

# The concept of social exclusion sociology essay



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-The Concept of Social exclusion tends to focus on those who experience exclusion and diverts attention from the persistent poverty and increasing inequality which characterize contemporary British society specifically children.

“ The UK government’s social exclusion agenda is broad: Involving work to combat the wider causes of exclusion alongside policies more focused on tackling poverty” this is what the UK National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010 says on the government agenda to deal with social exclusion and poverty its evident in this statement the UK government sees social exclusion alone will not eliminate poverty without policies that directly focused on persistent poverty. In this paper I will argue the links between “ social exclusion” focused concepts, “ persistent poverty” and “ inequality”. My arguments will focus on a) the origins of the social exclusion concept, b) how the concept of social exclusion is defined in the UK context, c) the state of child poverty in Britain, the state of increasing inequality for children in Britain and finally d) the linkages of the social exclusion concepts has on persistent poverty and increasing inequality for children in Britain.

Looking at the history and emergence of the concept of social exclusion its evident that most scholars and researchers agree this concept originated from the to industrialized countries (notably France in the 1970) “ exclusion sociale” meaning “ social exclusion” in English was obvious, in the French government policies, where specific groups of the society were excluded by the state (René Lenoir 1974) from receiving social protection/social insurance on policies and conditions. To qualify for state social

protection/insurance one had to either find a paying job or married to a person holding a paying job. Since the 1980 the concept of social exclusion has been widely adopted in the European Union and Britain.

Social exclusion in the UK context has been defined as “ the short-hand term for what can happen when people or areas have a combination of problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown. These problems are linked and mutually reinforcing. Social exclusion is an extreme consequence of what happens when people do not get a fair deal throughout their lives and find themselves in difficult situations. This pattern of disadvantage can be transmitted from one generation to the next” by the Social Exclusion Task Force (SETF) in the cabinet office, which plays the role of directing a common and coordinated strategy to fight and overcome social exclusion in government departments.

To examine some of the definitions and what it means in the academic and researchers' circles social exclusion has been defined:

Hilary Silver: Who concentrates on the European social and political ideology looks at the social exclusion concept in three paradigms and connects each paradigm to categories of causes and affects.

The solidarity paradigm founded in the French ideology of social solidarity: Solidarity deems the disassociation of one from the society and visa versa, implying the shared interests within which a healthy society is built.

The specialization paradigm is component of the liberal individualism philosophy; a society is comprised of individuals with different abilities and objectives assembled around the allotment of labour and trade. When individuals or groups in these allotments are obstructed by the likes of discrimination or over-regulation then exclusion takes place.

And the monopoly paradigm where collective individuals, groups or specific regulation that exclude a specific individuals to exercise/participate/make use a privilege enjoyed by monopoly groups.

Ruth Levitas: identifies three different discourses of Social Exclusion, First approach is a redistributive Discourse (RED) which derives from critical social policy, and which sees social exclusion as a consequences of poverty, the indicator for social exclusion in RED is low income. She adds Social integration Discourse (SID) is participation in paid work, therefore young people of working age should participate in labor market. Unemployment or economic inactivity indicates social exclusion. The third approach is a moral underclass discourse (MUD), which social exclusion is used as a substitute not for poverty or non employment, but for the underclass . This discourse presents the socially excluded as the morally distinct from the rest of the society and does not address inequality.

According to (Arjen De Haan 1999) “ social exclusion is a primary framework for analysis and not – In his my opinion – a new term for specific marginalised groups.” In his second issue he argues “ In an Anglo-Saxon tradition, social exclusion means a rather different thing. One of the main

theoretical differences appears to me to be the fact that 'poverty' is seen as an issue which is separate from 'social exclusion'

According to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee Child Poverty in the UK Second Report of Session 2003-04 Volume one there are 3.6 million Children living in poverty in the UK, where UK is ranked bottom in the 2007 UNICEF report on child wellbeing out of 21 OECD countries.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's latest report New Policy Institute Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2009 in the United Kingdom published in December 2009 shows:

The number of children in low-income households where at least one adult works is, at 2.1m, the highest it has ever been. Half a million higher than in 2003/04, it is this increase that has stalled progress towards the Government's child poverty targets - prior to the recession.

