

THE SOCIAL INCLUSION COMPONENT OF SOCIAL QUALITY

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1 Abstract*

In common with its sister papers on socio-economic security, social cohesion and empowerment the main task of this paper is to clarify one of the four conditional components of social quality so that, on the one hand, the relationship between them is transparent and, on the other, we may be as precise as possible in the delineation of domains, sub-domains and indicators. This paper begins by examining definitions of social exclusion and its concomitant, social inclusion. It acknowledges that these two elements of social quality are inextricably linked to a 'politics of social change'. It progresses to a brief overview of some of the methodological problems associated with analysing inclusion/exclusion across different nation states, albeit those linked through long-standing (mostly) and extensive intergovernmental agreements. It presents an overview of the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion as used by the European Commission, and uses as a case study of policy implementation the UK government's policy with regard to social exclusion. It provides the rationale for the development of domains, sub-domains and indicators in this component of social quality and includes an initial list based on discussions at the last ENIQ project meeting and the subsequent comments from ENIQ papers.

2 Introduction: Defining Social Inclusion from a Social Quality Perspective

Social quality is defined in terms of participation (Beck *et al*, 1997) and theorised in terms of social relations (Beck *et al*, 2001). It goes without saying therefore, that social inclusion is an essential element in the understanding and measurement of social quality. The editors of the book, Social Quality: A

* Joyce Hamilton, Margo Keiser and Chiara Saraceno made important contributions to this paper and the current revision has benefited from the comments received from the ENIQ partners.

Vision for Europe, (2001), explain the choice of 'inclusion' over 'exclusion' in terms of the positive, pro-active nature of social quality, and they link it explicitly to the idea of citizenship. This does not imply a narrow legalistic form of 'citizenship' but, rather, the wider 'possibility of participation in economic, political, social and cultural systems and institutions' (Beck *et al*, 2001, p.346). We acknowledge the potentially problematic nature of citizenship, which might be too passive or defensive a concept to incorporate what is meant by 'social inclusion', because it infers a more involved participation. Such participation has three dimensions:

- material - the possibility to articulate and defend specific interests,
- procedural - the guarantee of public and private autonomy,
- personal - voluntary participation.

Much depends, also, on how social exclusion/inclusion is conceptualised. Vobruba (1998) argues that one important factor is the creation of conditions 'which enable people at least to *tolerate* social change by making its costs bearable' [*emphasis added*]. On this definition, the understanding of social exclusion/inclusion becomes linked to what Vobruba sees as a politics of social change. As he acknowledges, all advanced western economies have undergone significant societal and economic change in recent times; and some eastern and central European nations have encountered significant political change, in the transition from communism to capitalism. At the same time it must be acknowledged that social exclusion also occurs in societies not undergoing radical social change. So, social exclusion may be present in the relatively stable society-polity as well as in the society-polity undergoing significant change. Vobruba (1998), echoing Sen (1985) who, in turn, echoed Aristotle (Ross, 1980) also makes the cross-cutting point that economic success and human well-being need not necessarily correlate. Yet without the latter, for

which there are no adequate quantifiable measures, we cannot fully understand social inclusion.

It is important, of course, to properly understand the theoretical point of departure of the perspective adopted in this paper. Our starting point is Social Quality: A Vision for Europe. Beck *et al* (2001, p.346) argue normatively that:

Modern democratic societies do not need more powerful leadership but real opportunities for citizens to address their circumstances, to develop their own visions and to enable themselves to contribute to an equitable and fair society.

However they point to the countervailing impact of social differentiation which creates separate sub-systems - economic, political, legal, scientific, artistic, religious, medical and so on - which operate within their own specific internal perspectives and logics. These sub-systems generate their own scripts for the observation of social life. As a result modern societies increasingly lack a common framework with regard to, for example, the social contract, shared experiences and cultural identities. (Some, of course, believe that, rather than adopt the 'common framework' approach, the real point is to have the resources allowing for adequate and timely reactions to the inevitably different requirements of different sub-systems). 'The primary consequence of differentiation is diversity and not necessarily a modern or 'post-modern' phenomenon; like differentiation (Marx, 1997; Parsons, 1960) it has a long history (Paugam, 1996)

Differentiation implies a fundamentally different logic of inclusion to that found within integrated structures such as families, households, and associations. Because the individual actor is forced to react to multiple sub-systems without

explicit links and a common medium of interaction, it is the individuals themselves that must integrate sometimes contradictory perspectives, logics and orientations in their search for inclusion in a differentiated world. By definition, therefore, inclusion in differentiated societies is a matter of multi-inclusiveness (Beck *et al*, 2001, p.348). Moreover, *participation* - the core of citizenship and of social quality - is not only a question of multiple inclusions but also one concerning the complex mechanisms that govern inclusion and exclusion with regard to a huge range of sub-systems.

So, a fully adequate appraisal of the 'politics of social change' requires an appreciation of the idea that social life cannot be fully understood by reference to a single sub-system, such as the economy, or access to health care delivery, or to education; or by reference to an existing societal unit, such as the family or household. Rather, a social quality approach has to recognise the complexity of the sub-systems and societal structures within which people operate, and the complexity of the processes governing access to, and from, those structures and sub-systems. Thus when we examine social inclusion within the context of a social quality approach, it is essential to reflect the complexity of sub-systems and different social relations and the barriers that restrict access to them. In doing so we must also appreciate the multi-layered nature of social exclusion: It may impact on individuals and groups and even whole communities (for example migrants). Moreover exclusion from society or some of its sub-systems may co-exist with inclusion within other sub-systems or communities.

