Chapter II

CONCEPT OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION
(WITH REFERENCE TO LABOUR DISPLACEMENT)
INTRODUCTION

The term "social exclusion" is of relatively recent origin. René Lenoir, writing about a quarter of a century ago, is given credit of authorship of the expression.

Social exclusion is a new concept in the literature and there is not full agreement on its definition. Moreover, the meaning of social exclusion is often mixed with that of related concepts such as poverty, deprivation and polarization. Social exclusion can be seen as a process that fully or partially excludes individuals or groups from social, economic and cultural networks and has been linked to the idea of citizenship (Lee and Murie, 1999). In fact, social exclusion can be defined as disempowerment at the individual level and as structural obstacles at the social level, which deny some group's access to resources associated with citizenship (Gore, 1997).

The notion has, however, already made substantial inroads into the discussions and writings on poverty and deprivation. There is a large and rapidly growing literature on the subject. (Amartya Sen, 2000)

At the end of 1980s social scientists observed a conceptual shift from poverty to social exclusion. The deep transformations in the economic system in Western countries, and the strong individualism, led to problems not only
related to a lack of wealth. But also to a weakening of family ties, an increase in the job precariousness and in the unemployment rate, a growing violation of human rights and a decline in the social participation, stressing inadequacy of the standard measures of poverty to describe the new reality. The lack of income is not the only relevant aspect anymore in the analysis of poverty and deprivation. To analyse the new reality, social scientists need to focus not only on economic aspects but also on social and political aspects of the individual day life. Hence, The new concept that emerged to address the challenges of new realities of deprivation in all its facets is social exclusion (Ambra poggì, 2004).

Thus, prompted by debates in Europe on new forms of poverty in the wake of the crisis of the welfare state, development studies in the 1990s started to explore the notion of social exclusion. It was promoted by a research project at the International Institute in the mid 1990s (IILS: 1994; Figueiredo and de Haan 1998), originally as contribution to the World Summit for Social Development, which produced a range of country studies. An IDS Bulletin in 1998 focused on the subject, with an emphasis on bringing together northern and southern debates on poverty (de Haan and Maxwell 1998), the notion reappeared in the writings of Amartya Sen for the Asian Development Bank (1998), at the conference on chronic poverty at the University of Manchester in 2003. In Latin America, particularly in the Inter-American Development Bank, social exclusion and inclusion has become a core concern, against of course
very high levels of measured inequality, and concerns around race and ethnicity (e.g. Buvinic et al. 2004). It has appeared in discussions in China too, related to government debates and policies to promote a ‘harmonious society’. Common to most of these writing is a definition that emphasizes: a) poverty as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and b) the institutions and processes that are responsible for causing and reproducing deprivation. (Arjan de Haan, 2007)

The idea of social exclusion has recently been used to cover a large variety of “exclusions” particularly important in Asia. There is, in fact, a considerable—and fast growing—literature dealing with one or more of these “exclusions” in Asian countries, such as India, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and others. The focus has been on processes through which deprivation occurs—processes (as Dr. K.F. Jalal, 1998, puts it) “through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live.” There have been things to learn from the European literature on social exclusion, and the learning has been impressively fast in Asia as well. (Amartya Sen, 2000)

**MEANING**

Social exclusion is a ‘highly problematic’ and contested term. Atkinson (1998) recognizes that “reading numerous enquiries and reports on exclusion reveals a profound confusion among experts”. Moreover, the meaning of social exclusion is often mixed with that of related concepts such as poverty,
deprivation and polarization. Our understanding of social exclusion is of a dynamic process with many varied dimensions

**DEFINITION**

Weber used for the first time the term social exclusion to indicate a process leading one group to secure for itself a privileged position at the expense of some other groups (Parking, 1979). In France, the term social exclusion was used to indicate the concept of underclass. Recently, the debate on the term social exclusion leads to the following results.

Social exclusion may be defined as... An inequality arising from the interplay of social differentiation and restricted entitlement and access to resources which compounds vulnerability, restricts prospects for upward mobility, and increases the probability of inter-generational chronic poverty.

