SOCIAL EXCLUSION:

TOWARDS AN HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF DEPRIVATION

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PREFACE

This paper was prepared for the World Development Report 2001 Forum on 'Inclusion, Justice, and Poverty Reduction', in particular the session on 'Exclusion and Poverty: Old Lessons and New Directions'. This session discussed conceptual issues in defining and measuring poverty, and the policy context of the exclusion debate, and conceptual differences between 'poverty' and 'exclusion', empirical indicators, and policy responses to exclusion.

The paper is the result of the work done at the University of Sussex. This was mainly conceptual, thinking about the usefulness of the social exclusion as a framework for understanding deprivation. This was partly done in the context of comparing deprivation in North and South. Work with Simon Maxwell (which resulted in the January 1998 IDS Bulletin) took up the concept in an attempt to cross the barriers of studies of deprivation in OECD and developing countries.

Courses on academic writing teaches one never to start an essay with 'in this rapidly changing world'; however, I can barely resist to start with 'in this rapidly changing world of ideas, concepts, and buzz words'. It is striking how quickly discourses emerge and change, and it is a cause of worry. It is legitimate to ask, what new insights the concept of social exclusion brings. I will not argue that the concepts is entirely innovative, or that it is necessarily the best way to describe newly emerging issues of deprivation (like 'the new poor'). Instead I will argue that the value of the concept lies in focusing our attention on two central elements of deprivation: its multidimensionality, and the processes and social relations that underlie deprivation.

Discussions about the concept, like at the WDR 2000 Forum, also reflect on differences in disciplinary backgrounds - and this is perhaps inadequately discussed in this note. The debate goes beyond the confines of what can be incorporated into formal models and regressions, and social exclusion is primarily a framework for analysis and not - in my opinion - a new term for specific marginalised groups. My argument seems to be in agreement with Kaushik Basu's presentation at the Forum, which pleads for widening economists' understanding of exclusion beyond analysis of income and productivity. Particularly the work by Silver (discussed below) shows how much such understanding can depends on analysts' backgrounds and political traditions.

INTRODUCTION

This paper makes a strong plea for the use of the concept of social exclusion. This is not because the concept describes a new reality, or because it is the only appropriate or a radically innovative concept to describe deprivation. The concept's advantage is that it focuses attention on central aspects of deprivation, equally relevant to analysis and policies: deprivation is a multidimensional phenomenon, and deprivation is part and parcel of social relations. The concept of social exclusion can help to ground the understanding of deprivation firmly in traditions of social science analyses.

The concept has made a rapid ascent onto the stages of debates on deprivation and policies that combat deprivation. The first section of this paper briefly reviews this ascent, and discusses some of the uses of the concept. The second section aims to clear up some of the confusions around the concept, before its central elements are discussed in section 3. Then I compare the concept with the notion of poverty, and its various definitions, emphasising the overlaps as much as the differences. Section 5 will argue that social exclusion can be measured but that the type of research is likely to be different from measurement of income poverty. The sixth section discusses the policies in which social exclusion has been central, particularly in France and more recently in Britain. It will also point at policies in developing countries that operate with similar understandings of poverty. Section 7 concludes, and points at some ways in which work on social exclusion can be taken forward.

1. A BRIEF GENEALOGY

It is common to attribute the invention of the term social exclusion to Rene Lenoir, then Secretaire d'Etat a l'Action Sociale in the Chirac Government, who published *Les Exclus: Un Francais sur dix*, in 1974. Lenoir's excluded included a wide variety of people, not only the poor, but also handicapped, suicidal people, aged, abused children, substance abusers, etc. – about 10 per cent of the French population. The term gained popularity in France because of at least two reasons (Silver 1994).

First, the (British) concept of 'poverty' had never been popular in France. It was discredited because of its association with Christian charity, the ancient regime, and

utilitarian liberalism. French Republicans have rejected both liberal individualism and socialism in favour of the idea of 'solidarity', and the welfare state was justified as a means of furthering social integration. Correspondingly, social exclusion was defined as a rupture of the social fabric, and attributed to a failure of the state.

