Explanations of Social Exclusion: Where Does Housing Fit in?

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ABSTRACT This paper takes the view that concepts of social exclusion are socially constructed by different combinations of economic, social and political processes. It is suggested that the core meaning of social exclusion is bound up with social isolation and social segregation, and it is therefore argued that an analysis of social mobility (or the lack of it) is crucial to understanding the content and extent of social exclusion. Three approaches to the analysis of social mobility are brie¯ y considered, and it is concluded that the causation of social exclusion appears to have three interrelated dimensions: economic, legal/political, and moral/ideological. The main theoretical approaches to social exclusion, encompassing `structural' and `cultural' perspectives, are then examined, and a new, more holistic theory is proposed, using the concept of a duality of interrelated labour processes. This theory is developed on three different levels, corresponding to the three dimensions of social exclusion. The final part of the paper is concerned with the application of the theory of social exclusion to housing processes. The latter are discussed under the headings of housing production, housing tenure, residential segregation, housing mobility, and processes associated with homelessness and leaving home. It is shown how housing processes cut across the different social levels (labour process, social reproduction and ideology), how they reflect prevailing patterns of social exclusion, and how they can either mitigate or reinforce those patterns. Social exclusion is distinguished from forms of housing exclusion (for example, relating to tenure), with which it is sometimes confused. It is noted that the groups which are commonly socially excluded through housing processes are those which are to be expected on the basis of the theory, namely unwaged, unskilled, not within a `traditional' family household, and seen as `undeserving'.

The Meaning of Social Exclusion

The term `social exclusion' has been used increasingly in recent years as a result

of the Europeanisation of social policy (Levitas, 1996). There exists considerable variation, however, in the meaning attached to the term, in the social groups which are held to be excluded, in the construction of social exclusion as a social and political problem, and in political and academic approaches to understanding

and explaining that problem. Two meanings of social exclusion appear to be particularly prevalent. The first

relates to exclusion from the labour markets of advanced capitalist countries. One general argument here is that due to processes of economic restructuring in

these countries a substantial proportion of their populations have been consigned

to long-term unemployment. The second meaning, in contrast, relates to

the denial of social citizenship status to certain social groups. The usual

argument here focuses on processes of stigmatisation and restrictive or oppressive

legislation and law enforcement, and forms of institutional discrimination. Each of these two meanings needs a little more explication. The first relates to

the social division of labour, and assumes the primacy of labour market

participation for inclusion in society more generally. This meaning has been

criticised for ignoring the economic and social importance of unpaid work

(Levitas, 1996, p. 12). Nevertheless, access to labour market positions can be

crucial for wider social inclusion or integration in a capitalist society (Levitas, 1996, p. 18), and this points us directly to the second meaning. In any case, the first meaning does not make it clear whether or not the insecurely employed

should be grouped together with the long-term unemployed. Social exclusion in

this sense could be defined in terms of either exclusion from the labour market or exclusion from secure paid employment (Morris, 1995). The second meaning relates to the social division of welfare (Titmuss, 1958).

In this case, there is a different ambiguity, relating to social citizenship, which

can mean anything from a right to a minimum income to a right to a decent

standard of living (which involves access to education, health care and housing, among other things). One approach is to assume that everybody should have the

same opportunities in life, and there should be no exclusion on the basis of class/race/sex/age/sexuality/disabilities/etc; but there remains the possibility

that people may be excluded on other grounds. There are perhaps three possibilities here. One is that a `citizen' does not take advantage of the opportunities presented (this can occur either

through incompetence or through contrariness). Another is that they commit an incivil or illegal act which results in a loss of entitlement, for example, exclusion from school or from a housing estate for anti-social behaviour. Third, the exercise of a right could be contingent upon the discharge of certain obligations, and failure to meet these obligations could mean forfeiture of the right and consequently exclusion from the benefits which

that right secures. For example, failure to sign on the employment register can

lead to exclusion from unemployment benefit, or failure to pay rent can result

in eviction from one' s home. In each case, a distinction is being made between

`deserving' and `undeserving' persons, and it is argued that it is only the latter who can legitimately be socially excluded. A further ambiguity of the `citizenship' approach to social exclusion relates to

immigration policy. For example, `citizen' could mean `British citizen' , `citizen of

the European Union', or even `citizen of the world'. Various writers have

commented upon how the terminology of national, and more recently of

European, citizenship has been used to exclude foreign nationals and non-EU

nationals (Cohen, 1985; Harrison, 1991; Jacobs, 1985; Mitchell & Russell, 1994). Thus, socially inclusionary projects can be simultaneously socially exclusionary.