Social exclusion can be seen as a process, which fully or partially excludes individuals or groups from social, economic and cultural networks and has been linked to the idea of citizenship (Lee and Murie, 1999). In fact, social exclusion can be defined as disempowerment at individual level and as structural obstacles at the social level which deny some groups the access to resources associated with citizenship (Gore, 1997). In particular, Bhalla and Lapeyre (1999) define social exclusion as a process, which causes individuals or groups, who are geographically resident in a society, not to participate in the normal activities of the citizens in that society.
Social exclusion is the denial of equal opportunities imposed by certain groups of society upon others which leads to inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society. (Sukhadeo Thorat)

Kabeer (2000) focuses on issues of process underlying relational exclusion: 'A focus on processes of exclusion ... draws attention to the production of disadvantage through the active dynamics of social interaction, rather than through anonymous processes of impoverishment and marginalization'.

Social exclusion may be defined as:

... inequalities arising from the interplay of social differentiation and restricted entitlement and access to resources which compounds vulnerability, restricts prospects for upward mobility, and increases the probability of inter-generational chronic poverty.

... a shorthand term for what can happen when people 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. (SEU, 1997)

Social exclusion occurs where different factors combine to trap individuals and areas in a spiral of disadvantage. (DSS, 1999)
Social exclusion is a process, which causes individuals or groups, who are geographically resident in a society, not to participate in the normal activities of citizens in that society. (Scottish Executive, nd)

The notion of poverty that has guided the development of this report is where people lack many of the opportunities that are available to the average citizen.... This broad concept of poverty coincides with the emerging concept of social exclusion. (NPI, Howarth et al, 1998)

The processes by which individuals and their communities become polarised, socially differentiated and unequal. (ESRC, 2004)

The dynamic process of being shut out from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society. (Walker and Walker, 1997)

A lack or denial of access to the kinds of social relations, social customs and activities in which the great majority of people in British society engage. In current usage, social exclusion is often regarded as a 'process' rather than a 'state' and this helps in being constructively precise in deciding its relationship to poverty. (Gordon et al, 2000,)

An individual is socially excluded if (a) he or she is geographically resident in a society but (b) for reasons beyond his or her control, he or she cannot participate in the normal activities of citizens in that society, and (c) he or she would like to so participate. (Burchardt et al, 2002)
Other dimensions include ‘Inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power’ (Room, 1995). Social exclusion is a broader concept than poverty, encompassing not only low material means but the inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life and in some characterisations alienation and distance from mainstream society (Duffy, 1995).

An accumulation of confluent processes with successive ruptures arising from the heart of the economy, politics and society, which gradually distances and places persons, groups, communities and territories in a position of inferiority in relation to centres of power, resources and prevailing values. (Estivill, 2003.)

Although the above definitions may be clear and precise, their level of abstraction means they are not empirically precise. While they help to conceptualize social exclusion, this is not the same as providing an operational definition that is amenable to measurement.

Several of the definitions refer to exclusion from activities that are ‘normal’ or available to the ‘average citizen’, or to the majority of citizens. While this appears to be an empirical question, it is also a normative one. The selection of which activities ‘matter’ involves a judgment, and one that may change over time, as expectations and opportunities change.

The definitions raise questions of both choice and capability.
The Nice criteria specifically distinguish risks from access to goods, resources, services and employment (implicitly therefore constitutive of exclusion). Labour market inactivity may be seen as constitutive of social exclusion (at least for working-age adults).

In particular, social exclusion can be defined as a process, which causes individuals or groups, geographically resident in a society, not to participate in the normal activities of the citizens in that society. However, this definition creates some problems. It is argued that non-participation in the normal activities of the society can be a voluntary choice, so the individual can decide to be excluded without feeling in a disadvantageous situation (Burchardt et al., 1999). Moreover, it is not clear which activities have to be considered “normal activities of the citizens in the society”.

Social exclusion is a multidimensional dynamic process leading to a state of individual exclusion relative to the rest of the society where the individual lives in. Social exclusion at a point in time is defined as the impossibility to achieve some relevant functioning (that is, the various things that an individual manages to do or to be in leading a life). – Poggi (2004).

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

- Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon, which refers to economic- structural and socio-cultural aspects of life. Theoretically it consists of material deprivation, insufficient access to social rights,
deficient social participation and a lack of cultural/normative integration;

- a distinction can be made between traits which describe the actual state of social exclusion (status characteristics) and risk factors that increase the chance of social exclusion (process);
- risk factors operate at the micro-level of the individual, at the meso-level of formal and informal organisations and social settings, and at the macro-level of government and society at large.

