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1

Defining Exclusion

The notion of social exclusion is relatively new in the Anglo-Saxon literature but it rapidly gained currency during the 1990s. It was first developed in France by sociologists concerned by the emerging social problems related to the socioeconomic transformations in the 1980s. It refers to the loss of social cohesion resulting from growing inequalities and the return of mass social and economic vulnerability for an increasing part of the population. Indeed, the lack of access of a growing number of individuals to a decent job (or simply a job), income, housing, health service or education and a more diffused feeling of insecurity among some portions of the population goes hand in hand with new opportunities for others who can take advantage of the potential for prosperity. Social exclusion is related not only to a lack of material wealth but also to symbolic exclusion, social deprivation and incomplete participation in the main social institutions (Silver, 1995). It emphasizes the quality of the relationship between the individual and society. An approach in terms of social exclusion highlights the new social question affecting social cohesion which calls for major changes in social policy.

Society has become more fragile. The debate on social exclusion is concerned with the transformation of capitalism and its impact all around the world in the new global era. Exclusion from the productive system and social deprivation are the two crucial processes leading to social exclusion whereas a decent job and an effective social network are the main elements of social integration.

Social exclusion is a multidimensional and structural process, embracing precariousness of labour and unemployment on the one

hand and the breakdown of social bonds through the crisis of the welfare state, flexible accumulation patterns, rise of individualism and the weakening of primary solidarity (of family networks, for example) on the other.

1.1 A short history of the concept

It is at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the 'social question' related to pauperism emerged explicitly for the first time. At this time a new type of poverty resulting from modernization and industrialization was affecting the working class. Social tensions produced by industrialization and liberalism were threatening the established social order. The dynamics of power struggles between the underprivileged classes and the bourgeoisie and the related risk of social breakdown were at the heart of the debate. Exclusion was viewed mostly as a *political* phenomenon resulting from an underrepresentation of the working class in political institutions and its lack of access to full citizenship. Thus, the social question was concerned with the integration of the working class into the political process. On the basis of an analysis of capitalism in the nineteenth century, Polanyi (1957) has shown how social forces have reacted to the socially negative impact of self-regulating markets (where the economy is disembedded from society so as to allow the market to function without social and political constraints). In a reaction of *self-defence*, social actors were able to enforce factory legislation, social insurance and the institutionalization of industrial relations. This was the origin of the modern welfare state.

The step-by-step building of the welfare state from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1960s reduced social tensions and conflicts in the industrialized countries. A broad set of social institutions emerged which enabled accumulation to proceed unfettered while maintaining social cohesion through the temporary resolution of crises endemic in the capitalist accumulation process. They provided a period of vigorous capital accumulation. During the golden age of the post-Second World War era, social integration resulted from economic growth, development of the wage-earning society, quasi-full employment and improvement in workers' living conditions. The welfare state contributed significantly to this process of integration through a redistributive policy: poverty issues

nearly disappeared from the top of the political agenda in the industrialized countries.

Lenoir (1974) is considered the pioneer in the use of the term 'social exclusion'. In *Les Exclus: un Français sur dix* he developed a stigmatizing view of the excluded: those who have no access to the fruits of economic growth. Indeed, the socially excluded were those with a mental or physical handicap, suicidal people, the aged and invalids, drug abusers, delinquents, asocial persons and so on. What this wide variety of people had in common was that they did not fit into the norms fixed by industrial society: they were socially disadvantaged groups. However, the term 'social exclusion' had a very restricted connotation and acceptance at this time,¹ as it was related to a marginal phenomenon which did not affect the whole of society.

However, the capitalist system in the late 1970s and the 1980s has been followed by a deep restructuring of the socioeconomic systems in the industrialized countries. Globalization of capital and the restructuring of labour markets were accompanied by new types of social and economic regulation and new strategies with supranational dimensions. In this process many institutions which worked in harmony during the period of Fordist industrial organization to maintain both sustainable growth and social justice have been destroyed. These were institutions which promoted social cohesion by finding a compromise between contradictory but interdependent forces (Boyer, 1995). The 1980s experienced a drastic ideological shift towards the supremacy of self-adjusting free-market mechanisms aimed at dissolving or circumventing most of the institutional forms inherited from the compromises of the Fordist growth regime. The new trend led to privatization, liberalization, reduction of public services, a shift towards targeted assistance and deregulation of the labour market. According to the neoliberal consensus that emerged in the 1980s, those reforms were crucial for restoring vigorous world economic growth.

The emerging new social problems in the 1980s concerned the deprivation of individuals who had formerly been well-integrated in society. Precariousness affected some members of the labour market who had once enjoyed secure jobs and good social networks. Thus the new poverty problem did not pertain to marginals (the disabled or those excluded from social norms) but to an

increasing proportion of the population suffering from such multidimensional problems as precarious jobs and long-term unemployment, the weakening of family and extra-family social networks and a loss of social status. Thus, the notion of social exclusion relates to socioeconomic structural changes rather than to individuals' behaviour or characteristics.

The new forms of poverty, mass vulnerability and long-term unemployment have led to new concerns relating to the processes of social polarization with rising income gaps between the top and the bottom segments of the social scale. At the heart of the new social question is the return of mass social vulnerability, marked by a growing number of people trapped in precarious forms of work or becoming permanently superfluous, irrelevant or a hindrance to the functioning of the global economy. Social and spatial restructuring, precarious employment and unemployment are inherent to the dynamics of accumulation. In the future every nation will have to face the challenge of what to do with the millions of people whose labour is needed less or not at all and who lack social recognition in the emerging global economy. The emerging global economy is characterized by strong tendencies towards a fragmentation of the social fabric and the occupational structure. The crucial issue then is how to ensure social cohesion in a fragmented society where a significant portion of the population is excluded in the name of economic efficiency and flexibility.

The new social question is related to the crisis of the wage-earning society and the loss of social protection (Castel, 1995). It is also the crisis of solidarity associated with the welfare state that seems inefficient in fighting the new poverty and the processes of social fragmentation that emerged in the 1980s (Rosanvallon, 1994). Strobel (1996) notes that the debate on exclusion poses the fundamental question of the social bond and the means that society has of ensuring solidarity among its members. This is becoming an increasingly important political debate.

A growing number of individuals are now suffering from economic and social deprivation. They are wholly or partially excluded from the society in which they live (Galtung, 1995). They are trapped in a kind of 'social no man's land' which risks becoming a social ghetto of people dependent on social benefits and deprived of positive social recognition. Thus, more and more people are

excluded not only from an economic, social or geographical point of view but also from a symbolic one. Fragmentation of society, the development of informal activities and the emergence of different and conflicting models of solidarity are deeply affecting social cohesion. As the Commission on Wealth Creation and Social Cohesion has noted, social cohesion is under stress. Mass vulnerability and exclusion go hand in hand with the new economic opportunities offered by globalization. The process is producing a fractured society with fewer and fewer shared values and common interests (Dahrendorf *et al.*, 1995, p. 16).