Second, the 1980s was a period of economic crisis and restructuring, crisis of the welfare state, and various social and political crises. The term exclusion was used to refer to various types of social disadvantage, related to the new social problems that arose: unemployment, ghettoisation, fundamental changes in family life (Cannan 1997). Old welfare state provisions were thought incapable of dealing with these problems, and a new set of social policies was developed (discussed in Section 6).

The concept has gained popularity in other countries, partly through EU channels (Silver 1998: 53 ff.). The EU has been committed to fighting social exclusion throughout this decade. The Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties and the Structural Funds included a commitment to combat social exclusion. It disseminated funding for social insertion via the European Social Fund, the European Anti-poverty Network, and Anti-poverty Programmes. Significant was the change in terminology in the Anti-Poverty programmes: while 'poverty' was central concern in the 1st Programme, in the 3rd Programme this had become 'social exclusion'. The EU induced new thinking on the nature of urban poverty and integrated, participatory strategies of regeneration.

Recently social exclusion also has become central to British policies and debates. During the Conservative government the notion did not find entry into policy debates. However, the notion was taken up in research – though the French meaning of the term was perhaps not always properly understood. In 1992 the British Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC) commissioned Jordan (1996) to review research on poverty and social exclusion, and it emerged as an ESRC 'thematic priority' in 1995. But the debate became dominated by the New Labour Government's initiative to establish an interdepartmental Social Exclusion Unit in late 1997.[1] The Unit has so far produced three

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[1] The Social Exclusion Unit is an example of the British Government's 'joined-up' policy making; it's importance is stressed by being in Downing Street itself, though it does not have a budget of its own. Though the notion of social exclusion rapidly came to occupy center stage, it should also be noted that it linked well with other developments and innovations that had been going on in the UK for some time (Parkinson 1998).

reports, on neighbourhood renewal, on rough sleeping, and truancy and school exclusion. It is currently engaged in an assessment of 16-18 year olds not in education, and consultation about teenage parenthood and how to reduce its rate.

Silver (1998) stresses the convergence in the debates within Western Europe, and the increasingly common use of the notion of social exclusion. However, the way in which the concept has been used seems rather different. Using Silver's earlier work (1994) on different interpretations of the notion, it seems that the British use of the term is rooted in an Anglo-Saxon liberal individualism.[2] Despite the adoption of the French notion, American models of welfare reform seem to have more influential in the British social policy debates. The French notion, particularly with the left-wing government, remains based more strongly in a national solidarity paradigm.[3]

The notion has so far found limited entry into the development studies debates (perhaps less than 'social capital'). The IILS/UNDP project has so far produced the only significant output of research in which the notion has been central,[4] though the ILO has now taken up the concept in its new STEP programme, and WDR 2001 may help make it more central in debates. But the concept has met with a degree of (healthy) scepticism. Else Oyen of CROP for example believes that researchers "pick up the concept and are now running all over the place arranging seminars and conferences to find a researchable content in an umbrella concept for which there is limited theoretical underpinning."[5] And though not always so strongly stated, similar opinions have been expressed at many occasions. I believe that the concept has the potential to provide useful insights into the

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[2] Lister (1998) emphasises the influence of the US on current British social policy debates. Powell (1995: 28-29), writing on Ireland, notes: "attitudes towards poverty have fundamentally changed in postmodern society, redefining citizenship in terms of duties and obligations rather than the Marshallian construct of social, as well as civil and political rights." Silver's work is described in more detail in the next section.

[3] This paper does not allow for further analysis of this theme, and the differences within Europe are offered as hypotheses. In probably all European countries there has been increasing targeting of welfare benefits, emphases on duties, and attempts to reduce government expenditure, partly driven by the fiscal goals set for the EU's monetary union).

[4] This has produced a large number of literature reviews, and a set of country case studies. Summary publications include IILS (1994, 1996), Rodgers *et al.* (1994, 1995), Gore and Figueiredo (1997), Figueiredo and de Haan, eds. (1998).

[5] Quoted in Sen (1998: 3). It is not evident that this is unique to the development of this particular concept. More importantly, the term does have theoretical underpinnings.

debate, and will try to argue this below; first however I will try to clarify some conceptual misunderstandings.