PARADIGMS

Hilary Silver's interpretations of the concept differed greatly from several others. Silver distinguished three paradigms of social exclusion, depending in particular on the ways social integration has been conceptualized, and associated with concomitant 'theoretical and ideological baggage'.

In the 'solidarity paradigm', dominant in France, exclusion is the rupture of a social bond between the individual and society that is cultural and moral. The poor, unemployed and ethnic minorities are defined as outsiders. National solidarity implies political right and duties.

A 'specialisation paradigm', dominant in the US, and contested in the UK, is determined by individual liberalism, emphasizing the contractual exchange of rights and obligations. According to liberal-individualistic theories, individuals are able to move across boundaries of social
differentiation and economic divisions of labor. In this paradigm, exclusion reflects discrimination, the drawing of group distinctions that denies individuals full access to or participation in exchange or interaction.

A ‘monopoly paradigm’ is influential in Britain and many Northern European countries, and views the social order as coercive, imposed through hierarchical power relations. Exclusion is defined as a consequence of the formation of group monopolies. Group distinctions and inequality overlap.

These paradigms as formulated by Silver help to contextualize and understand debates about deprivation. It helps understand why definitions of social exclusion vary (and indeed of ‘inequality’), and that the reasons for this can often be traced to political and intellectual traditions. Arguably, this is a key reason why a concept of social exclusion can be usefully applied in the context of the South, a context where absolute solidarity is relevant, conceptually, across a range of situations, and social exclusion can usefully be defined as “the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society within which they live”.

A social exclusion concept should help us understand the nature and causes of deprivation, in a way that takes context dependence as one of its key starting points.
ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION:

Atkinson (1998) underlined three main elements characterizing social exclusion: relatively, agency and dynamics. Social exclusion involves the 'exclusion' of people from a particular society. So to judge if a person is excluded or not, we have to observe the person relative to the context of the rest of the society she lives in. Moreover, exclusion implies a voluntary act (agency) and depends on how situations and circumstances develop (dynamic process). So, social exclusion is either a process or a state. Finally, another essential characteristic of social exclusion is its multidimensional nature.

In fact, the European Commission (1992 and 1993) suggests that “The concept of social exclusion is a dynamic one, referring both to processes and consequent situations... it also states out the multidimensional nature of the mechanisms whereby individuals and groups are excluded from taking part in social exchanges, from the component practices and rights of social integration and identity... it even goes beyond participation in working life: it is felt and shown in the fields of housing, education, health and access to services”.

Atkinson (1998) also points out that the dynamic process called social exclusion leads to a state of exclusion. Bhalla and Lapeyre (1999) identify the state of exclusion with individual deprivation. On the same idea, Sen defines social exclusion as a process leading to deprivation.

The literature on social exclusion includes studies on specific problems (e.g. long-term unemployment, social networks, etc.), which are taken to be
instances of social exclusion, as well as studies tending to develop a general conception of social exclusion. There are also a few studies stressing on the average number of years at which the individual is excluded (e.g. Burchardt 2000, Burchart et al. 2002).

CHARACTERISTICS

Two defining characteristics of exclusion are particularly relevant, namely, the deprivation caused through exclusion (or denial of equal opportunity) in multiples spheres –showing its multidimensionality. Second feature is that, it is embedded in the societal relations, and societal institutions - the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live (Arjan de Hann 1997).

It recognizes the diverse ways in which social exclusion can cause deprivation and poverty. Consequences of exclusion thus, depend crucially on the functioning of social institutions, and the degree to which they are exclusionary and discriminatory in their consequences. Social exclusion has sizable impact on an individual’s access to equal opportunity if social interactions occurs between groups in power/subordinate relationship. The groups focus thus recognized the importance of social relations in the analysis of poverty and inequality (Mayra Buvinic 2005).
DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Social exclusion as a concept denotes two main dimensions such as 1) Distributional dimension which refers to economic-structural exclusion, in line with the Anglo-American approach; 2) Relational dimension, which refers to the social-cultural exclusion as emphasized in the French school.

A) Distributional dimension: Economic/structural exclusion:

Within this first dimension two distributional aspects: a material (income and goods) and a non-material (social rights) one are identified.