It is in that context of deep socioeconomic transformations that the concept of social exclusion was originally developed in France by sociologists in the late 1980s. In French republican thought, it refers to a process of 'social disqualification' (Paugam, 1993) or 'social disaffiliation' (Castel, 1995) leading to a breakdown of the relationship between society and the individual. The notion of social exclusion emphasized the risk associated with the breakdown of the social fabric and ensuing loss of collective values. It forms the basis of the global debate on the mechanisms of national solidarity and social exclusion which became the mainstream paradigm in the 1990s, for a new approach to both the social crisis and the social policies to overcome it. For example, through the *revenu minimum d'insertion* (RMI) programme, the State has acknowledged the fact that new forms of poverty result from structural processes, related in particular to the rise of unemployment, which required a proactive policy. In that context, the French law against exclusion of 29 June 1998 can be seen as a cornerstone and a unique initiative in Europe in the fight against social exclusion. Resulting from several years of struggle by social actors urging the state to tackle exclusion in all its dimensions, the law against exclusion refers to the notion of fundamental rights to be guaranteed for all human beings: 'The struggle against exclusion is a national imperative founded on respect of equal dignity of all human beings ... The present Law aims to guarantee throughout the country, effective access for all to fundamental rights' (Article 1). The 1998 law stressed the need for an integrated multidimensional policy framework against exclusion and the mobilization of all concerned actors through new partnerships. In 1998 this law was followed up by the establishment of the National Observatory of Poverty and Social Exclusion to improve

understanding of exclusion in all its forms and to evaluate policies to fight it. The law of 27 July 1999 on universal health coverage guarantees a universal right to health care even for individuals having no fixed address.

In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the European Commission played a crucial role in the diffusion of the concept of social exclusion. It contributed significantly to making the fight against social exclusion one of the key objectives in national and European social policy. The then President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, played a key role in promoting the notion of social exclusion in both European policy debates and European research programmes. Indeed, in the 1990s the notion of social exclusion gained tremendous importance not only in the policy and media spheres but also in the academic sphere through specific European Commission research programmes such as Poverty 3, which focused on multidimensional action to foster economic and social integration of the least privileged groups. These cross-country programmes have oriented research teams all around Europe towards new issues and have mobilized them to improve knowledge concerning social exclusion processes, vulnerable groups and best practices.

The concept of social exclusion was explicitly mentioned in the preamble of the 1989 European Social Charter which pointed out that 'in the spirit of solidarity it is important to combat social exclusion' (European Commission, 1989). Following on this new commitment, the European Council of Ministers adopted a resolution on 'combating social exclusion' (Council of the European Communities, 1989). A European Observatory on Policies to Combat Social Exclusion was established which prepared several synthesis reports (Room *et al.*, 1991, 1992 and 1993).

The fight against social exclusion was mentioned as an objective in the Protocol on Social Policy of the EC Treaty in Maastricht in 1992 but it was not yet part of the constitutional core of the EU. It is only with the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 that the fight against social exclusion was inserted into the EC Treaty as one of the main objectives of the EU (Articles 136 and 137 of the Treaty). The Treaty of Amsterdam has broadened the mandates of the EU institutions for fighting social exclusion. Indeed, with a view to achieving the objectives of the renewed social policy chapter, the Community can take proactive action for 'the integration of people excluded from

the labour market'. It is also committed to support the member states' actions to combat social exclusion 'to improve knowledge, develop exchanges of information and best practices, promote innovative approaches and evaluate experience' (Article 137).

At the Lisbon European Council of March 2000, the Council adopted the strategic goal for the next decade of becoming 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy ... with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'. To this end, the Commission and the member states set the goals to make decisive progress towards the eradication of poverty by 2010 and to improve the understanding of poverty and social exclusion in the European context. It was agreed that the promotion of social inclusion within the overall strategy of the EU was to be achieved by an open method of coordination. This process is designed to help member states to develop their own policies, reflecting their individual national situations, to share their experiences, and to review their outcomes in a transparent and comparable environment.

Finally, the fight against social exclusion became one of the six objectives of the EU social agenda at the Nice European Council held in December 2000. The European Council agreed at the summit to request the member states to implement two-year National Action Plans on Social Inclusion for combating poverty and social exclusion, setting specific targets, taking into account national, regional and local differences, and listing the indicators used to assess performance and monitor progress. The plans were submitted to the Commission for the first time in June 2001. The member states and the Commission have sought to develop common approaches and compatibility regarding social indicators in the field of poverty and social exclusion (see Chapter 2).

A paradigm shift in Europe regarding social policy is evidenced by the fact that the New Labour Government in the United Kingdom established in December 1997 a Social Exclusion Unit in the Cabinet Office reporting directly to the Prime Minister.

The notions of social exclusion, social cohesion and social integration are now widely discussed not only at the European level but on a world level by the national governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. For

example, in the final Declaration and Action Plan of the World Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, social integration was one of the three key elements of a strategy for social development along with the eradication of poverty and the increase of productive employment.

One of the main reasons explaining the success of the concept of social exclusion as a global rather than a strictly European concept is that it offers a novel approach to such social problems as social fragmentation, deprivation and marginalization. These processes are now occurring within all societies to varying degrees depending on the nature of integration into the global economy. The protagonists of a global approach to exclusion claim that it provides an organizing theme that can help integrate into a general framework different loosely connected notions such as poverty, inequality and access to basic social, political and economic rights (Faria, 1995).

1.2 Underlying theoretical paradigms

One of the main criticisms of the concept of social exclusion is that it is very vague and lacks any precise and commonly agreed definition. The multiple facets and ambiguity of this concept result from the fact that it became a catchword with very different meanings. Silver (1994) defines three major paradigms on exclusion: (i) the *solidarity paradigm*, which explains exclusion in terms of lack of social ties between individuals and society – this paradigm is deeply rooted in French Republican thought; (ii) the *specialization paradigm*, under which exclusion is described in terms of various distortions, namely, discrimination, market failures and unenforced rights – this paradigm is deeply rooted in the school of liberal thought that is dominant in the United States, and (iii) the *monopoly paradigm*, under which exclusion is explained in terms of some groups (so-called insiders) controlling or monopolizing resources to their advantage – this paradigm is dominant in Western Europe.