From Exclusion to Inclusion

There is a substantial academic literature on the concept of social exclusion and the development of European social policy has assisted the gradual replacement of the term 'poverty' with that of 'social exclusion' (aided too by the resistance of

previous governments - especially British and German - to the discussion of poverty at EU level). The term was probably first used in France to label those who had slipped through the social insurance system (Room, 1995; Burchardt, Le Grand and Piachaud, 1999). Some of the literature emphasises the distinction between poverty and social exclusion (Room, 1995; Berghman, 1995) or the continuing conceptual confusion between them (Abrahamson, 1997). There is certainly a great deal of conceptual confusion and disagreement on the concept of social exclusion, which Saraceno (1997, 2002) notes has not prevented its widespread usage! However the differences between the concepts of poverty and social exclusion have been overstated, at least that is, when poverty is defined in a relative sense. For example, according to Townsend (1979, p.31):

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong.

Of course the two terms have different intellectual and cultural heritages (Silver, 1994; Room, 1995; Levitas, 1993; Saraceno, 2002) and poverty may be a modernist construction and social exclusion a post-modernist one (Saraceno, 1997), but poverty is not a static concept and there is a danger that in overstating their differences that this dynamism will be lost. According to Duffy (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 the mainstream of society.

In European policy discourse the term social exclusion has virtually superseded that of poverty. Despite the extensive European debate on what is the exact nature of 'social exclusion', Burchardt *et al* (1999) argue that there have been 'few attempts to define the concept properly' and 'even fewer in such a way as to assess the actual extent of social exclusion'. They run through the various definitions of social exclusion arguing that the term is used by some commentators as a newly fashionable way of talking about poverty and they note that, as a way of conceptualising a social condition, it overlaps with American ideas, though Americans use terms such as 'marginalisation', 'ghettoisation', and often refer to the 'underclass' (Fassin, 1996; Lister, 1996).

As Bouget (2001) points out, in the academic literature social exclusion is often linked to an improvement in levels of prosperity. He argues that social exclusion is an extension of poverty as it also takes non-monetary factors into consideration. In addition he suggests that when looked at from a political and social policy perspective, social exclusion can also be defined as a lack of social rights. Berting and Villain-Gandossi (2001, p.188) argue that social exclusion exists because 'society is too rigid, too reluctant to adjust to the exigencies of the market and the requirement of modern production'. They suggest that in a Weberian sense social exclusion is seen as a process. Members of a specific group exclude those who do not fit their requirements. In a modern political sense, exclusion is both a *process* (for example, people are ousted from the labour market, or from the housing market) and a situation or status (for example people are living under circumstances of being excluded). Svetlik, similarly, argues that there are clear difficulties connected with measuring social exclusion/inclusion on an output only level. He argues that social institutions also have a large role to play, thus emphasising the importance of processes. Understanding *how* social exclusion comes about, then, necessarily involves a

focus on *process*. But capturing the social picture involves employing output measures, even where they can be only, at best, surrogates.

Svetlik and Berting and Villain-Gandossi's discussion about processes is an important one for the ENIQ project. If social inclusion is to be defined as a *process* it may mean that the indicators for social inclusion should be *process* related. This would provide a contrast to the socio-economic security indicators which are solely *output* related. There are, of course, some output related indicators within the social quality construct, but process and output are here complementary factors. Given, as will be discussed later, that there is much overlap between the potential indicators for the components of social inclusion and socio-economic security it will be worthwhile focussing on process indicators for the former, as these will complement those of the latter. Although it must be recognised that inclusion is a status, albeit a differentiated one.

Berman and Phillips (2000, 2001) link their discussion of social exclusion to the concepts of social cohesion and solidarity and make some reference to the way in which both Room (2000) and Barry (1998) have also done this. They argue that social inclusion is concerned with communities, groups and citizens and, because of this, they see social inclusion as 'pervading all four parts of the social quality quadrant'. To this end Berman and Phillips (2001, p.345) assert that social inclusion is 'a multi-faceted phenomenon and it manifests itself at both the national and community level'. Like Bouget (2001), Berman and Phillips (2001) point out that social inclusion/exclusion is an all-encompassing term, which is much wider than the concept of poverty. Svetlik (2000) takes a different view, arguing that the four components of social quality need to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive in order to obtain the correct operational definitions. Of course this issue is important in terms of the operationalisation of the components.

Social Inclusion and the Other Three Components

How do we delineate the four components of social quality? From the start they were defined as distinct entities (Beck, van der Maesen and Walker, 1997) but, at the same time, they are inter-related via the basic theory of social quality. In this case social inclusion is related to poverty, because it is obvious that income level is an important determinant of participation. So, while social quality must concern itself with the lives of everyone, in operationalising the *social inclusion* sub-domains, attention must be paid to marginalised groups. However, in the social quality model, objective conditions such as poverty, income and wealth are located in the socio-economic security component. It is equally clear that social inclusion is closely related to the other two components: social cohesion and empowerment. The relationship with social cohesion is emphasised by the centrality of integration to social inclusion.