2. WHAT SOCIAL EXCLUSION DOES NOT MEAN

The work of Hilary Silver (1994) has stressed the variety of definitions given to social exclusion and integration, depending on contexts, and that the definitions come with "theoretical and ideological baggage". The French Republican tradition, drawing on Rousseau and with an emphasis on solidarity, and an idea of the state as the embodiment of the general will of the nation, has given the notion a specific meaning. Exclusion is primarily defined as the rupture of a social bond – which is cultural and moral – between the individual and society. National solidarity implies political right and duties. The poor, unemployed and ethnic minorities are defined as outsiders.

In an Anglo-Saxon tradition, social exclusion means a rather different thing. One of the main theoretical differences appear to me to be the fact that 'poverty' is seen as an issue which is separate from 'social exclusion' – perhaps akin to the underclass debate – rather than as an *element of* social exclusion. The Anglo-Saxon tradition is characterised by Silver as a specialisation paradigm, drawing on liberal thinkers like Locke. This perceives social actors primarily as individuals, who are able to move across boundaries of social differentiation and economic divisions of labour. Unenforced rights and market failures are seen as common causes of exclusion. Liberal models of citizenship emphasise the contractual exchange of rights and obligations. In this paradigm, exclusion reflects discrimination, the drawing of group distinctions that denies individuals full participation in exchange or interaction.

The third paradigm described in Silver's earlier work is the 'monopoly paradigm'. This draws on the work of Weber and is particularly influential in Northern European countries, but also in Britain – though recent debates about social exclusion in Britain make me emphasise the influence of the liberal tradition. Unlike the liberal tradition, the monopoly paradigm emphasises the existence of hierarchical power relations in the constitution of a social order. Group monopolies are seen as responsible for exclusion. Powerful groups restrict the access of outsiders through social closure. Inequality is

thought to overlap with such group distinctions, but it is mitigated by social democratic citizenship and participation in the community.

This emphasis on paradigms is helpful in stressing that social exclusion is (or should be) a theoretical concept, a lens through which people look at reality, and not reality itself. It does not connotate a particular problem such as 'the new poor', an 'underclass'[6], long-term unemployed, or the marginalised as understood in a Latin American context. Of course, the notions are applied with respect to these problems – perhaps most notably by Lenoir, to which the discovery of the term is commonly attributed – and it has become popular at a time of crisis of the welfare state, and perhaps of a crisis in social science paradigms. Yet social exclusion remains a concept, and the discourse emphasises that it is a way of looking at society.

In this context, it seems crucial to stress that people can be – and usually are – excluded in some areas (or dimensions), and included in others. Jackson, in her critique of the notion of social exclusion, emphasises that women are not categorically excluded but integrated in particular ways, through reproductive labour for example.[7] Also, marginality may produce the conditions for women to protest, and be included in collective organisations. Jackson's empirical remarks are of course correct, but the social exclusion debate does not (need to) focus on bounded groups, but stresses societal relations. The central definition of the notion of social exclusion (see the next section) stresses the *processes* through which people are being deprived, taking the debate beyond descriptions of merely the situation in which people are.

Social exclusion research does not need to start from one central top-down definition of integration – though some of the policy debates do tend to do that. Silver's focus on different interpretations of the notion opens up the possibility of thinking about forms of integration as being contested. A social exclusion concept can provide context-specific

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[6] Particularly in the US, 'underclass' has become a metaphor in debates about inner city crises (Katz 1993). In the popular press this has been often associated with 'drugs, crime, teenage pregnancy, and high unemployment', and not so much poverty.

[7] Jackson (1998). In her view, in the social exclusion discourse "the assumption that marginality is the problem remains pervasive." Also, she sees the social exclusion thinking as part of a movement – which she resists – in which "WID gave way to GAD, targetting to mainstreaming, and single identity analysis … challenged by integrated frameworks."

frameworks for analysis and policy, which may also provide a link to debates about participation. It starts from a general idea of the importance of integration in society, but the way this is operationalised can and should be dependent on local circumstances.