In the official French debate, exclusion is seen as a rupture of this bond of solidarity. Thus social exclusion can be viewed as a failure of the state to protect social cohesion. It refers to the Durkheimian idea of a specific social bond or solidarity. From a Durkheimian perspective, the development of a particular society and social division of labour in the nineteenth century led to a transition from

mechanical to organic solidarity. But in the mechanical model of solidarity associated with traditional societies, collective consciousness embraced individual consciousness. This led to a strong internal cohesion of the community. In the organic model of solidarity associated with modern societies collective consciousness was largely overshadowed by individual consciousness. The emergence of this new model of solidarity resulted from a growing interdependence of individuals within the framework of the social division of labour. Solidarity was no longer mechanical, as it implied that each individual was conscious of his or her role in the proper functioning of society. Here, the social order is conceived as *normative*, based on a core of shared values and rights. It presupposes a national consensus or, in other words, a collective conscience that ties individuals to society whatever their differences and interests. The traditional moral debate on solidarity is concerned with the building up of the national community going beyond individual, group or class interests.

The solidarity debate rejects social class conflict, Christian charity and liberal individualism. It is based on the relationship between two types of responsibility: individual responsibility and collective responsibility (Bourgeois, 1931). In this context, the state has a key role to play to preserve the social bond between individuals and society and promote social integration (Ion, 1995, p. 67). The responsibility of the State is to alleviate poverty and protect individuals against the risks associated with industrial society. But at the same time individual responsibility also is important: individuals must respect social norms, particularly through their participation in the labour market, if they want to enjoy social protection. The French debate on exclusion is deeply rooted in this relationship between individual responsibility and collective responsibility. As we shall see in Chapter 4, the RMI programme in France was elaborated from this perspective. As Donzelot (1996, p. 94) points out, the state must both protect individuals against society and protect society against individuals. According to Aglietta (1997), the right to not be excluded should be at the heart of the political debate and should become the minimum basis for a new social contract.

Unlike French Republican thought, the Anglo-Saxon tradition views social integration in terms of freely chosen relationships between the individual and society (Silver, 1994, p. 18). This

Anglo-Saxon thinking is rooted in the liberal paradigm under which society is viewed as a mass of atomized individuals in competition within the market-place. The liberal debate emphasizes individuals' rights and obligations. It assumes that there is no social bond other than voluntary contractual exchange between free individuals. We must point out, however, that the liberal paradigm rejects the ideas of domination or exploitation. Therefore, exclusion may reflect voluntary individual choices or a contractual relationship between actors, or 'distortions' to the system such as discrimination, market failures and/or unenforced rights. From a strict meritocratic point of view, in a society characterized by democratic institutions and equal opportunities for all, individuals have what they merit. Here, it is not a question of social justice; there are no structural processes of exploitation or exclusion and no one could be seen as directly responsible for situations in which individuals find themselves (Walzer, 1995).

The liberal paradigm does not envisage society's responsibility since it views the main causes of poverty as individual shortcomings and behavioural deficiencies. Nevertheless, there are two different groups of the excluded according to that normative view: first, those who suffer discrimination or those who do not have the required abilities because they are handicapped or disadvantaged for one reason or another; second, those who choose not to take advantage of the opportunities to participate actively in social and economic life because of the disincentive effects of public assistance. From a general point of view, one can say that the Anglo-Saxon notion of social exclusion is somewhat more materialistic and individualistic than the French, which is more holistic and is concerned with issues concerning social ties.

In this context, in an influential and controversial contribution Murray (1984) provoked a liberal debate by suggesting that the underclass was a consequence of state intervention, which creates a dependency culture by making public assistance more attractive than work. The underclass is viewed as consisting of deviant individuals behaving rationally in response to the policies of the welfare state. Thus, the policy should be concerned with overcoming the perverse effects of social insurance systems through the withdrawal of the welfare state. The state should intervene only to protect individual rights, prevent discrimination, help individuals to realize

their potential and concentrate limited resources on those who really need help rather than on those characterized by deviant values and behaviour.

Finally, the monopoly paradigm noted above is quite close to Weber's theory of 'social closure' (see Parkin, 1979). Here social groups interact according to their material interests, one group trying to monopolize advantages. Closure means exclusion of economic and social opportunities to outsiders: one group maximizing rewards by restricting access of other economic or social groups to the social and economic opportunities. This invites a collective response by the excluded to win some recognition or share of the resources. Parkin interprets social closure in terms of exclusion and usurpation, the latter being an inevitable consequence of the former; indeed social closure is the process by which social bodies or clubs seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to a limited number of eligibles; usurpation is the process through which outsiders resist and seek to overcome their exclusion. Depending on the size of such excluded groups of outsiders, their collective action may challenge the prevailing system of resource allocation and distributive justice. Protests and strikes by organized labour, the growth of women's movements, and groups formed by ethnic minorities to seek recognition are all symptomatic of the relationships between the two processes of 'social closure'. These two aspects of closure differ in one significant sense: 'The exclusionary closure involves the use of power in a "downward" direction ... whereas the counter-vailing action by the "negatively privileged", on the other hand, represents the use of power in an upward direction' (Parkin, 1979, p. 45).

More recently, Tilly (1998) has described exclusion in terms of exploitation and 'opportunity hoarding', defined as a situation in which members of a network 'acquire access to a resource ... supportive of network activities' (p. 10). Exploitation occurs when command over resources is monopolized by some groups excluding others. Those excluded may resort to hoarding of opportunities. While both mechanisms are exclusionary, there are differences between the two. First, the exploiters are a powerful elite whereas hoarders are not. Second, exploiters need to enlist the efforts of some groups to exploit resources the returns from which are not shared by them. Hoarders simply exclude some groups on the basis

of ethnicity and kinship, for example. Thus, there is a parallel between the above two mechanisms which both involve insiders and outsiders like Weber's theory of social closure. Both face a problem of maintaining a distinction between insiders and outsiders over time and of ensuring continuing loyalty and solidarity of group members.

Having introduced the notion of social exclusion, our next task is to distinguish it from the more conventional notions of poverty, deprivation or marginalization. Indeed, it is important to examine whether social exclusion is only a relabelling of old and long-standing problems or whether it emphasizes new social problems.

1.3 On poverty, deprivation and exclusion

In this section, we briefly review the existing concepts of poverty and deprivation to determine whether social exclusion is simply a broader *social* analysis of poverty and destitution. The social notion of deprivation is in fact not new, as Adam Smith in the eighteenth century focused on deprivation in terms of 'inability to appear in public without shame' (Sen, 2000, p. 5). In the context of industrialized countries (mainly the United Kingdom), Townsend (1979, 1993) defines poverty and deprivation in both economic and social terms. Noting that the 'subsistence' concept of poverty and deprivation 'minimises the range and depth of human need just as the "basic needs" concept is restricted primarily to the physical facilities', Townsend (1993, p. 79) defines poverty in terms of 'relative deprivation' as 'a state of observable and demonstrable disadvantage relative to the local community or the wider society or nation to which an individual, family or group belongs'.