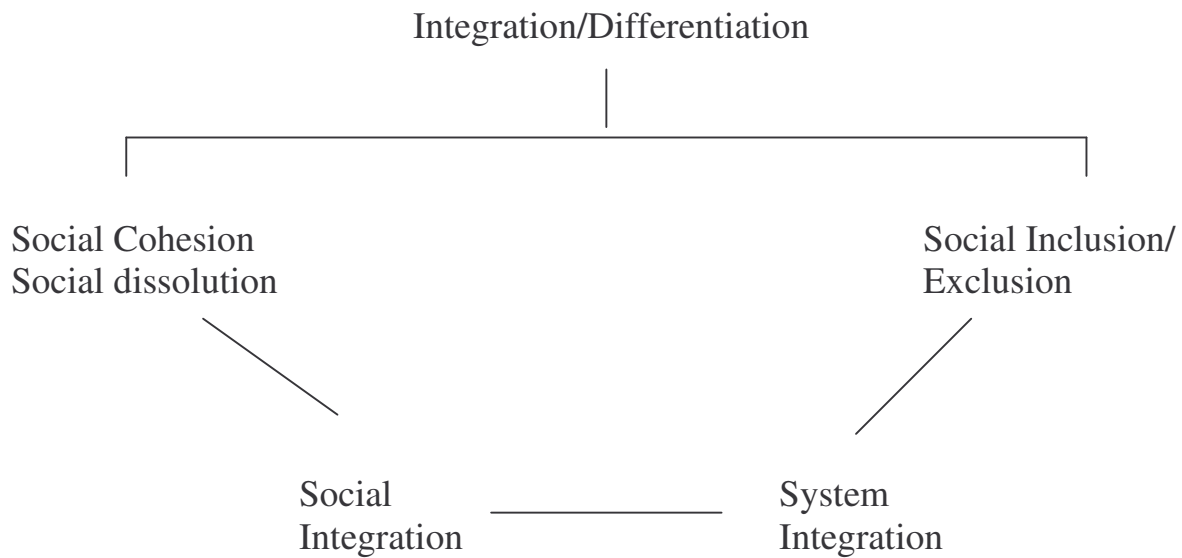
But it is also important to recognise that social cohesion and social inclusion should not be seen as inter-changeable terms. Cohesion needs to be understood in a holistic sense. Social inclusion, by contrast, can be understood as the ability of, or, at the very least, the potential, for individuals to partake in what can be seen as the available opportunities and methods of social advancement. Phillips (2003) notes that ‘Social cohesion usually refers to cohesion at a societal level, which in turn is normally taken to be at the level of a nation state, although there is considerable discussionat a European level.’ Thus, as argued above, it is important to bear in mind the multi-layered interactions between society, sub-systems, communities, groups and individuals.

Concern with integration goes back to the origins of sociology when, not surprisingly, sociological thought focussed on the scope for social integration in

the face of political and industrial revolutions (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 1994, p.218). In the Twentieth Century it preoccupied many key social theorists such as Parsons (1951, 1960), Merton (1968) Habermas (1973), Giddens (1984) and Lockwood (1999), although from very different perspectives. Thus integration has remained a core component of sociological analysis and, in particular, socialisation is identified as the process through which people acquire the attitudes, values and roles that make it possible for them to function as members of their society. The main feature of adult socialisation is the acquisition of social roles and, rather than being static expectations of behaviour (Linton, 1936), they are the outcome of interactive processes in which the roles are themselves reproduced (Mead, 1934). The point of this sociological excursion is that the acting individual is the subject matter of social quality with regard to the four components - the quadrangle is the field of action. In other words each component is related to each other logically and, at the same time, has a central focus that makes them mutually exclusive. Social roles or relationships are essential to the actions of individuals in the form of self-realisation or the creation of collective identities.

In the social quality model social cohesion concerns the structure or construction of social relations, whereas social inclusion focuses on access to and level of integration in those relations. Drawing on Lockwood's (1968) classic distinction between social integration and system integration, Beck, van der Maesen and Walker (2002, p.346) suggest that social cohesion relates to social integration in Lockwood's model (i.e. orderly or conflictual relations between individual actors); while social inclusion concerns relations between actors and systems or sub-systems (not only systems), as shown in the following diagram.

Social Cohesion and Social Inclusion



Source: Beck, van der Maesen and Walker (2002, p.346).

It is important to note at this stage that the idea of integration as a core element of social inclusion (or opposite to exclusion) is not accepted by all commentators. For example Steinert (2002, p.6) regards integration as being too passive and conservative in that it requires conformity to social norms (Phillips, 2003). An alternative view, which puts integration at the heart of the whole social quality project, is advanced by Berghman (1998). He postulates that the modern 'welfare state', no matter whether it is what he identifies as the 'Scandinavian' model, the continental/Bismarckian model, or the Atlantic/Beveridge model, has as one of its key aims, the production of 'social integration'. He summarises social quality as 'the extent to which citizens participate in the social, economic and democratic life of society'. Social quality relates, he argues, to the extent of participation that is fostered through social integration. Therefore, he suggests that it is the examination of *social integration* which should be given priority within social science research. Berghman (1998) formulates three dimensions that offer themselves as pointers for this task. A first dimension that focuses on ensuring an 'adequate level of

physical and economic security'; a second which emphasises the 'value based degree of social cohesion and solidarity', and a third that refers to the 'democratic, participatory process that should allow a more balanced collective decision making about it'.

Finally, with regard to the fourth component, it may be argued that empowerment depends on inclusion, cohesion and socio-economic security but it is distinct from these other three in that it relates to the capacity to act within social relations.

In terms of operationalising social inclusion for the purpose of the social quality indicators, Berman and Philips (2000) argue that social inclusion is both a process *and* an outcome and the two are closely linked. They provide an example of socio-economic security systems within different nation states, arguing that the level of social inclusion can be seen to be the outcome of that system. The link between the two therefore needs to be carefully thought about when the domains, sub-domains and indicators are being selected. They suggest that the key definitional differences between the socio-economic security and social inclusion domains relates to *who* is included. However, this is debatable. Although it is important to analyse who is socially included or excluded, i.e. which groups of people by sex, age, ethnicity, geographical location, this is not the main component of social inclusion. Rather social inclusion is about measuring the level (the proportion) of the population or populations who are included. An increase in this proportion clearly implies a higher level of social quality.