In order to deal with these multiple ambiguities of the concept, this paper

takes the view that social exclusion is socially constructed. Meanings of social exclusion are produced by combinations of economic, social and political pro- cesses, and one consequence of this is a considerable variety of socially excluded

groups. What all these groups have in common, and what lies at the heart of all

processes of social exclusion, is a sense of social isolation and segregation from

the formal structures and institutions of the economy, society, and the state.

Social exclusion in general, therefore, is not so very different from poverty, construed in relational terms rather than absolute or relative terms (Corrigan, 1978). The concentration on process makes it appropriate to begin with a discussion

of social mobility, because lack of such mobility could be taken as prima facie

evidence of social exclusion in any sense. This discussion leads on to an analysis

of theoretical approaches to social exclusion, and the latter part of the paper is

then concerned with how exclusionary processes manifest themselves through

networks of housing relations.

Social Exclusion and Social Mobility

Social mobility could refer to mobility into and out of the labour market, into

and out of poverty, or between `deserving' and `undeserving' social categories.

If such mobility were low, it would suggest the probable existence of social exclusion, and the meaning of social exclusion would depend upon the social construction of the institutions concerned in each case. The precise nature of this

social exclusion could then be investigated through more detailed study of these

institutions such as the labour market, the state benefits system, and the `core

ideology' (Gramsci, 1971) of individual responsibility.

The Approach of `Class Analysis' One problem with many mobility studies, especially in England, is that they are articulated within programmes of `class analysis' which have little bearing on

the issue of social exclusion as such (Goldthorpe, 1987; Marshall et al., 1989). In

these studies, social mobility is understood as a change in the class position and

orientation of individuals (from `origins' to `destinations'), not in terms of

processes of transition of social groups into and out of key social networks and

institutions. Payne (1992), for example, points out that ª the boundaries between

the social divisions of the three classes [service class, intermediate class, and working class] have weakenedº (p. 231), in the sense that it has become more

likely for individuals to move from one class to another. This does not tell us,

however, whether the class structure as a whole has become more or less open

to any given social grouping. It is also far from clear why the upward `moving

column' of material mobility to which Payne refers should present a problem for a class-based perspective, because increased material prosperity for all is not

incompatible with a growing gap between rich and poor. There is also no

contradiction between an aggregate increase in upward mobility (whether absolute or relative) and reduced upward mobility for certain social groups.

In contrast to the English approach to class analysis, two other approaches to

social mobility can be distinguished. One is associated with the so-called

`sociology of consumption' (Burrows & Marsh, 1992), and derives from the work

of Pahl (1984, 1988) and Saunders (1986). The other adopts an international comparative perspective, and is identfied with the work of Esping-Andersen

and his collaborators (Esping-Andersen, 1993).

The Consumptionist Approach

The first approach, which I call consumptionist, holds that consumption activity

forms an increasingly important source of social stratfication independent of

that deriving from social class. The main social classes are allegedly fusing

gradually into an increasingly comfortable, culturally standardised, and privatised

`middle mass' (Pahl, 1988; Saunders, 1986). Consequently, divisions arising

from production are said to be declining in importance, while those arising from

consumption are becoming more pronounced. In practice, however, even in the US where these processes are alleged to be most advanced, there is little

evidence to suggest that the establishment of a `mass culture' has been associated with a decline in class-based forms of social organisation (Grusky, 1994, p. 21). It is simply not the case that, just because the `moving column' of material mobility (to use Payne's expression) involves increasing consumption, the role of

production is bound to be downgraded. The relevance of the consumptionist approach for the purposes of this paper

is that it is associated with an argument that the new `middle mass' has become

increasingly detached from a socially isolated and hopeless `underclass' (Auletta, 1982; Pahl, 1988). This argument has been considered in much more detail in