Finally, people may chose not to be included, and others are included against their will. In that sense, and as a description of the situation, it may be more appropriate to conceive of exclusion as exclusion from rights or entitlements: what counts is people's access to food, training, employment etc. – and less whether they decide to use that access.

3. What the concept does connotate

As indicated above, there is an 'official' French definition of the concept, which defines social exclusion as a *rupture of social bonds* – which reflects a French emphasis on the organic and solidaristic nature of society. More broadly, social exclusion has been defined as "the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society within which they live."[8] Social exclusion is defined as the opposite of social integration, mirroring the perceived importance of being part of society, of being 'included'.

The concept has two main defining characteristics. First, it is a multi-dimensional concept. People may be excluded, e.g., from livelihoods, employment, earnings, property; housing, minimum consumption, education, the welfare state, citizenship, personal contacts or respect, etc. (Silver 1994; also CESIS 1997). But the concept focuses on the multidimensionality of deprivation, on the fact that people are often deprived of different things at the same time. It refers to exclusion (deprivation) in the economic, social and political sphere.

Second – less discussed in the literature but perhaps more relevant for the theoretical contribution of the concept – social exclusion implies a focus on the relations and processes that cause deprivation. People can be excluded by many different sorts of

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[8] European Foundation (1995: 4). For the British Social Exclusion Unit, according to Carey Oppenheim, in April 1998 the establishment of a working definition was still a key challenge (the Guardian, 1 April 1998). For the EU's Economic and Social Committee on the cost of poverty and social exclusion in Europe (1998), 'complete social exclusion' is the 'final culmination of a series of specific exclusions from basic rights'.

groups, often at the same time: landlords exclude people from access to land or housing; elite political groups exclude others from legal rights; priests in India may exclude scheduled castes from access to temples; minorities may be excluded from expressing their identity; labour markets, but also some trade unions exclude people (non-members) from getting jobs; and so on. Exclusion happens at each level of society. Group formation is a fundamental characteristic of human society, and this is accompanied by exclusion of others. The concept takes us beyond mere descriptions of deprivation, and focuses attention on social relations, the processes and institutions that underlie and are part and parcel of deprivation.

The disadvantages faced by the excluded may be, and often are, interrelated. For example, people belonging to minorities or school drop-outs may have a greater risk of being unemployed or employed in precarious jobs and hence be low paid, less educated, recipients of social assistance, have little political power, and fewer social contacts. Research on social exclusion focuses on the extent to which these dimensions overlap. Which of these dimensions forms the central one – if any – will be dependent on the context; as stated above, a social exclusion concept forms the basis for context-specific analyses, and can allow for contesting definitions of integration. Thus in some societies or among some groups labour market participation may form the crux around which other elements of deprivation revolve; whereas elsewhere or among other groups religious identity is more important.

4. SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND POVERTY COMPARED

How does this notion relate to the in the Anglo-Saxon tradition more common concept of 'poverty'? In Britain, poverty has been a central concept at least since the Poor Law. Since Hume and Smith – and in reaction to the mercantilist thought in which poverty was seen as necessary for national development – economic growth has been seen as remedy for poverty. An individualistic approach has been central: the market consists of free

individuals entering voluntarily into contracts, and poverty therefore is an individual problem.[9]

The concept of 'basic needs' – deriving from Rowntree's work at the turn of this century, and popularised in development studies after WW2 – also is based in an individualistic theoretical approach to society. Basic needs are defined as a minimum consumption basket, which can include water and health care, and the poor as those who cannot afford this. The approach is different from the 18th century economists' concern in that it is welfarist, but it is similar in that it focuses on the individual, on individual utility.

As in the basic needs approach, the analytical focus of poverty assessments using absolute poverty lines is at the individual or household level. This is clearly distinct from a French social exclusion approach, with its focus on society, and the individuals' ties to society.[10] Lack of basic necessities is the focal point of analysis, rather than the processes that lead to exclusion from access. A similar point applies to analysis of 'relative poverty': though the poverty line is defined depending on the context of a particular society, analyses of relative poverty do not focus on the social processes responsible for deprivation.