Defining Social Inclusion

In sum, social *exclusion* is a comprehensive social phenomenon which refers to the 'dynamic process of being or feeling shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine social status and citizenship' (Walker, 1997). If social exclusion is the denial (or non-realisation) of different dimensions of citizenship then it would be simple to say that the other side of the coin is social inclusion, i.e. the degree to which such citizenship is realised. However social inclusion is not simply the opposite of social exclusion. Its choice in the social quality context represents, first, a positive orientation and, second, an open horizon of possibilities to articulate the meaning of citizenship in democratic societies. The latter emphasises the practical application of the concept: in what ways, specifically, can it find articulation? Moreover, from a social quality perspective, it is not purely inclusion that matters (see the discussion below of EU and UK inclusion policies) but also the *quality* of that inclusion

Taking into account the previous discussion and the social quality orientation we will formally define social inclusion as the degree to which people are and feel integrated in the different relationships, organisations, sub-systems and structures that constitute everyday life. 'Feelings', here, then, represent a perception, or a subjective conditional factor. The subjective, like the objective, is important, though the difficulty is in its quantification and precise categorisation mean that, in the context of this project, the focus is on the objective. Therefore, for the purposes of this project, we suggest that social inclusion is *the degree to which people have access to the different social relations that constitute everyday life*. Processes are at the heart of social *inclusion* and this means that individuals may be included or excluded on a range of different dimensions (see below). The fact that this definition of social inclusion takes us to the heart of the social quality concept hardly needs re-stating. Nonetheless social quality is defined in terms of participation and

theorised in terms of the tension between individual self-realisation and the formation of collective identities. Clearly social inclusion is a pre-condition of all three.

It is recognised that subjectivity in making assessments about the extent and level of social exclusion runs the risk of distorting what might be seen as objective reality. Such measurements, by individuals, have long been recognised by sociologists as being relative, for example, and, further, they are affected by the prevailing social culture, which will differ from one European country to another. And yet, perceptions must count for something, especially in an age of globalised communications, through which people can gain an impression of levels of prosperity, and levels of social cohesiveness, elsewhere.

On the basis of the previous analysis we can draw some conclusions about the nature of social inclusion. Social inclusion is concerned with processes that are dynamic; is comprehensive or multi-faceted in terms of the processes and sub-systems it refers to; is multi-layered in that it may cover exclusion from personal relationships, neighbourhoods, organisations, nations or supra-national blocs such as the EU; is both an objective and subjective experience; and, therefore, different levels of inclusion may co-exist in the lives of one person or family. So, for example, it is very common for migrant groups to experience high levels of inclusion within their own communities in interpersonal terms but to suffer exclusion on a range of fronts (e.g. employment) from the dominant society. Also for some women a high degree of social inclusion in family and community may go hand in hand with exclusion from the labour market or political participation. Indeed, in this case, perversely social inclusion in the private and informal sphere may be a key determinant of social exclusion from the public sphere (Daly and Saraceno, 2002). Traditional 'breadwinner' welfare state regimes have institutionalised this exclusion (Lewis, 1992).

2 Methodological Issues

While the European policy debate and the academic literature has tended to emphasise social exclusion, an emphasis reflected in the previous section, here we will shift the focus (as far as possible) to social inclusion. In considering how best to understand and utilise social inclusion as a component of social quality, at least two methodological issues emerge. One is the *definition* of social inclusion and delineating the difference (if there is any) between the latter and 'poverty', as discussed earlier. The differences, or lack of differences, between the two perspectives have been the subject of an extensive debate. A second methodological difficulty, as noted by Saraceno, is in the lack of directly-comparable data across the EU Member States. As she notes, from her own comparative research:

...how difficult it is to collect data on policies which vary so greatly at the national and local level... often policies are compared which have different meanings, institutional frameworks and beneficiaries (Saraceno, 1998, p.181; see also Saraceno, 2002).

The above methodological problem is likely to intensify with the accession of new Member States to the EU in the near future.

The second issue, again as Saraceno (1998) notes, is whether or not social exclusion and its corollary, policies to bring about social inclusion, are best researched at the national level, rather than at the *inter-governmental* European Union level. This is especially so given that policies to combat social exclusion are designed and implemented at the level of the nation state under the subsidiary principle. Saraceno speculates as to whether this latter factor is why

it is so difficult to develop what she calls an 'EU based policy framework' (Saraceno, 1998, p.182).

It is axiomatic, however, that the phenomenon of social exclusion is transnational and, although the extent and form of social exclusion will vary, it is a factor which can be said to be having an impact on sections of the population within all advanced western economies, and the EU is no exception to this. Saraceno (1998, p.182) cites a number of societal changes which influence the extent to which social exclusion manifests itself and which, at first glance, might not be recognised as having their origins at the international, rather than the national, level:

...the devaluation of unskilled jobs, the displacement of jobs, even the restriction on public budgets originating at international level as much as, if not more, than at the national and local level

There is a strong case for arguing, therefore, that if some of the causes of what we are defining as social inclusion and exclusion are at the international level (promoted by the actions of agencies of international government, such as the International Monetary Fund, or the actions of international corporations restructuring in order to find conditions of optimum profitability), then the attempted response to those causes, and the *analysis*, and measurement of the *impact*, of those responses should also be at the international level.

These two well rehearsed methodological issues are not insurmountable but, rather, should be seen as challenges for researchers. Our responses are first to operationalise inclusion as a multi-layered phenomenon - operating at different levels or layers of society and existing in objective and subjective forms - that result from dynamic processes; and second, pragmatically, to recognise that

inclusion is experienced primarily within nation states (even though the causes may be international).

Burchardt *et al* (1999) highlight two further important issues that need to be examined in any analysis of social inclusion/exclusion. Firstly, to use their exact phrase, 'is social exclusion always involuntary?' This question is reflected in Vobruba's (2003) distinction between good and bad inclusion/exclusion. Secondly, how can the concept be operationalised in a practical sense? Both questions present an important link to ideas as to how social inclusion can be subsumed within the wider concept of social quality.