Townsend distinguishes between two types of deprivation: *material* (relating to food, clothing, housing and so on) and *social* (family, recreational and educational). This latter kind is noted to provide 'a useful means of generalising the condition of those who do not or cannot enter into ordinary forms of family and other social relationships' (Townsend, 1979, p. 82). The major focus of Townsend's approach to poverty is on social interaction rather than the material aspects. His interest lies in examining who in the UK is excluded from 'ordinary living patterns, customs and activities' (Townsend, 1979, p. 15).

Non-economists generally believe that the economists' concept of poverty is narrowly focused on material aspects such as the level, size or distribution of incomes. While this may have been true in the 1970s, it is no longer the case. Lipton and Maxwell (1992) show how the new conceptualization of poverty embraces such elements as the importance of civil society (besides just NGOs) and security of livelihood. Sen has also developed a comprehensive approach to poverty which goes beyond economics. At the heart of Sen's theory is the notion of individuals' 'capabilities' which are opportunities to achieve valuable 'functionings' or 'states of being'. Thus 'living may be seen as consisting of a set of interrelated "functionings", consisting of beings and doings' (Sen, 1992a, p. 38). In addressing poverty issues, Sen focuses on valuable functionings which represent different factors of well-being. Functionings may include both physical elements such as being adequately fed and sheltered and 'more complex social achievements such as taking part in the life of the community, being able to appear in public without shame, and so on' (Sen, 1992a, p. 110). As the capabilities set reflects the various combinations of functionings individuals can achieve – and so their positive freedom to choose between different ways of living – it embraces the political and social dimensions of poverty.

In the context of rich countries defined in terms of per capita GNP (for example, the United States), low income is merely one factor among others that influence poverty (Sen, 1992a). The diverse social circumstances and characteristics (health facilities, violence in inner cities, the absence of social care as factors in the social environment which influence poverty) also need to be taken into account. In an effort to empirically apply Sen's concept of capabilities, Desai (1995) adds the dimension of resource requirements for guaranteeing capabilities, which will vary from society to society depending on social norms and practices. These requirements need to be considered along with the availability of resources at the disposal of individuals.

Another pioneering piece of work on poverty and destitution by Dasgupta (1993) examines the influences of equal and unequal asset distributions on the functioning of the labour market and on those seeking employment. His concept of *economic disenfranchisement* is somewhat similar to Sen's concepts of entitlement and capabilities discussed above. The poor who have no actual labour power (or

those like landless people without any ownership of assets) suffer from a failure of entitlements owing to lack of income, assets or employment. Their capabilities to command employment and access to resources can be enhanced only if their consumption levels are raised (particularly higher food intake) to a level at which they can satisfy their minimum nutritional requirements to enable them to convert their *potential* asset of labour power into *actual* labour power. On the other hand, some people in agrarian societies (the analysis is mainly concerned with these) have some assets in the form of land and unearned income. These people enjoy a comparative advantage in the labour market because they can convert their potential labour power into actual labour power without having to work. In the labour market, those with assets can undercut those without any assets unless social norms prevent such wage-undercutting. Thus, it is the assetless people such as the landless labourers who are particularly vulnerable.

It is clear from the above discussion that recent concepts of poverty, hunger and destitution, as defined by Dasgupta, Lipton and Sen, capture their economic, social and, to some extent, political dimensions. As such they provide a useful starting point for the analysis of social exclusion.

However, the traditional concept of poverty is restricted to a lack of disposable income which is considered to give access to a minimum standard of living in a society, whereas the more comprehensive concept of social exclusion refers also to a breakdown or malfunctioning of the major social systems that should guarantee full citizenship (Berghman, 1995). This is not to exclude the possibility that economic status (being rich or poor) may influence the extent of exclusion from or access to certain political rights (economic clout undoubtedly influences access to political goods and rights). But some developing societies like that of India provide constitutional rights. The 'fundamental rights' provision in the Indian Constitution guarantees to all citizens non-discriminatory access to legal process, education and public employment as well as basic civil liberties. The Constitution goes even further and provides for compensatory discrimination (affirmative action) in favour of particularly disadvantaged social groups ('scheduled castes and tribes'), religious and cultural minorities (see Appasamy *et al.*, 1996). However, while the

Constitution can legally enforce these 'negative' rights and freedoms, it cannot legally ensure 'positive freedoms' or economic welfare in the form of guaranteed employment and a guaranteed minimum income.

In the context of industrialized countries, the shift in thinking in Western European countries, for example, from poverty to social exclusion was the result of increasing concern with the structural and multidimensional nature of processes by which individuals or specific areas are actually excluded from 'the social exchanges, practices and rights which are an intrinsic part of social and economic integration' (European Commission, 1989, p. 43).

In Europe, the concept of social exclusion was adopted for both political and conceptual reasons. On political grounds, member states expressed reservation about the use of the term 'poverty'. The concept of exclusion was considered less disparaging of the structural social problems experienced (Berghman, 1994). Moreover, the concept of poverty was deemed inadequate considering that the welfare states in Europe guaranteed a minimum income and access to basic services. Besides, an income-based notion of poverty was considered too static and narrow an approach to social problems.

The European notion of exclusion embraces multidimensional processes and points to the malfunctioning of the *institutions* that should guarantee social integration. Thus the focus of analysis shifts from individuals to communities and institutions to which the individuals belong or from which they are excluded. The EU defines social exclusion in terms of the denial or non-realization of economic, social and political rights. It emphasizes each citizen's right to a certain standard of living and to participate in the major social and occupational institutions of the society where he or she lives. This approach is very close to Marshall's (1950) classic formulation of citizenship rights in industrial society. According to it, the coexistence of civil, political and social rights is a necessary condition for full citizenship and democratic societies should preserve a good balance in the provision of these rights. Thus, the denial of social rights constitutes a major failure, even if civil and political rights are effective. Indeed, where citizens are unable to secure their social rights, they will suffer from multiple and persistent disadvantages and their social and occupational participation will be undermined (Room *et al.*, 1992).

Therefore, the concept of social exclusion may be superior to that of poverty in two main respects. First, it focuses on the multidimensional character of deprivation and can thus provide an insight into the cumulative factors that keep people deprived. Second, it enables an analysis of deprivation as a result of dynamic causal factors. The conceptual differences between poverty and social exclusion are illustrated in Table 1.1.

To conclude, we can argue that social exclusion is a new approach to the analysis of social issues. It has stimulated the development of longitudinal research for a better understanding of the multidimensional processes causing vulnerability and deprivation for an increasing portion of the population not previously affected by this phenomenon. In the latter part of the 1980s, research in the social sciences shifted from the static definition of poverty, based on a monetary approach, to the processes leading, at least in some cases, to the extreme situation of social exclusion through the cumulation of disadvantages and a progressive rupture of social bonds. As Mingione (1996) explains, it is necessary to look at dynamic processes and their perception within changing systems of social integration. From this perspective, the notion of exclusion both promotes the debate and motivates social science research. Further, there occurred in the 1990s a new phase of research programmes guided explicitly or implicitly by the concept of social exclusion so that in France, for instance, a large consensus exists on the actual framework for analysing social exclusion and questioning social issues and policy.