Morris (1994), and her critique will be discussed in the next section. Here it is

sufficient to point out that the consumptionist writers, while being highly critical

of the `class analysis ' approach, have not proposed any coherent alternative

criteria for the identification and measurement of social mobility, whether in

relation to participation in the labour market, dependence on state benefits, or

`deserving' status.

The International Comparative Approach

This approach looks potentially more fruitful, for three reasons. It is based on a greater breadth and depth of empirical evidence, it has a more pragmatic approach to ideological and theoretical assumptions, and it focuses on the causes of social exclusion as well as its outcomes. The question

which Esping-Andersen poses is how recent changes in advanced capitalist labour processes have affected social mobility and class formation. Evidence from six countries (Britain, Germany, Sweden, Norway, US and Canada) indicates some potential for class closure (a socially constructed system of barrier s to upward social mobility) ª in

terms of a relatively closed mobility circuit between unskilled service jobs, sales

jobs, and including probably also unemployment and household workº (Esping Andersen,

1993, p. 231). The extent to which this has actually occurred, however, appears to vary, with major differences emerging between the American countries,

the Scandinavian countries, Britain and Germany. Esping-Andersen concludes that in the American and Scandinavian countries ª from the point of view

of class formation, fluidity and mobility patterns are simply too strong for any

significant social closure to occurº (p. 235). In America, this is due primarily to

the expansion of (low-paid) private sector service jobs, and in Scandinavia it is

the result mainly of the growth of the public service sector. In Britain and

Germany, in contrast, mobility is more restricted, but even in these countries the

ª degree of class closure is highly uncertainº (p. 235). Esping-Andersen' s general

point, therefore, is that although recent developments in capitalist labour pro- cesses have created the potential for the formation of a new non-mobile

`underclass', there is some doubt about whether this has actually happened, and

if it does happen it is likely to take different forms in different parts of the world. Esping-Andersen qualifies his conclusion in two ways, the first of which

relates to gender and the second to education. These factors, together with the welfare state, are used to explain the international variation in mobility regimes. On gender, Esping-Andersen points to the possibility of an underprivileged

`class' of unskilled women, moving within a closed circuit between unskilled

services, low-end sales and low-end clerical work (Esping-Andersen, 1993, p. 235). This could develop in any of the six study countries. On education, he

stresses that the upward mobility out of the (private or public) service jobs is

increasingly related to the possession of educational qualifications, so those without such qualifications may find themselves moving only within ª a circuit

of essentially similar unattractive jobsº (p. 235), which could turn out to be a

form of class closure. Another effect of the increasing importance of educational

qualifications is that mobility to the top layers of the stratfication system

becomes more and more difficult. Consequently, ª the role of education in the post-industrial order may be to assure openness at the lower rungs of the

stratfication, but solidification and class closure at the topº (pp. 235±236). The

differences in national mobility regimes can be explained by reference to the degree of citizen participation in further and higher education (high in America

and Scandinavia, low in Britain and Germany), the degree of public welfare provision relative to private welfare (high in Scandinavia, low in America), and

the nature and extent of female participation in the labour market (high but

segregated in Scandinavia, high but less segregated in America, lower and

segregated in Britain and Germany). Empirical research therefore tends to suggest that, in attempting to understand

social exclusion, a more holistic approach needs to be adopted. The labour market needs to be considered alongside systems of education, welfare, citizen- ship rights and the ascription of gender roles. The next section considers the

causation of social exclusion in more detail. Is it possible to develop a holistic

theory to make sense of the complex nature of exclusion? Such a theory might contribute to understanding of the composition of socially excluded groups, and

inform policy on how to combat social exclusion. It would need to consider three

interrelated dimensions: economic, legal/political, and moral/ideological.