The first question raises a whole series of philosophically complicated issues that mirror those encountered in the definition and measurement of poverty (Piachaud, Townsend). For example, Burchardt *et al* (1999) cite an example of a group within society that *voluntarily* becomes excluded. If it is voluntary, then this implies that the 'exclusion' is not problematic. In other words, the group has chosen to become excluded, so it cannot feel that this is a problem, or that it is detrimental to the group. The authors go on to postulate some qualifications to this, however. What if, for instance, the group has withdrawn from society, and become 'excluded' because it is being subjected to constant persecution. 'Exclusion', here, is a choice that the group has implemented, but only in order to avoid the *more* unpleasant consequences of inclusion. Another, similar example is presented: what if someone, or some group, is excluded, but does not care? Again, there is a case for arguing that such exclusion is not problematic. The arguments are explored in some detail, but the conclusion of Burchardt *et al* (1999) is that all exclusion is to be considered damaging because of its impact on wider society.

The second question concerns operationalisation. Burchard *et al* (1999) suggest 'five dimensions' by which to measure whether or not someone, or some group, is socially excluded. These dimensions are: *consumption activity* (ability of someone to consume what is considered 'normal' within society); *savings activity* (a certain level of savings, or property, or pension rights); *production activity* (employment, self-employment, education, retirement, studying); *political activity* (voting, membership of political parties or campaigning groups); *social activity* (friends, family or a cultural group with whom or which to identify with). The problems with this approach are that it is based on exclusion not inclusion, it does not clearly identify the sources of exclusion and fails to acknowledge the different levels of society at which exclusion may occur. For example exclusion from political activity may occur at macro, meso or micro level and each form of exclusion calls for different policy action. Whelan *et al* (2001) have proposed a much simpler operationalisation of social exclusion in terms of a threshold based on ECHP data: an individual or a family are at risk of social exclusion when they experience serious difficulty in at least three areas of everyday life (e.g. in paying for housing, food and children's education, or housing, health and food). Again the focus is on exclusion and levels of exclusion are not distinguished and, therefore, this minimalistic approach is not compatible with the normative orientation of social quality.

3 Inclusion in EU Politics and Policies

We now turn to the concepts of social inclusion and social exclusion as used by the European Commission. The European Commission has been concerned, for many years, with combatting social exclusion. One of the first EC initiatives in this particular field was the establishment, in 1989, of an Observatory on Policies to Combat Social Exclusion. The Observatory sought to investigate social exclusion in both relational and distributional terms. A key focus was to

evaluate the extent to which some groups of the population are denied access to the main social and occupational milieux, as well as to welfare institutions. At the same time, the Observatory sought to examine the resulting patterns of multi-dimensional disadvantage. According to Berghman (1997), the Observatory attempted to view social exclusion as the non-realisation of citizenship rights.

The Observatory was disbanded in 1994, but the European Commission's efforts to combat social exclusion have not ceased. In 1992 the Commission launched an initiative for a convergence strategy regarding the diversity of social protection systems in the Member States. In 1997 the Commission referred to the emerging consensus 'that social protection systems, far from being an economic burden, can act as a productive factor which contributes to economic and political stability and helps European economies to be more efficient and flexible and, ultimately, to perform better.' Of interest here is the shift from security to protect citizens against social risks to a broadly defined protection with which to contribute to economic and political stability. In the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999 the above mentioned strategy of the Commission was formulated in the objective of inclusion as a fight against social exclusion.

The Amsterdam Treaty, together with the Nice Treaty outlined a role for the European Union to 'support and complement the activities of the Member States in a range of objectives relevant to social protection: the social security and social protection of workers, combatting social exclusion, modernisation of social protection systems'. This formed the basis for processes of policy cooperation and coordination which have developed over recent years involving exchanges of information, the evaluation of ongoing policy developments, and the identification of good practices.

The scope of this cooperation was assisted by the Lisbon Summit in 2000. At this summit the European Union set itself a new strategic goal for the forthcoming decade, 'to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' (<http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/>). In order to implement this strategy a new open method of coordination at all levels was introduced. An open method of coordination specifically to combat *social exclusion* was part of this plan, with a view that, by 2010, poverty would start to be eradicated. In particular these policies aim to:

- promote a better understanding of social exclusion through continued dialogue and exchanges of information and good practice, on the basis of commonly agreed indicators;
- mainstream the promotion of inclusion in Member States' employment, education and training, health and housing policies
- develop priority actions addressed to specific target groups (for example black and minority ethnic groups, children, older people), with Member States choosing among these actions according to their particular situations

Since the Lisbon summit there have been attempts to streamline the whole system of open coordination within the social protection process. A particular objective is that progress across the social protection field should be monitored towards agreed common objectives. Therefore the development of a set of commonly agreed indicators that fully reflect the common objectives was deemed to be essential. Thus the Social Indicators Sub-group of the Social Protection Committee has produced a common set of indicators of social exclusion which are based on the list proposed by Atkinson and colleagues (2002). Prior to this, at the European Council in Laeken in December 2001, a provisional set of 18 indicators of poverty and social exclusion was approved.

These are organised in a two-tier structure of primary indicators - consisting of 10 lead indicators - and 8 secondary ones. The Indicators Sub-Group has continued to refine and consolidate the original list of indicators and the common list was approved by the Social Protection Committee in July 2003 together with their definitions. A full list of the indicators is in Appendix 1 (to be added).

The European Commission uses the concepts of social inclusion and social exclusion as opposites. By developing policy measures to enhance the social inclusion of European citizens, the Commission aims to try to diminish social exclusion and eradicate poverty. To reach those goals the Commission identifies severe risk factors that increase the danger of poverty. Those mentioned are long-term unemployment; living long-term on low income; low quality employment; poor qualifications and leaving school early; growing up in a family vulnerable to social exclusion; disability; poor health; drug abuse and alcoholism; living in an area of multiple disadvantages; homelessness and precarious housing; immigration; ethnic background and the risk of racial discrimination.

