

DISCOURSES & SOCIAL EXCLUSION/INCLUSI ON



SOC607

Mgr. Ivana Rapošová

Mgr. Lenka Kissová

DEFINING SOCIAL INCLUSION

... is difficult

- Meanings vary
- Meanings are shifting

→ complex settings indicate that approaches towards social exclusion/inclusion are **(country-) specific** and **context-dependent** (history, discourse, public policies, institutions, cultural understanding of social relations, etc.)



VARIETY OF DEFINITIONS OF EXCLUSION

- *“Social exclusion may be understood as an accumulation of confluent processes with successive ruptures arising from the heart of the economy, politics and society, which gradually distances and places persons, groups, communities and territories in a position of inferiority in relation to centres of power, resources and prevailing values” (Estivill 2003, p. 19)*
- *“the dynamic process of being shut out ... from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society” (Walker and Walker 1997, p. 8)*
- *”lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life.” (United Nations 1995, p. 57)*
- *“inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life, alienation and distance from the mainstream society” (Duffy 1995)*



Dimensions of social exclusion and inclusion, social policy areas

| Social Exclusion | | Social Inclusion | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Areas | Indications | Prerequisites/ conditions | Social Policies |
| <i>Economic Activities</i> -consumption | -poverty -material deprivation | Resources – redistribution: -income -other resources -housing | -income assistance -social services -housing assistance |
| -activities in labour market | -(un)employment -job quality | -flexibility -approach (equal opportunity principle + social capital) -skills/capabilities (human capital) | -job supply -anti-discrimination measures -positive discrimination -active employment policy -life-long education -social services |
| <i>Social Activities</i> | -(non) participation in social networks -limited quality and width of networks/ contacts | -social contacts and networks -quality of contacts and networks -trust in other people | -social work -prevention against isolation -empowerment, fellowship/participation, partnership |
| Political Activities | -(non)participation in political activities – eg. elections, organisations | -trust in institutions -legitimacy of political systems and representatives | -access to realisation of political and civil rights -recognition policy |

Source: Mareš, P. and Tomáš Sirovátka. 2008. “Sociální vyloučení (exkluze) a sociální začleňování (inkluzie) – koncepty, diskurz, agenda.” *Czech Sociological Review* 44 (2): 271-294.



DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION

- Economic activities
- Social activities
- Political activities

...discussions might go even further...

- Community
- Individual
- Group
- Spatial



PROBLEMATIC FORMULATION OF POLICIES

- term still quite new
- concept is very flexible (country, context-specific)
- missing a well-developed set of indicators
- clarifying the definition and the concept would undermine the flexibility of the concept

Any other potential problems?



IMPORTANCE OF DISCOURSES

*Discourse formulates the ways we look at things, we describe them, what meanings we ascribe them and thus how we act.
(Levitas 2005)*

- we (re)produce mental representations and meanings through discourses
- it offers us a certain perspective how we look at things
- it offers particular ways how we produce knowledge about things
- it influences the way we act



1. REDISTRIBUTIONIST DISCOURSE (RED)

- developed in British critical social policy
- prime concern is **poverty**
- critique of inequality
- exclusion is contrasted with a form of citizenship calling for substantial form of redistribution of power and wealth



2. MORAL UNDERCLASS DISCOURSE (MUD)

- stress on moral and behavioural delinquency of excluded people
- in the center there are criminals, unemployable youth, irresponsible single mothers → paid employment is the crucial tool of disciplination
- their exclusion is a moral threat and a cultural feature
- emphasises the cultural but ignores political and economic causes of exclusion



3. SOCIAL INTEGRATIONIST DISCOURSE (SID)

- central focus is on paid employment
- inclusion is primarily considered through paid work
- reduction of social to economic exclusion/inclusion + ignoring political and cultural features/factors
- doesn't acknowledge non-market work (they're squeezed into market or spaces around paid employment) – unpaid work is addressed from perspective of market



IMPORTANCE OF DISCOURSES II

Social exclusion/inclusion anchored in discourses (Levitas 2005)

→ different discourses will frame and tackle exclusion and related problems differently

They will differ in:

- Who defines the insiders/outsideers
- How they characterise/define boundaries (what is the crucial feature of the boundary)
- How is it possible to support inclusion
- How they represent relation between inclusion/exclusion and inequality

'In a political environment the advocates of reform need to employ strategies to overcome the scepticism of others and persuade them of the importance of reform. In other words, they must create a frame that changes the collective understanding of the welfare state, because doing so 'shapes the path' necessary to enact reform' (Cox, 2001: 475 in Béland 2007)

