004, at www.redem.buap.mx/javiermor.htm.

The so called Waiting Lists represent a frictional non take up that voids in its lifespan (over months or years) the use of a right, benefit or public service, sometimes producing serious collateral problems in both family and work realms of citizens. The Waiting Lists are used mostly in health sector but also are applied to other rights in benefits, pensions, unemployment benefits, pending court trials and more.

One of the major problems of the public health system with an important incidence in the media is the Waiting Lists. These refer to the lapse of time wasted from the moment when a health intervention is ordered (a test, a consultation with a specialist doctor, etc.) and the date when it is made effective. According to a research from the *Defensor del Pueblo/ Ombudsman*¹³, at the end of 2001, there were almost one and a half million people on a waiting list to access a primary specialized consultation. Hospital admittances are also affected by this phenomenon.

The way to measure Waiting Lists are two, 1) the rate of persons going through waiting lists out of those who do not do so, and 2) the time wasted in the waiting list. According to Health Nationwide Surveys, about one out of four in-patients came from waiting lists, between 1993 and 2001 the number of affected Decreases (25.5% to 23.3% out of the total of in-patients) as the waiting time (7.1 to 6.5 months). Anyway, in 2001, slightly over 700,000 out of three million admissions were waiting list patients¹⁴.

The surveys performed in Spain on "waiting time" coincide that it is a non coverage problem persistent in time. Following a survey applied in Andalusia in 1992, the average time to enter a public hospital as a patient, be it for a test or for surgery, was 63% of the times over half a year, and over one year in 43% of the cases¹⁵. That is the reason why most hospitals admissions are channeled across Accident and Emergency Rooms.¹⁶

¹³ DEFENSOR DEL PUEBLO (2003), *Listas de espera en el sistema nacional de salud* (Waiting Lists in the National Health System), Informes, Estudios y Documentos – Serie III.

¹⁴ COLECTIVO IOÉ, *Salud y estilos de vida en España* (Health and Life Styles in Spain), FUNCAS, Madrid, 2004, page 113.

¹⁵ SOCIOLOGÍA ANDALUZA (Market and Opinion Studies), *Tablas estadísticas y gráficos del estudio sobre las listas de espera* (Statistical Tables and Charts in Waiting Lists), Sevilla, 1992.

¹⁶ National Health System last survey the last hospital admission of adult people surveyed had been in the A&E room 54.4% of the cases and through other ways 45.4%. MINISTERIO DE SANIDAD Y CONSUMO, Health And Consumption Ministry, 1999, page 80.