1.4 Different dimensions of the concept

It follows from the above discussion that both *distributional* (economic) and *relational* (social) issues lie at the heart of the concept of

Table 1.1 Conceptual differences between poverty and social exclusion

	Static outcome	Dynamic process
Unidimensional (income)	Poverty	Impoverishment
Multidimensional	Deprivation	Social exclusion

Source: Berghman (1995).

social exclusion (see Chapter 2). The concept goes beyond the economic and social aspects of poverty. It also embraces the political aspects such as civil and political rights and citizenship that determine a relationship between individuals and the state as well as between the society and the individual. Besides rights and citizenship, the emergence of new social organizations and groups can also indicate a new relationship between individuals (through their social group) and the state. Having considered the concept of exclusion in general terms, below we discuss its three main aspects, namely, economic, social and political.

1.4.1 The economic dimension

The economic approach to exclusion is concerned with the questions of income and production and access to goods and services (or commodity bundles *à la* Sen) from which some people are excluded and others are not. That is to say, they may be excluded from income from employment and/or from the satisfaction of such basic needs as housing/shelter, health and education. Dasgupta's concept of economic disenfranchisement, discussed above, more explicitly approximates exclusion from the labour market, which, however, also incorporates such social aspects as malnutrition and ill health. Both these concepts emphasize ownership of assets (social structure and organization) and access to resources as important factors preventing or minimizing exclusion. In a study on *Employment, Technology and Development*, Sen (1975, p. 5) defined the employment concept in terms of (a) income, (b) production and (c) recognition. The economic approach to exclusion seems to cover mainly the first two aspects. The third aspect refers to the idea that 'employment gives a person the recognition of being engaged in something worth his while'. Thus, the recognition aspect of Sen's concept of employment can be interpreted as providing a social dimension to the concept of exclusion (see below).

Most analyses of poverty are based on the level of consumption or income compared to what is socially considered to be a minimum standard of living. Within Europe, the so-called 'relative' poverty threshold, like the 60 per cent or 50 per cent median equivalent income threshold, has become very popular and is being frequently used by many national statistical offices. Despite the numerous

critics of the material bias of poverty lines, Townsend (1985, p. 662) stressed that they remain a relevant tool because money is an overall good indicator of the satisfaction of basic needs as 'below an approximate threshold of income, deprivation seems to intensify, accelerate or multiply disproportionately'. Thus material deprivation is a key dimension of social exclusion even if it is not the only one. The results of EU research programmes have shown the complex relationships between income poverty, deprivation and social exclusion (Muffels and Fouarge, 2002). There is a high degree of mismatch between poverty measures based on income and deprivation (seen as exclusion from customary activities, goods and services). At the 40 per cent median income-based line the degree of consistency between the two measures is very low and income and deprivation appear to be measuring quite different phenomena. The degree is less than 10 per cent for Belgium and Denmark, 15 per cent for the UK and Germany and 25 per cent for France and Italy (Whelan *et al.*, 2002, p. 187). This mismatch is for the most part a consequence of the failure of current income to capture the longer-term accumulation and erosion of resources. Indeed, in the case of *persistent* poverty the degree of consistency varies between 46 per cent and 56 per cent among most of the countries of the survey whereas in the case of *transient* poverty, the degree varies only between 29 per cent and 39 per cent.

In practice, symptoms of economic exclusion can be found in income inequality and worsening of income distribution over time. Many countries around the world are experiencing widening gaps between the rich and poor. Since the 1980s income distribution has worsened not only in most of the developing countries and the transition economies but also in the industrialized countries. When growth of the per capita GNP is associated with an increase in income shares of the top 20 per cent, while the income share of the bottom 20 per cent declines, one cannot argue that economic exclusion has been overcome. On the contrary, in the case of a skewed income distribution, the benefits of growth do not trickle down to the poor and the excluded.

1.4.2 The social dimension

The concept of social exclusion is rooted in the social tradition of giving a greater weight to *relational* issues while Sen's concept of

entitlements is rooted mainly (but not exclusively) in the economic tradition of giving a greater weight to *distribution*. As we noted above, Sen has extended his concept of entitlement to cover functionings and capabilities. Though related to entitlements, these latter concepts go well beyond the pure economic tradition. An extension of Sen's concept of entitlements to a study of social exclusion requires, *inter alia*, the incorporation of a theory of social or group action (besides changes in relative prices) to change the original distribution of incomes and assets or entitlements to commodities. Gore (1993) examines the concept of entitlements and extends it to a moral economy of provisioning in times of hunger and famine. He argues that socially enforced moral rules can constrain or expand entitlement to food and its distribution in conditions of famine. Interactions between social norms determined by non-governmental institutions and state-enforced legal rules extend beyond gender relations.

Let us take a specific case of access to employment to overcome the exclusion of those who are not integrated into the labour market. Sen's concept of employment mentioned above demonstrates that lack of employment not only denies income and output to those who are excluded; it also fails to recognize their productive role as human beings in society. In other words, employment provides social legitimacy and social status as well as access to income. Access to the labour market entitles individuals to rewards and economic rights which are essential entitlements to full citizenship. It brings with it human dignity which alleviates the negative effects of exclusion on human beings and increases the scope for social integration (Gorz, 1994).

Other social dimensions included in the entitlement concept concern participation of certain social groups in decision-making as well as the marginalization of such disadvantaged groups as women and ethnic minorities. Studies in India (for example, Tilak, 1987) show considerable gender and caste bias in education. Access to education for men and for higher castes is noted to be higher than for women and for lower castes. At the higher levels of educational attainment, access of lower castes becomes even more restricted. This social phenomenon of unequal opportunities and lack of access is explained by both economic and cultural factors.

In industrialized countries, increasing violence and crime is a reflection of the weakening of relations between individuals on the

one hand and between individuals and the state and society on the other. In many countries the number of prisoners has increased substantially. The incidence of drug-related crimes and adult rapes is also high in several countries.

It is useful to recognize that the term 'social' is rather ambiguous and is used differently by different people. This is especially true when one distinguishes between 'economic' and 'social' well-being. The most commonly used indicators of social well-being relate to access to health and education. This is partly because data on these sectors are easily available although the quality or robustness of these data may be dubious. When it comes to relational issues as discussed above, it is difficult to be specific and quantitative. However, indicators of civil and political liberties, which represent relations between the state and individuals as well as among individuals, can give some indication of the strength and weakness of such relations (see Chapter 2).