Of course, most poverty analyses do not only count the poor, but studies the 'correlates' of poverty: characteristics like education, labour market status, gender, location, etc. that are correlated with poverty status. This brings us closer to a multi-dimensional notion of social exclusion, though an essential difference remains in terms of the central unit of analysis. Further, recent research has focused on the extent of transient poverty. This shows light on whether situation of exclusion are permanent – often showing more mobility that usually expected – but like other poverty assessment is rooted in what Silver describes as the liberal specialisation paradigm.

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[9] According to Locke, owners of capital had the duty "to provide with shelter and to refresh with food any and every man, but *only when a poor man's misfortune* calls for our alms and our property supplies means for charity" (cited in Lipton and Ravallion 1995: 2555, italics added).

[10] It is perhaps no coincidence that – as the ODI comparison of EU donor policies suggests (Cox *et al.* 1998) – that French development interventions have a weak focus on 'poverty', but I don't know of work that explores this.

The notion of 'relative deprivation' is more closely related to a concept of social exclusion, and it is often noted that rising inequality in various countries has contributed to the popularity of the notion of social exclusion.[11] Townsend, criticising the use of the basic needs concept, a minimum consumption basket, and the use of the concept of absolute deprivation, emphasised the concept of relative deprivation, in which the poverty line is set not as an absolute minimum but depending on the country's wealth. This is now common in the debates of poverty in Europe, where a poverty line is set at a level of, e.g., half the average national income. Also, some of the empirical studies in the IILS project on social exclusion (particularly Russia, Tanzania and Yemen) drew heavily on Townsend's work (IILS 1996: 18), perhaps not fully utilising the richness of the social exclusion concept that would not only focus on relative poverty lines, but also the relational characteristics of deprivation.

Notions of vulnerability seem closer to the concept of social exclusion. According to Chambers (1989), vulnerability is not a synonym for poverty. Whereas poverty means lack or want, and is usually measured for convenience of counting in terms of income or consumption, vulnerability means insecurity, defencelessness, and exposure to risk and shocks. It emphasises people's own perceptions of their situation, rather than relying on definitions by outsiders. Like social exclusion, a concept of vulnerability focuses on the variety of dimensions of deprivation, and is clearly a more relational approach to deprivation than the focus on measurement of income or consumption poverty.

Sen's work on capabilities and entitlements (1981) stresses that what counts is not what (poor) people possess, but what it enables them to do. He argues that Townsend's concept confuses the lack of commodities with the individual's or household's capabilities to meet social conventions, participate in social activities, and retain self-respect. A concept of relative deprivation measures relative standards, inequality, whereas capabilities are *absolute requirements* for full membership of society. The entitlement concept draws attention away from the mere possession of certain goods, towards rights, the command families have over goods, using various economic, political, and social opportunities within the legal system.

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[11] The "association of poverty with a more divided society has led to the broader concept of social exclusion, which refers not only to material deprivation, but to the inability of the poor to fully exercise their social, cultural and political rights as citizens" (Powell 1995: 22-23)

In a recent contribution, Sen (1998) welcomes the social exclusion framework, because its focus on "relational roots of deprivation … [bringing] concentrated attention on features of deprivation", and "its *practical* influence in forcefully emphasising the role of relational features in deprivation" (italics added). He believes that a social exclusion framework *reinforces* the understanding of poverty as capability deprivation.[12] Contribution to clarification of the possible meanings of the concept, he makes two distinctions. One, he distinguishes the constitutive relevance of exclusion (exclusion or deprivation is of intrinsic importance in its own) from its instrumental importance (exclusion itself is not impoverishing – like exclusion from credit – but it can lead to impoverishment of human life). The two can overlap, like landlessness that can be responsible for generating deprivation (instrumental) but also have value in itself, in cases where being without land is like "being without a limb of one's own" (constitutive). Second, he differentiates between active and passive exclusion: active exclusion occurs for example when immigrants are not given full political status or citizenship; while passive exclusion exists when deprivation is caused without deliberate attempt, for example because of a sluggish economy.