Theories of Social Exclusion Discussion of social exclusion inevitably raises the question of the existence and

character of an `underclass' or `outsider' group, which is socially distinct from

(and below) the main social classes. Theories of social exclusion have therefore been framed mainly in relation to this alleged entity. For example, van Parijs

(1987) has talked of an insider-outsider cleavage in terms of ª a closed labour market of (upgraded) insiders enjoying high wages and job security, and a

swelling army of outsiders including youth, long-term unemployed, early

retirees, and discouraged workersº (quoted in Esping-Andersen, 1994, p. 699). These theories have been comprehensively and systematically reviewed by

Morris (1994) (see also Morris & Scott, 1996), and consequently Morris' work

represents a useful starting point for the present paper.

`Structural' and `Cultural' Approaches Morris (1994, p. 80) identifies two general theoretical or ideological positions with respect to an `underclass'. One is broadly `cultural', seeing the source of

their social exclusion as lying in the attitudes and behaviour of the underclass

itself. For example, Murray (1984) has argued that welfare dependency has encouraged both the break-up of the nuclear family household and socialisation

into a counter-culture which devalues work and promotes dependency and/or criminality. The other is termed `structural', and sees the source of social exclusion as lying in the structured inequality which disadvantages particular groups in society, for example the failure to provide sufficient secure employment to meet demand, and the consequent destabilisation of the male bread- winner role. Some writers, notably Wilson (1987), have attempted to integrate `structural' and `cultural' approaches, but Morris argues that they are irreconcilable (Morris, 1994, p. 87). She sees the `cultural' position as incorrect and ideological, and the

`structural' position as correct and scientific. Many of her criticisms of the

`culture' theorists are valid, for example, lack of evidence for a `culture of

dependency' or for a link between nuclear family break-up and decline of work

ethic. It is not possible, however, to identify a clear boundary between `structure' and `culture', at least not without being far more explicit about the theoretical underpinnings of the `structural' approach. A social structure is, after all, only an

ordered set of social relations, and these relations could just as well be `cultural' as `economic'. It may not be the theoretical approach of the `culturalists' which

is at fault, but rather their empirical evidence and the correlations which they

draw between different pieces of such `evidence'. The structural factors which Morris regards as most important in giving rise

to social exclusion are the labour market and the state. She is uncertain as to which of these has priority, and therefore suggests that they relate to two different issues (social class and social citizenship, respectively). The whole force of the concept of `underclass', however, is precisely to make a connection

between these two issues, by implying that those who do not ®t into the

class structure will tend to be the same people who are excluded from

social citizenship. Other structural factors which Morris mentions include social

isolation, racism, and traditional gender roles, but she does not make it clear how these factors relate to the (more fundamental?) structural factors of

labour market and state. Are structures of community, white dominance and

patriarchy not closely bound up with class and politics, and should we not

therefore expect a more holistic approach? For example, in the American

context, the issue is surely not whether it is racism or unemployment which is

responsible for the exclusion of the `ghetto poor' (Wilson, 1987), but how

precisely capital flows and racial discrimination combine so as to produce the ghetto phenomenon. Or again, in relation to lone mothers, the issue is not

so much whether they might form an underclass (Murray says yes, Morris says no), but the precise ways in which capitalist structures based on male wage-labour oppress women with responsibilities for children. In this context,

it is perhaps worth noting that American research has indicated that it is not

single motherhood as such which causes the social exclusion of this group,

but the combination of single motherhood with social isolation and lack of exploitable skills (Jencks & Petersen, 1991). Indeed, for many unskilled married women, the position may not be so very different (Esping-Andersen, 1993, p. 235). Perhaps the main problem with Morris' `structural' approach is that it neglects

the role of agency, and in particular the views and practices of the socially

excluded themselves. What, after all, is a `structural' factor but a social process which has been abstracted from human activity? One example should serve

to clarify this point. Gallie (1994), who largely shares Morris' `structural' approach, has argued that the chances of obtaining paid employment are related

to the structural conditions of the labour market rather than to `cultural' considerations such as the degree of commitment to work. All studies of