Three main aspects of the social dimension of exclusion are particularly important: (i) access to social services (for example, health and education, drinking water and sanitation facilities), (ii) access to the labour market (precariousness of employment as distinct from low pay), and (iii) extent of social participation reflected in the extent of weakening of the social fabric, as measured by greater crime, juvenile delinquency and homelessness, and so on). This last category captures relational aspects: relations among individuals as well as between the citizens and the state.

Using a social exclusion approach, rather than a poverty one, implies focusing not only on distributional but also on relational aspects of exclusion. Thus, we need to assess 'social-relations deprivation' (Penz, 1986), including structural (rather than cyclical) aspects of exclusion besides material deprivation. Most recent studies on exclusion (particularly in developing countries: for example, Appasamy *et al.*, 1996; Kaijage and Tibaijuka, 1996) are, however, concerned mainly with material deprivation. A study on Thailand (Phongpaichit *et al.*, 1996) is, perhaps, the only one which explicitly considers social exclusion as something different from poverty and defines it in terms of claims of rights and citizenship instead (for a detailed analysis of exclusion in the context of developing societies, see Chapter 6).

Poverty may not always be a good indicator of exclusion of people from goods and services. People can be poor and not be excluded

from certain basic needs; they may continue to enjoy some access to the labour market, to some physical resources and to political rights and obligations. The same levels of achievement in life expectancy and access to social services can be attained by countries with widely varying per capita incomes (Sen, 1983a). For example, China and Sri Lanka performed well in the improvement of living standards despite a relatively low per capita GNP (Dasgupta, 1993). In 1992, Sri Lankans had a life expectancy at birth of over 71 years, whereas the Republic of Korea, which is more than three times richer in terms of per capita GNP, has not yet overtaken this level (see UNDP, 1994). Thus social change seems to be highly dependent on the particular pattern of development chosen. Implementation of social policies within the framework of a people-centred development strategy is more likely to lead to an increase in the capabilities of disadvantaged people than a rapid growth strategy based on a trickle-down effect.

The state of poverty is not a condition for exclusion from certain social networks. In developing countries an increasing number of organizations of the poor support our contention that poverty does not necessarily mean exclusion from social relations. These organizations may actually offer bargaining strength to the poor and ensure social cohesion and solidarity instead of accentuating exclusion, as a number of authors on 'social clubs' have argued (for a discussion of the role of exclusive groups, see Buchanen, 1965; Olson, 1965).

The dimension of civil and political rights and citizenship (a political asset) further distinguishes exclusion from poverty.

1.4.3 The political dimension

One of the advantages claimed for the concept of social exclusion is that it includes a political dimension. That is, it concerns the denial of certain human and political rights to certain groups of the population. The UNDP (1992, p. 29) notes these rights as: personal security, rule of law, freedom of expression, political participation and equality of opportunity. One can extend this list by including trade union rights (or freedom of association) and the process of democratization in general. After all, democracy provides institutions and opportunities for the fulfilment of political rights and freedoms. According to Marshall (1964), these rights can be grouped

into three main categories of citizenship rights: (a) *civil* (freedom of expression, rule of law or right to justice), (b) *political* (right to participate in the exercise of political power) and (c) *socioeconomic* (personal security and equality of opportunity, right to minimum health care and to unemployment benefits, and so on). However, these three sets of rights may not be offered to all citizens. Moreover, citizens may be assured of socioeconomic rights but not political rights (as seems to be the case in China). Thus, the progression from civil rights and liberties to political rights and social rights proposed by Marshall is not necessarily valid in practice.

Social exclusion can be interpreted in terms of a denial of the above rights or in terms of *incomplete* citizenship. Deficiencies in citizenship rights may be due to poor enforcement of these rights by the state and the inability of the individuals, social groups and organizations to defend their rights.²

The problem of political exclusion takes very different forms in democratic and non-democratic countries. Indeed, in Europe, for instance, political exclusion results less from restrictions in political or human rights than from the lack of political representation and influence of the excluded. The excluded have no voice because there is no politically relevant representation of their specific interests that would make them a political force. By inhibiting participation social exclusion creates permanently outvoted minorities (Silver, 1997, p. 60). Moreover, social fragmentation has a debilitating effect on institutions and modes of political participation. One of the consequences of this is a fragmentation of social forces and of a growing gap between the masses and political leadership. In contrast, in many other countries, overcoming political exclusion involves a democratic transition to the enforcement of political rights.

Even within Europe political exclusion of the immigrant populations differs in the UK on the one hand and France and Germany on the other. The immigrants from the Commonwealth countries enjoy voting rights in the UK whereas no non-citizens in France or Germany enjoy such rights. This may partly explain why right-wing extremism has grown in these latter two countries much more than in the former. In most of the European countries it is very difficult to acquire citizenship (Sen, 2000).

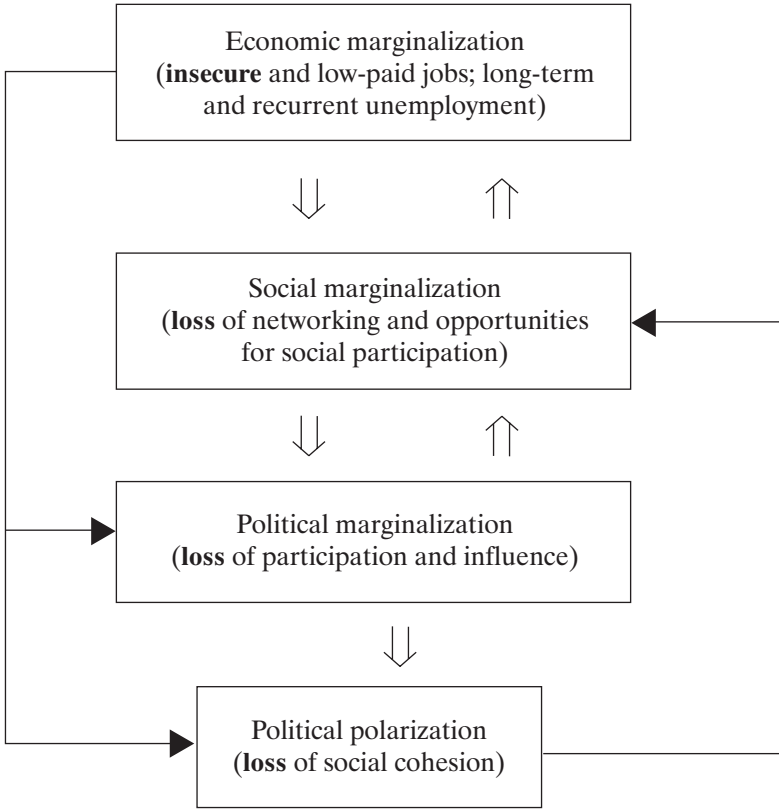
The spread of social and economic deprivation in the 1980s has deeply threatened social cohesion. As Mingione (1996, p. 12)

notes about the crisis of full citizenship, the problem is not the revolt of the excluded, because they have no political representation, but rather the weakening of the social bond as a whole in a situation where solidarity and certainties are fading away even for those who are not poor. Nowadays, both employment and family are becoming less stable and thus more problematic and selective in protecting individuals from falling into a cumulative process of deprivation. Mass unemployment, the development of precarious forms of work and the weakening of the systems of kinship and community solidarity are all bringing new forms of vulnerability for an increasing number of people. The concept of exclusion is based on the processes through which individuals who were formerly well-integrated into society are now facing social and economic vulnerability.