The first joint report of the Commission (EC, 2002) of the major structural changes that are taking place in society which could lead to new risks of poverty and social exclusion for particularly vulnerable groups. These changes include: changes in labour markets due to globalisation and the very rapid growth of the knowledge-based society and information and communication technologies; demographic changes with more people living longer and falling birth rates; a growing trend towards ethnic, cultural and religious diversity as a result of increased international migration and mobility within the Union; changes in household structures with growing rates of family break-up and the de-

institutionalisation of family life; and the changing role of men and women. The Commission identifies eight core challenges:

- developing an inclusive labour market and promoting employment as a right and opportunity for all,
- guaranteeing adequate income and resources for a decent standard of living,
- tackling educational disadvantages,
- preserving family solidarity and protecting the rights of children,
- ensuring reasonable accommodation for all,
- guaranteeing equal access to and investing in high-quality public services (health, transport, social, care, cultural, recreational and legal),
- improving the delivery of services,
- regenerating areas of multiple deprivation.

This list indicates that the European Commission's definitions of social inclusion, social exclusion and poverty are very much connected with the definition of socio-economic security in the concept of social quality. The similarity of the aspects of combating social risks and enhancing life chances and opportunities is manifest. Even the operationalisation by the Commission in the form of eight challenges closely resembles the operationalisation of socio-economic security via sub-domains (see Draft Second Working Paper, section 4.4). Of particular interest here are the comments made by Atkinson and his colleagues (2002) on the proposal of the EC for the development of indicators to measure social inclusion. They primarily focus on social indicators without diving into the conceptual and theoretical debate around the concept of social inclusion. This suggests that the authors accept the concept as defined in practice by the EC. Therefore this book is especially useful with regard to the actual process of defining indicators of social inclusion and the conditions these social indicators should meet but does not assist our understanding of the

concept of social inclusion. They criticised the initial list of indicators proposed by the Social Protection Committee and made helpful suggestions for a more elaborate and qualitative approach to measuring social inclusion. As noted previously the Indicators Sub-Committee accepted these suggestions and modified their proposed list (Atkinson, Marlier and Nolan, 2003).

2 Social Policies on Inclusion: the UK

While some will wish to focus exclusively on the theoretical, and others place more emphasis on the practical, it is believed that, for our purposes here, a synthesis of the two should be developed, so that one can logically flow from the other. It is in this regard that the preceding comments on EU policy, and the following appraisal of UK policy, is presented. Thus the UK is presented as a case study of the practical application of policies on inclusion.

In this section we extend the previous analysis of the European policy debate on social inclusion and exclusion to examine the case of one Member State and how it has operationalised these concepts. Social exclusion in the UK is an issue which achieved major recognition with the election of Tony Blair's New Labour Government in 1997. From the start it was social exclusion that was the target: shortly after the election victory Blair announced the creation of the Social Exclusion Unit. There was a symbolism attached to the fact that the Unit was so closely associated with the Prime Minister: tackling social exclusion was being presented as a priority; also the Unit itself would be working to the Prime Minister's agenda and was part of the Cabinet Office.

The Unit has researched and presented numerous reports on differing aspects of social exclusion such as truancy and school exclusion; teenage pregnancies; 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training; rough sleepers;

neighbourhood renewal; reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners; transport; and educational attainment of children in care. It claims that, in each case, 'major policy changes have been made'

(http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/SEUs_work.htm).

The Government's approach to tackling social exclusion and poverty is based around four key themes:

- Decent family incomes – with work for those who can and support for those who cannot;
- High quality public services for everyone by raising the standards of the worst performers
- Preventing social exclusion by addressing risk factors;
- Reintegrating those who become excluded back into society.

The UK government has been explicit in its objective of tackling social exclusion, and is working across many policy areas, from education to welfare, pursuing that aim. The Department for Education and Employment, for instance, lists among its objectives the following:

...an inclusive society, where everyone has an equal chance to achieve their full potential...; ensuring that all young people reach 16 with the skills, attitudes and personal qualities that will give them a secure foundation for lifelong learning, work and citizenship; (and) helping...others at a disadvantage within the labour market.

According to Pantazis the SEU has 'a remit to help improve government action to reduce social exclusion by producing joined up solutions to joined up problems' (www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/index/faqs/html).

Since being established the Government claims to have achieved the following reductions:

- 71% in rough sleeping between 1998 and 2001;
- 25% in school exclusions between 1996/7 and 2001;
- 9% in the under 18 conception rate, encouraging progress toward a 50% reduction in teenage pregnancies by 2010;

Since 2002 the SEU has been located within the new cross-cutting office of the Deputy Prime Minister, but still reports to the Prime Minister. This brings the SEU together with other aspects of government strategy, such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, and the homelessness directorate, in aiming to achieve social justice and quality of life for everyone. In March 2003, two new projects were announced by the Deputy Prime Minister: 'barriers to employment and enterprise in deprived areas; and mental health and social exclusion'. (There is also a current project on older people.)

Barriers to employment and enterprise in deprived areas

This programme aims to examine what more can be done to help people in England's most deprived areas move into jobs. The SEU will consider whether existing policies are being delivered as effectively as possible to help the unemployed in these neighborhoods find work. This will include looking at whether more can be done to help people leave the informal economy for legitimate jobs and businesses, and help people move into self-employment and enterprise.

Mental health and social exclusion

This aims to address the barriers to opportunity faced by adults with mental health problems. Mental illness has emerged in the SEU's work as a factor contributing to social exclusion. The Unit intends to look at how people with mental health problems, who want to work and retain employment, can be helped.