the labour market have shown, however, that ª informal patterns of association

can be critical in determining who is successful in the search for employmentº

(Morris, 1995, p. 38), and such informal connections would appear, in

Gallie's and Morris' terms, to be `cultural' rather than `structural'. The distinction

between `structural' and `cultural' factors is therefore either not as clear-cut as these writers claim, or else the way in which they wish to draw it is

theoretically ¯awed. Perhaps the important distinction, after all, is not one between `structure' and `culture' (which is in fact based on an outdated base/

superstructure model of society), but one between progressive and reactionary

social forces, between social processes which promote social inclusion and those which lead to social exclusion, between processes which increase and those which reduce the degree of control which people exercise over their everyday

lives.

Labour Process Analysis

If the structure/culture couple is dismissed as theoretically inadequate, is it

possible to find an alternative which will lead to a more convincing explanation

of exclusionary processes? Such an explanation will need to show how the three dimensions of social exclusion identfied in the last section are inextricably

interlinked, as well as how this interlinking is produced by institutionalised

patterns of activity deriving from processes of production and social reproduction. The remainder of this section is devoted to developing such a possible

alternative. The starting point for the analysis has to be the labour process, because it is

the nature of the exploitation in the labour process which is fundamentally

responsible for social polarisation, and hence for social exclusion. In advanced

capitalist countries such as Britain there are two main types of labour process. The first is generalised commodity production, where labour itself is a commodity. The second is the domestic labour process, where labour is not commodified. (Other types of labour process in advanced capitalist countries include

simple commodity production, and forms of voluntary work, but these are less

important and are not discussed in this paper.)

Under generalised commodity production, labour is exploited by being paid

less than the value of the goods or services which it produces. Under the domestic labour process, labour is exploited by not being paid at all (in money

or in kind), or by being paid at a rate which bears little or no relation to the value of its product. The nature of the exploitation in the two cases is entirely

different: in the former case it gives rise to the reproduction and expansion of capital, and in the latter case to the reproduction and growth of labour. It is

precisely their interconnection, however, which is the key to understanding the

causation of social exclusion. Basically, non-commodified domestic labour processes produce and reproduce

the labour required for commodified labour processes, while commodified

labour processes produce and reproduce the capital which is required to pay

labour what it needs to maintain its domestic economy. This is a complex and

delicate relationship, which can easily break down as a result of changes in

either type of labour process. Examples of such changes include a growth in the numbers of lone mothers and a decline in the profitability of certain types of commodity production. Both of these can lead to the disconnection of domestic

labour from commodified labour. In the former case, this is because of the burdens of child care, and in the latter case because of the decline in demand for commodified labour. The above conception of a duality of interrelated labour processes can be used

to make sense of research findings such as those of Esping-Andersen and his colleagues. For example, what Esping-Andersen (1993, p. 235) calls the ª gender- divided process of class formationº can to some extent be related to the fact that a large proportion of women are doubly exploited in the domestic economy. This double exploitation follows from the fact that they perform labour not only

for their male partners, but also for their children, for which they receive no

equivalent value (Somerville, 1994a). The existence of such double exploitation

in the home is another reason why, as Morris (1994) has argued, the term

`underclass' is simply not appropriate to understanding the position of women

in society. However, Morris does not follow up this argument to question the whole rationale of the orthodox approach to `class analysis' based on people's occupations. Esping-Andersen's excluded group of unskilled women is in fact

produced not by capitalist labour processes alone but by the duality of capitalist and domestic labour processes. In the face of such multiple exploitation, lone parenthood can actually be regarded as a means of defence (because of the

elimination of domestic male exploitation), although not necessarily a very

effective one. Similarly, the role of education in increasing or reducing social mobility can

be explained by reference to the effects of domestic labour in providing `added

value' to the next generation in relation to the opportunities provided by

changes in capitalist labour processes. Again, it is the interrelationship between

labour processes of the two types which defines the structural role of the processes concerned. The capacity to provide `added value' to children, for example, will to some extent be related to the function of the parents in capitalist