1. Material deprivation: Deficiencies in relation to basic needs and material goods; ‘lifestyle deprivation’; problematic debts; payment arrears (a.o. housing costs).

2. Inadequate access to government and semi-government provisions (‘social rights’): Waiting lists, financial impediments and other obstacles to: health care, education (especially of children), housing, legal aid, social services, debt assistance, employment agencies, social security, and certain commercial services (such as banking and insurance); insufficient safety.

B. Relational dimension:

Socio-cultural exclusion the second dimension is also divided in two different aspects: social integration, which point to social relations and networks; and cultural integration, which regards values and norms.
3. Insufficient social integration: A lack of participation in formal and informal social networks, including leisure activities; inadequate social support; social isolation.

4. Insufficient cultural integration: A lack of compliance with core norms and values associated with active social citizenship, indicated by a weak work ethic; abuse of the social security system; delinquent behaviour; deviating views on the rights and duties of men and women; no involvement in the local neighbourhood and society at large.

In addition to the above the researchers have mentioned a few other dimensions of social exclusion.

Burchandt et al. (2001) identify four dimensions: consumption (capacity to purchase goods and services), production (participation in economically or socially valuable activities), political engagement (involvement in local or national decision-making), social interaction (integration with family, friends, cultural groups and community).

One popular social policy expert cites seven dimensions to social exclusion itself (Percy-Smith, 2000):

- economic (for example, long-term unemployment, workless households, income poverty)
- social (for example, homelessness, crime, disaffected youth)
- political (for example, disempowerment, lack of political rights, alienation from/lack of confidence in political processes)
• neighbourhood (for example, decaying housing stock, environmental degradation)

• individual (for example, mental and physical ill-health, educational under-achievement)

• spatial (for example, concentration/marginalisation of vulnerable groups).

• group (concentration of the above characteristics in particular groups: elderly, disabled, ethnic minorities).

Miliband emphasized the multi-dimensionality of social exclusion in general: “the focus on social exclusion signaled that there was more than one dimension to inequality” – assets, skills, social networks and housing, as well as income (Miliband, 2006). He identified four distinctive features of government thinking in terms of social exclusion:

• it is relative and relational

• it is multi-dimensional

• the extension of state help must be accompanied by an extension of personal responsibility

• it is embedded in power relations that constrain and define the capabilities and choices of individuals.

FORMS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Amartya Sen draws attention to various meanings and dimensions of the concept of social exclusion (Sen 2000). Distinctions is drawn between the
situation where some people are being kept out (at least left out), and where some people are being included (may even be forced to be included)- in deeply unfavorable terms, and described the two situations as “unfavorable exclusion” and “unfavorable inclusion.” The “unfavorable inclusion”, with unequal treatment may carry the same adverse effects as “unfavorable exclusion”.

Sen also differentiated between “active and passive exclusion”. For the casual analysis, and policy response, Sen argued that “it is important to distinguish between “active exclusion” - fostering of exclusion through the deliberate policy interventions by the government, or by any other willful agents (to exclude some people from some opportunity), and “passive exclusion”, which works through the social process in which there are no deliberate attempts to exclude, but nevertheless, may results in exclusion from a set of circumstances.

Sen further distinguishes the “constitutive relevance” of exclusion, from that of “instrumental importance”. In the former, exclusion or deprivation have an intrinsic importance of their own. For instance, not being able to relate to others and to take part in the life of the community can directly impoverish a person’s life, in addition to the further deprivation it may generate. This is different from social exclusion of “instrumental importance”, in which the exclusion in itself, is not impoverishing, but can lead to impoverishment of human life.
Deep exclusion: Multi-dimensionality is key to the idea of 'deep exclusion'. This term was introduced into the conceptual field by David Miliband, who argued in March 2005 that "social exclusion exists in wide, deep and concentrated forms, and it is important not to confuse them" (Miliband, 2006). "Wide exclusion" refers to those deprived on a single indicator. "Deep exclusion" refers to those who are excluded on multiple counts, while 'concentrated exclusion' refers to the concentration of problems in particular geographical areas. "Here we get closer to a more recognisable definition of social exclusion reflecting the most disadvantaged in society" (Miliband, 2006.). Miliband suggested that the SEU and other government departments need to set minimum standards across different stages of the life course - for children, working-age adults and older people. A large minority would be below one or more of the basic minimum standards. (Indeed, it is even possible that a majority of the population could be considered socially excluded on at least one count.)