Thus, there are large overlaps between a notion of social exclusion, and definitions of poverty. With a broadening of notions of income-poverty, incorporating notions of vulnerability, and the entitlements framework, convergence of thinking about deprivations seems to predominate. A notion of social exclusion – especially as defined within a 'solidarity' paradigm – may take us a step further in the direction of an holistic understanding of deprivation. The application of the notion is not restricted to particular situations of deprivation – the value of the notion lies in the light it sheds on these situations, and hence would be equally relevant for deprivation in richer countries as in situations of mass poverty. The policy implications of such an understanding may also be different, which I explore in some more detail later, after discussing measurement issues.

[12] He refers to Gore's (1995) stated preference of a social exclusion approach over the capability framework, which "still remains wedded to an excessively individualist, and insufficiently social view". The differences between the approaches deserves more theoretical discussion. I believe that Gore's argument correctly points at the different paradigmatic underpinnings of the analyses – more than differences in empirical descriptions. Nevertheless, there is clearly a convergence in the understandings of deprivation.

5. CAN IT BE MEASURED?

In a slightly surprising statement, Lipton (1997) welcomed the notion of social exclusion, provided it is more accurately measured. In an earlier article, and using an hypothetical example relating to India (de Haan 1997), I argued that this is possible; building on this I will here discuss some implications for approaches to deprivation. It does not need stressing that measuring multi-dimensional aspects of deprivation is by no means new – it's been the central emphasis in UNDP's Human Development Index, and is implicit in poverty assessments' 'correlates of poverty; probably more challenging is operationalising what Sen called the relational roots of deprivation.

Within Europe, there have been significant initiatives to measure and monitor social exclusion. For example, focusing on the polarisation within British cities, the London Research Centre (1996) provides an index of deprivation of areas. Through factor analysis of a large set of variables, six major factors that determines polarisation were identified, relating to economic as well as social variables. Silver (1998: 62-71) describes a whole range of approaches to monitoring social exclusion, from macro to micro level. The French Action Plan for Employment provides 35 quantitative evaluation indicators, and the EU is trying to establish quantitative indicators to evaluate social inclusion initiatives. Britain's New Labour's 'poverty charter' proposed about 30 measures to track movement towards nationally defined social integration goals. There are also initiatives to approach this in a dynamic sense, such as French panel studies focusing on the subsequent activities of participants of training programmes. Silver also refers to the notion and measurement of social capital, to capture exclusion and inclusion in social networks.

Few people will disagree that its both possible and important to use such a range of indicators to monitor exclusion and inclusion. But I believe that the concept goes beyond such mapping of exclusion. Taking the relational features of deprivation serious – and this is relevant for policies, since they point to causes of deprivation and not just measurement of outcomes (even if multi-dimensional) – implies a different research emphasis. The concept of social exclusion can contribute to understanding of deprivation, in a way that is different from mapping it. Paugam's (1995) research on social exclusion in France is a fascinating example of the kinds of insights this type of analysis can

provide. He describes ‘spirals of precariousness’, how in French deprived neighbourhoods loss of unemployment tends to be accompanied not only by loss of income, but also (as the classic sociological study of Marienthal during the Great Depression showed) by social and psychological forms of deprivation such as marital problems and loss of ‘social capital’. Paugam’s study makes intensive use of quantitative analysis of correlations between elements of deprivation. This helps to characterise specific vulnerable groups – but equally important, it serves to illustrate the processes that lead to, and are part and parcel of deprivation.

Such type of analysis is I believe equally applicable to developing countries’ contexts. There also, deprivation is multi-dimensional: a landless female daily labourer of scheduled caste in Bihar is very likely to be poor, illiterate, in poor health, have little social capital, and will find it difficult to exercise her constitutional rights. Similarly, in developing countries it is important to see this as a process, and not just as a description of outcomes, and focus, for example, on the labour ‘market’ that determines these outcomes, on the gender and caste ideologies that inform labour market practices as well as other forms of interaction.