As a consequence of social fragmentation and the lack of social and political representation of the excluded, mechanisms of solidarity between the fully integrated and the vulnerable or the excluded may break down. The crisis of social cohesion may involve political exclusion and the development of hostile attitudes among the different segments of society as is indeed the case in France and Germany where racial attacks against the immigrants by right-wing extremists have become frequent.

The economic, social and political dimensions of exclusion discussed above are interrelated. For example, political and civil rights and liberties can draw the best out of people, raising their productivity and thereby contributing to growth and thus overcoming economic exclusion. Are political liberties a necessary condition for overcoming economic and social forms of exclusion? One can argue that these liberties *vis-à-vis* the state give bargaining strength to the excluded to claim inclusion. Violence and wars may be manifestations of this strength 'for the purposes of righting wrongs' (Dasgupta, 1993, p. 122). Freedom also provides a person 'with the *ability ... to function* and it values a person's access to and command over certain specific commodities solely because they are a *means* to this ability' (Dasgupta, 1986 p. 33). Thus, there is clear interdependence between the economic and political aspects of exclusion. Exclusion can be reduced when access to economic and political goods is increased. Figure 1.1 illustrates the relationship between the economic, social and political aspects of exclusion.

Figure. 1.1 Relationship between economic marginalization, social disintegration and political polarization



Source: Adapted from Andersen (1996), p.158.

The political dimension of exclusion discussed above involves the notion that the state, which grants basic rights and civil liberties, is not a neutral agency but a vehicle of the dominant classes in a society. Its support for particular classes is reflected in prevailing policies and programmes. Such a bias may be rationalized on pragmatic economic grounds (capital accumulation) or political expediency (support of rich farmers and industrialists).

Thus, the role of the state is important for overcoming social exclusion. But this role is being redefined in a new framework of political

economy under which markets and the private sector are replacing many of the old functions of the government sector. The emergence of social organizations may help achieve simultaneously the objectives of improved state performance, increased social welfare and greater participation in decision-making. But these organizations may not emerge spontaneously; the state may have an important role to play in their creation and use as intermediaries between government and people.

Social exclusion may also be overcome more directly through government intervention and legislation. Special admissions quotas for educational institutions granted to minorities in China and to lower castes in India are examples of positive discrimination in favour of the underprivileged or socially excluded (Bhalla, 1995; Appasamy *et al.*, 1996). Similarly, in the USA, affirmative action programmes and 'bussing' have the objectives of improving access of Afro-Americans and other racial minorities (historically excluded and underprivileged groups) to education and employment. But whether these actions to include some social groups lead to the exclusion of others (because of competing claims on limited resources noted above) is also a relevant and practical policy issue which underlines the importance of the economic factor. These actions may nevertheless be necessary to overcome deep-seated prejudices which deliberately exclude certain segments of society.

Overcoming social exclusion requires a new approach to the role of the state. In the hegemonic liberal doctrine, active public policies reflect vested interests which lead to economic waste, and which in turn involve a welfare cost. A minimal state associated with economic growth policies is often recommended in the expectation that growth will increase the well-being of the population without the need for any state intervention.

One can explain the weakening of the welfare state in Europe in terms of the rising cost of providing social protection and the failure of the state to raise sufficient resources to include everyone in the welfare system. The resource base for such a system is being eroded by rising unemployment and shrinking social security contributions as well as by an ageing population (the baby boomers are close to retirement which leaves a heavy burden on the social security system with fewer wage earners contributing to the system). In discussing the myopia of the political process (discounting the future costs and benefits), Wolf (1990) explains how the growth of redistributive

welfare programmes in Europe and the United States in the 1960s and 1970s was due to an overestimation of the social and political benefits from such programmes, and an underestimation of their long-term costs.

Control of exclusion calls for a proactive social policy based on (i) an understanding of the mechanisms causing exclusion and (ii) democratic institutions of social control. The state needs to play a major role in defining such policy. Institutional creativeness is required to empower excluded groups and promote their effective representation in the process of policy definition. Social policies may involve the creation of new institutions or the modification of existing ones in order to build social consensus. To ensure that such consensus is achieved, these policies need to be rooted in people's own analysis of their situation and needs. The notion of a concerted economy developed by the pioneers of French planning after the Second World War (Massé, 1991) is particularly interesting because it emphasizes the role of the state in order to allow a positive dialogue between the different social actors. By reinforcing the links between individuals and society, information and consultation processes can reduce failures in the implementation of public policies.

1.5 Towards a capability approach to exclusion

A large consensus has emerged on Sen's capability approach. Sen's major contribution is to broaden the scope of social policy aimed at giving all citizens the means to achieve effective freedom to act by empowering them and increasing their capabilities. In Sen's approach, capability and freedom to act go together. It thus has great affinity with the rights-based approach influenced by Marshall's (1950) work and adopted by the EU. Both approaches entail 'activation' policies³ and active labour market policies to increase the opportunities of the unemployed to reintegrate into the labour market, and of the employed to maintain their employability through lifelong learning.

From this perspective, it is more important to focus on capabilities than on means. Sen (1983b) emphasized the difference between 'freedom from want' and 'freedom to act'. According to him, what matters is not only the amount of income and goods each individual

has but also what he or she can do with them. Individuals may have jobs and a minimum standard of living but may be denied professional mobility and be excluded from the life of the community or from opportunities of social mobility because of ethnic or gender discrimination. Thus, the entitlement to some commodities is a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* condition to enlarge an individual's choice set. Individual abilities to convert goods into capability differ a great deal.

Indeed, Sen insists on the idea that social exclusion is better defined in terms of capabilities rather than in terms of commodities. The excluded lack adequate capabilities to remain employed and to participate actively in community life. Following Sen's approach, Raveaud and Salais (2001) stressed that instead of dealing only with shortage of income, social policy should also deal with what people can achieve with the resources in their possession. They emphasize the value of people's freedom of choice to live the life they value.