A working definition of deep exclusion might therefore be: Deep exclusion refers to exclusion across more than one domain or dimension of disadvantage, resulting in severe negative consequences for quality of life, well-being and future life chances.

Deep exclusion thus emphasises the issue of multiple and severe disadvantage. Miliband's (2006) examples of multiple deprivations are:

• struggling with basic skills and long-term unemployed
• a child in poverty, in poor housing, with a parent suffering mental illness
• homeless, on drugs, without skills, and without family.

These, and especially the last example, echo the concerns encapsulated in the SEU's original description of social exclusion, as well as being wholly consistent with the United Nations (UN) definition of overall poverty.

**DIMENSIONS – INDICATORS:** The European Commission (2000) when defining social exclusion in terms of the denial or non-realization of social rights, proposes to analyse the different dimensions of social exclusion with the following indicators: distribution of income, share of population below the poverty line before and after social transfers, persistency of poverty, proportion of jobless households, regional disparities, low education, long-term unemployment. Fields like health, housing and homeless, literacy and innumeracy, access to essential services, financial precariousness and social participation, are also considered.

**PROCESS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION:** Further elaboration of the concepts of exclusion or discrimination has come from the mainstream economics in the context of race and gender. The mainstream economic literature throws more light on discrimination that works through markets, and developed the concept of market discrimination with some analytical clarity. In the market discrimination framework, exclusion may operate through restrictions on the entry in market, and/or through “selective inclusion”, but with an unequal
treatment in market and non-market transactions (this is close to the Sen’s concept of unfavorable inclusion).

The exclusion could also manifest itself in diverse ways in terms of “causes and outcomes”. Sen therefore refers to various meanings and manifestations of social exclusion, particularly, with respect to the causes or the processes of discrimination and deprivation in a given society. Exclusion could occur through direct exclusion, violating fair norms of exclusion (that is unfavorable exclusion), or through inclusion, but under unfavorable conditions, again violating fair norms of inclusion (that is unfavorable inclusion), or through deliberate government policies (that is active exclusion), and through unintended attempts and circumstances (passive exclusion), or exclusion caused through inability of some persons to relates to other persons (constitutive relevance). The mainstream economists have further elaborated the concept of discrimination that operates particularly through markets.

Social Relations:

Constitutive and Instrumental Importance

The distinction between constitutive relevance and instrumental importance is only one of the distinctions that can be fruitfully used to understand and analyse the nature and reach of social exclusion.

The distinction between the two ways in which social exclusion can lead to capability deprivation is worth clarifying more precisely and also worth investigating further.
Being excluded can sometimes be in itself a deprivation and this can be of intrinsic importance on its own. For example, not being able to relate to others and to take part in the life of the community can directly impoverish a person’s life. It is a loss on its own, in addition to whatever further deprivation it may indirectly generate. **This is a case of constitutive relevance of social exclusion.**

In contrast, there are **relational deprivations** that are not in themselves terrible, but which can lead to very bad results. For example, But not to have access to the credit market can, through causal linkages, lead to other deprivations, such as income poverty, or the inability to take up interesting opportunities that might have been both fulfilling and enriching but which may require an initial investment and use of credit. Causally significant exclusions of this kind can have great instrumental importance: they may not be impoverishing in themselves, but they can lead to impoverishment of human life through their causal consequences (such as the denial of social and economic opportunities that would be helpful for the persons involved).

Given the age-old value system in peasant societies, landlessness can also have constitutive importance in a world that values a family’s special relation with its land: to be without land may seem like being without a limb of one’s own. But whether or not a family attaches direct value to its relation with its “own land,” landlessness can also help to generate economic and social
deprivations. Indeed, the alienation of land has been—appropriately enough—a much-discussed problem in the development literature.

Clearly, particular relational deprivations may, easily enough, have both constitutive and instrumental importance. For example, not to be able to mix with others may directly impoverish a person's life, and also, additionally, reduce economic opportunities that come from social contact. Indeed, quite often different aspects of capability deprivation and social exclusion may go together. However, they can also appear singly, and as and when they are relevant, we have to pay attention to each possibility within the general categories of constitutively important deprivations and instrumentally significant handicaps. When a deprivation does not have constitutively relational importance, it may still be fruitful, in many cases, to use the perspective of social exclusion, on instrumental grounds, to analyse it, if the causal process can be better understood through invoking the idea of exclusion. The nature of the causal process is crucial for deciding the relevance of each perspective.