Speaking about these new projects recently at *'Tackling Social Exclusion: Achievements, Lessons Learned and the Way Forward'* Barbara Roche, the Minister for Social Exclusion and Equality at the time said:

worklessness and mental health problems feature strongly in social exclusion.... The government is committed to building thriving, sustainable communities – environments in which we would all like to live. They will only be sustainable if they are fully inclusive and cut to the core of social exclusion and poverty. This new programme of work is vital in realising that goal.

www.socialeclusionunit.gov.uk/current_projects.htm.

Thus the New Labour Government places a heavy emphasis on tackling social exclusion. As noted previously its focus is not social inclusion. Moreover, in practice, the policy focus is rather narrow: area deprivation and renewal, and employment. In this approach social exclusion is seen as assisting understanding of the *processes* whereby people and communities experience isolation, lack of services and socio-economic insecurity. The SEU report *Bringing Britain Together: A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (1998) observed that poverty has become more concentrated in individual neighbourhoods and housing estates and this reinforced the trend towards area-based programmes such as the health, housing and education action zones and area-based regeneration programmes.

The second major dimension of social exclusion policies in the UK is employment. This includes a range of 'New Deal' policies aimed at reintegrating mainly younger but also older and disabled workers and increasingly stringent disincentives to unemployment. This strand of policy has led to the criticism that there is a 'Durkheimian conspiracy' lurking behind it which suggests that social inclusion is best achieved through integration into occupational roles (Levitas, 1998). The distinction between three discourses underlying social exclusion - redistributionalist (RED), moral underclass (MUD) and social integrationalist (SID) - reminds us that, like poverty, social exclusion is not a value free term (Levitas, 1998).

Thus, not surprisingly, the UK shares with the EU a conception of social exclusion and, it must be assumed, social inclusion, which is heavily if not exclusively focussed on paid employment. Because of the Lisbon and Stockholm European Council targets and the emphasis put on employment at the Nice Council meeting we find that employment is the key feature of the EU's strategy towards both employment and social exclusion. Of course they are not exclusive strategies - improving employability and creating new job opportunities are part of the employment strategy but they are also important elements of any policy to promote inclusion. The problem arises when employment becomes the main, or worse still, only element of the inclusion strategy, which appears to be the case in most Member States. As noted by the first joint report on social inclusion:

participation in employment is emphasised by most Member States as the best safeguard against poverty and social exclusion. This reflects adequately the emphasis laid on employment by the European Council at Nice. (European Commission, 2002, p.12)

The problem is that paid employment is only one among a range of multiple forms of inclusion and there are some groups, such as older people, who are permanently excluded from it. Furthermore some forms of employment cannot be regarded, at least within a social quality context, as inclusion. For instance where the employment is of a poor quality and damages an individual's health (see Paugam, 1997; Jordan, 1996; Gallie and Paugam, 2003).

6 Domains and Sub-domains of Social Inclusion

In this section we explain the development of the proposed domains and sub-domains of social inclusion, which will lead logically to the subsequent discussion of indicators.

One suggestion for the development of domains, sub-domains and indicators of inclusion is to conceptualise the different *levels* of inclusion, from societal to interpersonal. This is the approach taken below but it is worth noting that previous attempts to operationalise social exclusion have tended to adopt an institutional approach. For example Berghman (1997, p.19) disaggregates exclusion with regard to four key societal institutions: the democratic and legal system, the labour market, the welfare system, and the family and community system (see also Atkinson and Davoudi, 2000). As noted previously Burchardt and her colleagues (1999) have operationalised social exclusion in terms of an individual's participation in 'normal' social activities: consumption, ability to consume up to a minimum level the goods and services considered normal; savings, production, political and social. A very similar approach has been adopted by Gordon *et al* (2000) focussing on impoverishment, labour market participation, access to services, and a range of social relations.

Until very recently operationalisation has focussed almost exclusively on social exclusion and the dominant scientific approach to conceptualising and measuring social exclusion reflects the history of mainly Anglo-Saxon poverty research which culminates in Townsend's (1979) concept of resources necessary for participation. Indeed Townsend's pioneering work paved the way for much of the contemporary study of social exclusion. Some researchers have placed particular emphasis on the spatial dimension of social exclusion (Perri 6, 1996; Madanipour *et al*, 1998; Scharf *et al*, 2002). For example Madanipour and

colleagues (1998, 22) refer to the multi-dimensionality of social exclusion and its impact on particular types of location:

social exclusion is defined as a multi-dimensional process, in which various forms of exclusion are combined: participation in decision making and political processes, access to employment and material resources, and integration into common cultural processes. When combined, they create acute forms of exclusion that find a spatial manifestation in particular neighbourhoods.

It is important to bear in mind the neighbourhood dimension of inclusion/exclusion because there is evidence that the local residential environment may constitute a particularly important aspect of inclusion/exclusion for some groups (e.g. older people, Scharf *et al*, 2002). The multi-level and multi-dimensional approach to inclusion we adopt below will help to ensure that the measurement of this component is sensitive to such variations.

Domains and Sub-domains of Inclusion

As explained in the introductory chapter (Laurent's draft) the derivation of the domains, sub-domains and indicators is based on the same logic for all four conditional components of social quality. Each must embody the same three dimensions of its component: a) subject matter (in this case social inclusion as defined above), b) specificity (in this case integration in multiple systems and sub-systems), and c) mutual focus (in all cases the core relationship between self-realisation and the formation of collective identities). This tripartite nature of each component produces both their unique and their mutual character and provides a logical method to construct domains, sub-domains and indicators.

