

OLLSCOIL NA hÉIREANN  
THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY

SUMMER EXAMINATIONS 1999/2000

**Welfare Economics (EC220)**

B.A. (Economic & Social Studies), B.A. (Public & Social Policy), 2 B.A. & 2  
B.Comm.

Professor J. Round  
Professor M. Keane  
Mr. B. Kennelly

**Time allowed: TWO hours.**

**Answer Section A and one question from Section B.**

**SECTION A (36 marks)**

**Answer THREE of the following questions**

- A1. Discuss the different policy objectives regarding child care.
- A2. Write a note on Sen's theory of capabilities and functionings.
- A3. "Esping-Andersen's classification of welfare states is a useful framework for thinking about the welfare states in Europe." Discuss.
- A4. Why should the government be involved in the production and distribution of education?

**SECTION B (34 marks)**

**Answer ONE of the following questions**

- B1. What are the economic, social and demographic changes that lie behind current discussions about European welfare states? Julian Le Grand has argued that changes in social policy in recent years are based on the rational, self-interested model of human behaviour. Discuss his argument. Do you think it is supported by recent changes in the Irish welfare state?
- B2. Outline the main elements of the rational choice model. What are the main criticisms of this model? What weight ought to be given to preferences in determining social and public policy?
- B3. Outline briefly the principal features of the Irish health system. Explain why private markets may not provide an efficient level of health care. Why has health spending (as a proportion of GDP) risen in most western countries over the last 30 years?

- B4. Are private markets likely to provide an efficient level of social care? What are the main policy issues regarding long-term care in Ireland? How important is it to take account of motives for caring before making policy changes in, for example, the allowance of carers?
- B5. Discuss the nature and extent of poverty in Ireland in 1987, 1994 and 1997 paying careful attention to the different methods for measuring poverty. How does income inequality in Ireland compare to income inequality in other EU or OECD countries? What will be the impact of the changes in tax and social welfare in the 1999 budget (December 1) on poverty and inequality in Ireland over the next few years?
- B6. Compare utilitarianism and John Rawls's theory of justice.