Providing excluded people with a minimum income may solve their poverty problem but it does not overcome exclusion. The aim of a social exclusion strategy is not to provide compensation to those who are excluded but, instead, to build a more inclusive society. Otherwise, social policy would only aim at managing outsiders in a fragmented society and would consist of an element of social control. New social policy to fight exclusion aims to increase individuals' capabilities and to empower them rather than to compensate the excluded for the consequences of exclusion (Muffels and Tsakloglou, 2002). It means a shift from *reactive* to *proactive* policies in the fields of employment, training or education. The main objective is to increase citizens' future prospects through capability-enhancing policies which are intended to develop the freedom of choice.

This strong focus on people's freedom of choice attaches great importance to what the social environment offers them and how it affects their choice set. As Sen (2000, p. 8) argues:

the focus of capability analysis ... has been very sensitive to the social causes of individual deprivation. For example, both are concerned with the capability to take part in the life of the community (or the more specific capability to appear in public without shame) and the causal factors that are seen as influencing such capabilities cannot but be inescapably 'social'.

Capabilities and the choice set do not depend only on individual characteristics but also on resources and opportunities offered by society.

The spread of new standards of employment based on autonomy, flexibility, relational and intellectual skills and lifelong learning leads to a segmentation of the labour market and the exclusion and vulnerability of a large number of workers. Social policies to fight exclusion must stimulate the capabilities of people not only in relation to the labour market but also in skills for everyday life. A capability approach must focus on an individual's potential, on his or her capacity for work and achievement. Indeed, the excluded suffer from lack of opportunities and their inability to do and be the way other members of their society do and are. What matters is not only what their situation is but also what they can do or what they could have done. Sen (2000, p. 5) notes that 'social exclusion can ... be *constitutively a part* of capability deprivation as well as *instrumentally a cause* of diverse capability failures'. Lack of social interaction can itself be considered a deprivation but it can also lead to economic impoverishment. Sen notes that the novelty of the exclusion concept lies in focusing on those relational aspects.

1.6 Main features of social exclusion

Social exclusion as developed in this book is viewed according to its following features:

- *A multidimensional approach* which combines economic, social and political elements that are interconnected. It refers to mutually reinforcing processes of deprivation: cumulative disadvantages which lead to a gradual erosion of resources and opportunities over time (Whelan *et al.*, 2002). Exclusion is a matter of capabilities and multiple exposure to risks. By focusing on a combination of factors pushing individuals or groups towards a state of vulnerability and deprivation, exclusion stresses the importance of relations and processes that can sometimes be mutually reinforcing.
- *Consequences of unemployment and precariousness*. The quality of integration into the labour market is at the heart of the exclusion approach. Unemployment and job precariousness are key factors

explaining the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in society. Indeed, the strength of the links between the employment situation and other dimensions of economic and social life (family, income, living conditions and social contacts) suggests that those people in situations of occupational precariousness – whether they are in an insecure job or are unemployed – are at great risk of becoming excluded from society. Employment, especially full-time employment of the household head, is considered the safest means of avoiding poverty and social exclusion. We, therefore, believe that an analysis of the labour market can improve our understanding of social exclusion, and indeed it is the rise in unemployment and the changing structure of employment involving an increase in atypical jobs which represent the main source of uncertainty. They contribute to a decline in the process of citizenship-building that characterized the European social model. Here, two main processes contribute to exclusion: (i) high unemployment and job precariousness for groups of people who were fully integrated before, and (ii) difficulty in entering the labour market to enjoy the social bonds associated with it, particularly for younger people (Castel, 1995). There are several ways in which exclusion from the labour market and long-term unemployment can result in social exclusion of different kinds: loss of skills, restriction of freedom to participate in the life of the community, lack of motivation, self-confidence and dignity, intolerance, racism and crime.

- *The qualitative dimension.* Indeed, what is important in the analysis of social exclusion is not only the problems related to access to basic rights such as employment, housing, health or education, but also the quality of jobs, housing, health services or school. This is an important point to stress in the present climate of privatization which is affecting the quality of services delivered to the poorest. From this perspective, social exclusion directs attention to previously untackled problems such as the conditions of access to basic services such as water, gas, telephone or basic banking services for the poorest. Affordable access to such mainly private services is a crucial aspect of social inclusion.
- *A long-term process.* Exclusion at present may give little prospect for escaping exclusion in the future because it reduces a person's

capabilities, future opportunities and those of his or her children. Social exclusion raises the problem of generational and intergenerational social mobility which is a crucial element of any fair society. It is crucial to take into account the Braudelian idea of the 'longue durée' into the analysis of social transformation and to acknowledge that fighting social exclusion is time- and resource-consuming. There are no best practices for solving social exclusion problems in a short period of time. Continuity and flexibility in an integrated social policy are essential.

- *A dynamic process.* Exclusion does not focus on a final stage characterizing social and economic deprivation but, instead, on the *dynamic* processes which create those states and push individuals from a zone of integration to a zone of precariousness, vulnerability and, finally, exclusion. Thus social exclusion is both a 'process' and a 'state'.
- *A relative concept.* Unlike poverty which can be absolute or relative, the concept of exclusion has a feature of relativity (Atkinson, 1998) based on local, cultural and time-based criteria, or what people in a given society would regard as the essential elements of a 'normal' life. It signifies being excluded from something or somewhere in a particular society at a particular time.
- *A policy-oriented concept.* This refers to a qualitatively new phenomenon. The traditional welfare systems turn out to be inadequate as the nets of existing national systems of social protection have been unable to ensure effective protection against the risk of social exclusion. Thus social exclusion calls for a radical redesign of social policy towards the development of capabilities, public-private partnerships, participation, and integrated and proactive policies. This is a key policy issue because it emphasizes the need for both a reactive policy to assist the excluded and a proactive policy to avoid entry into the process of exclusion. Policies to fight social exclusion will have to deal with both disempowerment at an individual level and structural obstacles at the societal level.

1.7 Conclusion

Our objective here in the book is not to analyse exclusion per se, but the specific forms which the processes of exclusion have taken

since the late 1970s as a result of globalization, the evolution of the labour market towards flexibility, the crisis of the welfare state and the rise of individualism. Indeed, although the concept of exclusion in sociology is relatively new, it has existed in various forms in different socioeconomic contexts among many ancient societies such as Athenian ostracism, the condition of the pariah in Hindu civilization, the banishment from ancient Rome or the ghetto in the Middle Ages (Freund, 1993).

In this book we seek to develop an analytical framework which does not focus on social exclusion as a final stage characterizing social and economic deprivation but, instead, on the dynamic processes which create those states and push individuals from a zone of integration to a zone of precariousness, vulnerability and, finally, exclusion. As Castel (1995) notes, the intermediate zone of vulnerability, which rapidly increased in the 1980s and 1990s, is crucial (see Chapter 4 below). Our objective is to point to the different paths leading to precariousness and exclusion. From this perspective, the notion of 'disaffiliation' developed by Castel is one of the major intellectual contributions to an analysis of the new social question.

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