From the previous discussion and the principles set out by Atkinson and his colleagues (2002) we suggest the following additional guidelines for the development of domains, sub-domains and indicators of social inclusion:

- social inclusion is a relative concept and, therefore, requires reference to other groups/populations;
- reflecting the complexity of modern societies, people may be included in (or excluded from) a range of different societal institutions and groups, at different levels and to different degrees;
- the previous point suggests that some account must be taken of the time dimension (see also Leisering and Walker, 1998; Leisering and Liebfried, 1999; Whelan *et al*, 2001; Saraceno, 2002);
- account must be taken of the quality of any inclusion;
- social inclusion is a process as well as a multi-faceted status;
- our focus should be the individual rather than the household (in subsequent research we may focus on groups) because, as explained in the introductory chapter, social quality is concerned, *par excellence*, with acting individuals.

In the light of the above criteria it is particularly appropriate to distinguish the different levels or layers of social action (crudely macro, meso and micro) and this also helps with regard to the policies necessary to promote inclusion. We acknowledge the interaction of the different levels, they are not intended as isolated categories. Sub-domains are sub-sets of the domains and those identified are the most critical with regard to the tripartite method of domain/indicator construction.

Levels of Social Action and Policy

Domains

Sub-domains

International/Societal (Macro)	Citizenship Rights	Constitutional/Political Rights Social Rights Civil Rights
Institutional (Meso)	Labour Market	Access to Paid Employment Quality of Employment (including care leave, support and resources; and balancing work and family life)
	Public Services	Health Services Housing Education Social Care Transport
	Private Services	Financial Services Transport Commercial Facilities Leisure Services
Neighbourhood/Interpersonal (Micro)	Social Networks	Friendships Neighbourhood Participation Family Life

7 Indicators of Social Inclusion

Following the tripartite logic for the construction of domains and sub-domains the draft list of indicators below is proposed as a starting point for discussion with national experts and Network participants. Although there is a clear logic to the selection of indicators the list is potentially infinite therefore we must engage in an iterative process to ensure the best (i.e. fit for purpose) selection. It is worth reiterating here that the critical issues for social quality are both inclusion and the quality of that inclusion.

Sub-domains

Indicators (provisional long list)

(Citizenship rights)	
Constitutional/Political Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % among ethnic groups with citizenship/residence permit % of ethnic groups registered to vote and voting % of ethnic groups in highest socio-economic group (SEG)
Social Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % with right to benefits in case of unemployment % with right to public pension (i.e. a pension organised or regulated, at least to some extent, by the government)
Civil Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % with right to free legal advice % experiencing discrimination (race, gender, age) and availability of redress in cases of discrimination
(Labour Market)	
Access to Paid Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % economically active and types of employment % long-term unemployment (12+ months) % underemployed (part-time, discontinuous moving to full-time employment; gap between level of education and job status)
Quality of Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % deaths/accidents at work % in jobs that pose a health risk % in insecure employment (temporary, seasonal) % with access to work-based training
(Public Services)	
Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % with access to primary care
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of homeless, sleeping rough % with access to different types of housing
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % with access to primary, secondary or higher education
Social Care*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % with access to social care and availability of support for carers
(Private Services)	
Financial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % with a bank account % with a mortgage or owing home outright % denied credit
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % car ownership/access

	level of availability of public transport
Commercial Facilities	proximity of grocery shops frequency of visits to cafes, bars, pubs
Leisure Services	% participating in sports or related activities (e.g. swimming baths/facilities) % participating in cultural pursuits (cinema, theatre, concerts)
(Social Networks)	
Friendships	level and duration of contact with friends % feeling lonely/isolated
Neighbourhood Participation	% participating in local clubs etc. % attending a place of worship % regular contact with neighbours
Family Life	level and duration of contact with relatives (cohabitating and non-cohabitating) levels and duration of intra- and inter-generational help and support

* defined, generally, as assistance to families and individuals when it becomes necessary because of old age or disability or for some other reason.

8 Conclusions

Social quality, as an analytical tool for conceptualisation, and measurement of, social change, has great potential. It offers the opportunity to re-integrate two policy strands which should never have been separated: economic *and* social policy. In a European Union struggling to ensure that there is popular support for further or, indeed, existing levels of political and economic integration across the international, and inter-governmental, organisation, its further role may be to act as a spur to legitimacy and popular support. Paradoxically, as Showstack Sassoon (1998) has argued, and Baars *et al* (1998) reiterated, such support might be more easy to generate if the differences across Members States are emphasized. More participatory politics is, after all, likely to *increase* social integration, at the same time as fostering differentiation across the Member States.

Within the constraints and opportunities presented by the above approaches and positions, a number of other factors, proposed originally by Baars, Knipshceer, Thomése and Walker (1998), are worth reviewing. A starting point should be a recognition of 'innovating social quality'. Within this, there is a need to examine and formulate an analysis of 'the emergence of new social movements, the changing role of traditional movements, and the changes in social participation of citizens'. A further crucial element under this heading is seen as the need to promote ideas and methods that generate trust and social cohesion across the European Union. A second element referred to is the need for 'integrating social quality'. Important within this is how the four domains of socio-economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion, and empowerment are inter-connected within European societies. Specifically, there is a need to examine the *tensions* within and between the four domains, especially those that relate to the labour market and the income-welfare nexus, such as the complex

relationship between 'paid work, poverty and social inclusion' and, although frequently a 'hidden' contribution to economic life and social quality, 'the field of civil participation and family life for understanding social cohesion and competence' (Baars, Knipscheer, Thomése and Walker (1998).

As argued by Baars *et al* (1998), it is also essential that the appropriate institutional actors, and their respective roles, should be unambiguously identified. There needs to be a clear recognition and appreciation of *who* is responsible for *what*. Otherwise, an ambiguity might lead to a lack of focus from both the institutional actors involved *and* the citizens of Europe from whom support is being sought. A further step, and one which carries with it the need for the most delicate of political positioning and balancing, is the crucial decision as to which social policies can best be developed and implemented at European level and which should be left to the individual Member States to implement.

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