The number of children in low-income households has also risen in the last three years. As a proportion, it now stands at around 30% (AHC). All of this recent rise has been among children in working households and it is this that has undermined progress towards the target to end child poverty. Even the more modest target as set out in the Child Poverty Duty will not be reached without the problems of in-work poverty being addressed.

Around 1.8 million children live in workless households. Two-thirds of them are in lone parent households.

Save the children UK latest report for measuring poverty reveals that:

Children and families in the UK are living in severe poverty. 1. 7 million Children across the UK live in severe poverty – around 13% of all UK children.

As we approach the deadline for the interim goal of halving child poverty by 2010, we find that the level of severe child poverty is actually increasing.

I believe that this is a clear evidence of the existence of poverty and child poverty in Britain, The UK government has formulated a child poverty currently awaiting royal assent, this bill will put in law the government's pledge to eradicate child poverty by 2020, this bill according to the department of children, schools and families will tackle children living in:

Relative low income (whether the incomes of the poorest families are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole) – target is less than 10%

Combined low income and material deprivation (a wider measure of people's living standards) – target is less than 5%

Absolute low income (whether the poorest families are seeing their income rise in real terms) – target is less than 5%

Persistent poverty (length of time in poverty) – target is to be set in regulations by 2015.

From this the underlying causes of poverty can be attributed to low income, material deprivation.

Reports from the NPI, Save the Children and TUC indicate the likelihood of the 2020 child poverty eradication target being missed due to the recession, <https://assignbuster.com/the-concept-of-social-exclusion-sociology-essay/>

yet this bill which is at its last stage fails to acknowledge that this might be missed and no contingent strategies or framework has been mapped out in the event the country faces similar recessions or goes back to the same.

Persistent poverty can not be eradicated unless more severe actions, strategies and policies are put in place. While the government tackles poverty, persistent poverty is on the rise.

Peter Townsend argued that poverty should not be understood in terms of subsistence, but in terms of people's ability to participate in the customary life of society: "individuals, families and groups can be said to be in poverty when their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities" (Townsend, 1979, p32)

Inequality in Britain is said to in the same level as child poverty (TUC 2008); inequality has relative connection to persistent poverty and as this affect more in children and those leaving in poverty. The poor (in poverty and persistent poverty) and the excluded (discriminated and unemployed) are more likely not to have access to their democratic rights and human rights and thus falling into the "inequality" category of the society. By tackling poverty (persistent and non) and social exclusion, certain short term progress towards inequality can be achieved. The social exclusion concept that focuses on those excluded does address some of the underlying causes of inequality and poverty in general; Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional process as I have explained above. It's crucial to look at social exclusion as a process and a framework and not as an outcome. For example discrimination

beliefs and practices that affect the labour, trade markets, children, member of the society and the wellbeing of the society as whole can be said to be:

Social exclusion (discrimination) and can be over with awareness campaings by responsible institutions, bridging the gaps between communities and government putting in place policies to put a stop to this.

A cause of persistent poverty, a child in a home of parents that has been discriminated against, will continue to grow in a home that in the low-income category and if this is not changed will grow up to be in the same state of his parents.

Increased Inequality as the child will not be in an equal state with other children in the society, as it has been revealed in studies carried out in low-income homes and unemployed parents that children in these homes are the least prepared for school and are more likely to suffer from physiological inequality, the below table compares the performances of children in the different categories of income in the united kingdom and shows those who are in the lower part of the income grid do not perform as well as children from adequate income homes.

I will conclude that although the concept of social exclusion concentrates on those excluded it does address the issues that lead to general poverty and inequality but has not been designed to directly tackle the issues of persistent poverty and inequality in the contemporary British society and in particular the children. Persistent poverty and increased inequality are the results of the issues that the social exclusion concept and policies could not overcome.