**Active and Passive Exclusion**

Another potentially useful distinction is that between active and passive exclusion. When, for example, immigrants or refugees are not given a usable political status, it is an active exclusion, and this applies to many of the deprivations from which minority communities suffer in Europe and Asia and elsewhere.
When, however, the deprivation comes about through social processes in which there is no deliberate attempt to exclude, the exclusion can be seen as a passive kind. A good example is provided by poverty and isolation generated by a sluggish economy and a consequent accentuation of poverty.

Both active and passive exclusions may be important, but they are not important in the same way. The distinction can be relevant for causal analysis as well as for policy response.

Relational exclusions may, in some cases, be brought about by a deliberate policy to exclude some people from some opportunities. For example, the decision of the United States Congress a couple of years ago to exclude permanent residents who were not US citizens from certain types of federal benefits was clearly an active exclusion, since it came about through policies directly aimed at that result. In contrast, the macroeconomic circumstances that may lead to a significant level of unemployment may not have been devised to bring about that result. Also, when particular groups—such as the young and the less skilled—suffer especially from being left out of the employment process, it is possible that the economic conditions causing that result (and even the economic policies precipitating those conditions) may not have been, in any sense, aimed at excluding these vulnerable groups from employment. The absence of direct aiming does not, of course, absolve the government involved from responsibility, since it has to consider what bad things are happening in the economy and how they can be prevented (and not
merely the things that are directly “caused” by its own policies). Nevertheless, for causal analysis it may be important to distinguish between the active fostering of an exclusion—whether done by the government or by any other willful agent—and a passive development of an exclusion that may result from a set of circumstances without such volitional immediacy.

Sometimes an active exclusion can bring about other exclusionary consequences that were not part of the plan of exclusion but nevertheless are results of the directly aimed exclusion, even though they may not have been clearly anticipated (or not at all foreseen).

Indeed, in much of Europe, legally settled immigrants do not have the political right to vote because of the difficulties and delays in acquiring citizenship. This keeps them outside the political process in a systematic way—this is clearly an active exclusion. This political exclusion results in disenfranchisement of the immigrants, even long-term settled immigrants, and this in turn makes their social integration that much harder.

Since the issues of political integration and of voting rights also arise in other parts of the world, including in Asia, this connection between active and passive exclusions may have a much wider relevance than the European nature of this example may initially suggest.
The nature of Social Exclusion may be summarized as follows:

**Dynamic process**

Social exclusion is dynamic and has to do with the process through which people become excluded.

**Relative concept**

For social exclusion there is no absolute demarcation point. It can only be assessed in a relative way, by comparing a person’s circumstances vis-à-vis others in the same socio-historical context.

**Multidimensional disadvantage**

Social exclusion involves deficiencies in several dimensions, which are associated with 'full citizenship': paid work and income, education, housing, health care, legal assistance, accessibility of public provisions.

* **Distributional and relational focus**

Social exclusion also concerns relational and socio-cultural aspects, such as solidarity, social bonds and participation, integration, engagement, discrimination, and norms of social citizenship (e.g. reciprocity, mutual obligations).

* **Endogenous and exogenous agency**

Agency refers to the individual or collective actors that bring about shortages. The agency lies mainly in the characteristics of the disadvantaged themselves, and may be regarded as endogenous. Social exclusion, also derives
from a lack of ‘communal resources’: a person’s neighborhood and social network, social security agencies, and the social infrastructure. The excluded may have little or no control over such exogenous factors.

The concept of social exclusion is defined partly by contrasting it with the concept of poverty; but the distinctive criteria are not very sharp. Social exclusion need not relate solely to the process of being socially excluded (dynamic), but can also denote the condition of being socially excluded (static). Social exclusion can relate both to non-material characteristics (relational dimension) and to material aspects (distributional dimension).

The causes of social exclusion and of being socially excluded may lie at a collective level, but individual characteristics and behavior can theoretically be important as well. Social exclusion involves different dimensions.
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