The specificity of the example is less relevant than the general point I would like to put forward. The notion of social exclusion is a way of conceptualising society, including (and with a focus) on the processes of deprivation that are part and parcel of that society. The mapping and monitoring of deprivation, as descriptions of outcomes is important; but a social exclusion framework takes us beyond that, and identifies the processes that lead to and cause deprivation. This framework also has specific policy implications, as described next.

6. SOCIAL INTEGRATION POLICIES

This paper is primarily about the conceptual merits of the notion of social exclusion, and the question of its relevance for developing countries; yet this section briefly discusses some policy implications. The notion itself has direct implications for policy approaches, quite different from, e.g., targeted anti-poverty interventions. The stress on the multi-dimensional nature of deprivation points at the need to integrate sectoral approaches. And the focus on the relational nature of deprivation emphasises the need to address the

social processes and institutions that underlie deprivation. Both these aspects are central to recent innovations in European social policies.

Though elements of the approach have existed elsewhere, the 'model' of anti-exclusion policies was developed in France during the 1980s.[13] Economic crisis, rising unemployment and crisis of social security system forced a redefinition of social policies. Unlike elsewhere the approach continued to assume a central responsibility of the state, for active policies for education, training and the labour market. During Mitterand's socialist government, a new model of social policies was developed, promoting economic development policies and enterprise values, and a culture oriented towards both market and social ideals. New management methods were introduced in public administration, and decentralisation, adaptation to local conditions and strategic thinking played an important role. Specific policies included education priority areas, programmes of 'insertion' for long-term unemployed, and social development of neighbourhoods. Throughout all this, solidarity remained a key concept, and insertion of individuals, families and groups the main objective.

With the changes in French government both practice and discourse changed, but overall social integration policies have continued to be at the centre of French social policies (Silver 1998: 42 ff). While reduction of the fiscal deficit was crucial in France as well, and in the context of social pressure an anti-exclusion bill was finally passed under the socialist government of Jospin in 1998. This seems very much a continuation of the social integration policies of the 1980s,[14] with a focus on the various groups suffering from most serious forms of deprivation, combinations of supply and demand policies, integrated decentralised initiatives, 300,000 new 'contrats d'initiative locales', and its focus on national solidarity.

The similarities with new initiatives elsewhere is striking (Parkinson 1998). Britain's new Social Exclusion Unit similarly has a focus on various forms of deprivation. The Third Way stresses a multi-sectoral approach illustrated by the Social Exclusion Unit as a form

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[13] This section draws heavily on the work of Cannan (1995, 1997), Evans *et al.* (1995), and Silver (1998).

[14] Though the new social policies in the early 1990s have been seen as a radical departure from the post-war Bismarckian system in France (Bouget 1998).

of 'joined-up' up government. The New Deal for youth and new Welfare to Work programmes show many similarities with French policies, as does the stress in partnerships. But there are differences as well, as suggested earlier. In the British debate, for example, responsibility is a much more important concepts than solidarity – though in both countries targeting of welfare benefits has been important. And the Third Way seems to put much more emphasis on supply policies, illustrated by the three priorities of 'education, education, education'.

Evaluations of these initiatives so far have shown mixed records. For example, though isolation of neighbourhoods has been broken in many cases, poverty tends to be dealt with less well.[15] However, important for the purpose of this discussion here is whether such social integration programmes have relevance for countries where mass poverty predominates. The question of a multi-dimensional approach seems easiest to answer. There seem to be good reasons why such an approach would work better – though the institutional implications are crucial. According to Lipton (1996), poor people achieve durable progress only when they can meet several requirements, like income, health, education, jointly. He quotes the 'Narangwal study' that showed that a much greater gain in child health is achieved resources available for primary health care and food supplementation are divided between the two than if the resources are concentrated on either one.

More difficult perhaps is the second aspect, the emphasis on social and psychological, or relational aspects of deprivation. But I do believe that in this sense also a social exclusion approach has potentials for the poorest countries. The social aspects of deprivation are not only a result of deprivation, but is integral part of it, and also causes the overall situation of deprivation. The work by Narayan and Pritchett (1997) on social capital suggest the independent role of the density of people's networks in causing income poverty. More generally, I suggest that, dependent on context, increasing social cohesion can be a pre-condition for poverty alleviation, rather than a second priority. Recently, I

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[15] It is early to evaluate the initiatives, and their multi-dimensional nature make this difficult. Cannan (1997) notes the reduction in neighbourhood deprivation, as well as the positive aspects of working in partnership and increasing responsiveness to the inhabitants' needs. Yet participation remains problematic, as is the proliferation of intermediate bodies, a relative neglect of (income) poverty, and the variety and lack of clarity of goals.

had the opportunity to discuss Colombia's social fund, the Red de Solidaridad Social,[16] and found interesting parallels in the conceptualisation of issues of deprivation and how to combat this. Within the Fund, priorities shifted from poverty-reduction objectives with precise criteria, towards a more flexible approach with more responsiveness towards local communities' priorities. The Red, so it is stressed, is a new *social-political model*, and as all social funds separate inter-sectoral unit to combat deprivation was set up. In the context of a violence-ridden society, the management has moved the Red's aim towards a contribution to the creation or restoring of civil society, building human capital, and the realisation of citizenship. It is acknowledged that there may be a trade-off with immediate (income) poverty reduction objectives, but the original targeted anti-poverty approach was thought to be unsustainable.

This example may seem far removed from the European policies described above. However, the similarity in the way deprivation has been approached is striking. Both see social relations and social integration as determining for and a crucial element of deprivation. The creation of a new social model of course does not have a blue-print, and as in Colombia will be context dependent. The central point for the discussion here is that the building of such policies depart from an holistic view of society, and places social relations in the broad sense in the centre of the analysis of deprivation.

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[16] This was part of a review of targeted anti-poverty interventions for the World Bank's OED (de Haan *et al.* 1998). Apart from various published and unpublished documents of the Red, the interview with Arcecsio Velez of the Red was particularly helpful.

7. THE WAY FORWARD

The problem with the term social exclusion is perhaps that it can be applied to about any situation, particularly if – as is common – the word 'social' is omitted. As Sen (1998) points out, we could use the language even to describe crop failure, and Jackson (1998) is not entirely wrong in her observation that social exclusion research tends to concentrate on categorical groups. But for me the main value of the concept lies in the perspective this brings to the understanding of society and deprivation. This perspective, summarised as 'holistic understanding' in the title of this paper, has clear implications for policies. The value of the concept has to be proven in further research, but realisation of the value will depend on taking its two defining characteristics seriously.

First, it needs to focus on the multi-dimensional nature of deprivation, and hence I believe it does provide a useful framework even to analyse situations of crop failure (where the household's deprivation also depends on its access to, e.g. state provisions, support from relatives, or labour markets), or to put gender analysis in a wider framework where gender forms only one of the axes – however central – of deprivation, besides class and race for example. In this perspective, income poverty is an *element of* social exclusion, and poverty reduction a part of social integration. In particular, social exclusion research can shed light on the extent to which various dimensions overlap.

Second, and more challenging, research needs to take the focus on actors and processes – in Amartya Sen's words the relational roots of deprivation – serious. The mapping of various dimensions of social exclusion is important, but the understanding of the social relations that determine deprivation requires a more qualitative approach. This needs an understanding of the social processes that include some groups and exclude others. These processes are as much of an economic, political as cultural nature, requiring interpretation of material and formal aspects of deprivation as much as of identity and ideology. If applied in that sense, social exclusion and integration may be a useful language to look at deprivation in a holistic sense, and in a way that takes us away from seeing deprivation as an outcome towards understanding the multi-dimensional way in which these outcomes come about.

Finally, a social exclusion and integration framework needs to be informed by a notion of rights. Ultimately, social integration needs to refer to individuals' and groups' right to being integrated, to a society's products and values, leaving open possibility for contesting definitions and practices of integration. An analytical framework of social exclusion should allow for differing definitions of integration, and varying prioritisation of dimensions of inclusion and exclusion. A social exclusion framework is primarily an analytical framework for understanding society and deprivation, with context dependence – both of definitions and of practices of exclusion and integration – as a central point of departure.

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