labour processes, and the capacity for young people to take advantage of new

job opportunities will to some extent be related to the `added value' which they

have had invested in them by their parents. The picture is further complicated

by the fact that it relates only to the economic dimension of social exclusion. For education in particular, the political/institutional dimension, encompassing mainly the state education system, is just as important for determining social outcomes. This dimension has its own capitalistic (or quasi-capitalistic) labour processes, and it has its own ascriptions of roles for domestic labour, for example, on homework, discipline, and moral and financial support for schools and the schooling process. Labour process analysis therefore has considerable potential for explaining

social exclusion arising from forms of capitalist and domestic exploitation. It

suggests that women and unskilled people will be particularly likely to lose out, and this is confirmed by the findings of empirical research. The analysis also

explains why the dimensions of gender and skill, although always co-present, are nevertheless articulated on quite different bases.

Social Reproduction Analysis

Katznelson (1986) suggests that the labour process represents the first of a number of levels at which social class can be analysed. A similar approach can

be adopted in relation to the theory being developed in this paper. The second

level to consider would then be the level of social reproduction, which encompasses all the means by which labour is reproduced in the wider society. It has

long been established that such social reproduction involves processes of cumulative

advantage and disadvantage, and is therefore a major source of social

division and exclusion (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The domestic labour pro- cess itself is one of the types of process contributing to social reproduction, and

therefore provides a key link between the two levels. Of the other types of

process, probably the most important are those associated with state regulation:

legal and political institutions, national economic and financial management, education, defence and welfare in the broadest sense. All of these processes,

separately or together, can either mitigate or exacerbate the forms of division

and exclusion arising from the development of the (dual) labour process. The

general tendency of their development, however, is to produce a `division of welfare' (Titmuss, 1958) which mirrors rather than reforms the prevailing

division of labour (Mann, 1992) this in itself suggests that the labour process is

in some sense more fundamental. This tendency becomes considerably stronger when the duality of labour processes is considered, that is, domestic labour as well as wage-labour. This is

because much of state regulation is concerned with reinforcing certain norms of

the domestic economy, as well as increasing productivity of labour and

profitability of capital. The result is that state policies and services reflect the domestic division of labour as well as the capitalist division of labour. For example, in a country where as many women as men participate in the labour market, this is likely to be reflected in greater state provision of welfare for women (and this can itself include the provision of employment, thus reinforcing

the role of women in the labour market). Or again, so long as the responsibility for child care remains primarily with women, it is unlikely that their overall position in the labour market will ever be equal to that of men. This

inequality will then continue to be reflected in state regulation which condones

sex segregation in the workplace and `supports' female caring in the home. The level of social reproduction therefore corresponds with the legal/political

dimension of social exclusion. Analysis at this level could include a treatment of class `strategies' of inclusion and exclusion such as those originally identfied by

Parkin (1979). The key argument here is that social classes at this level can be

characterised in terms of the social bases on which they exclude other people

from their membership. The middle classes, for example, can be identfied in

terms of the `assets' which they hold relating to property, credentials, and social organisation (Savage et al., 1992). Similarly, the working class can be recognised

as those whose main `asset' is labour power. This serves to distinguish them

from those who do not participate, or (according to the working-class exclusionary strategy) do not deserve to participate, in the labour market. In Britain,

traditionally such `non-deserving' cases have been mainly women, ethnic minorities,

older people and foreigners generally (Mann, 1992). In such ways, it can be

seen that the political dimension tends to reinforce the social exclusion which is

already being generated through the labour process. This tendency, however, is

by no means inevitable, and it is important to bear in mind that inclusionary

political action is possible, and can be successful. The reference to the exclusion of ethnic minorities and older people suggests

that there may be social bases for exclusion other than those deriving from the

labour process (which is the source of the `assets' mentioned above). If exploitation

is the key to explaining social exclusion, then discrimination on grounds of `race' or age presents a problem, because there is no counterpart to such

discrimination in either the capitalist or the domestic labour process contrast

discrimination on grounds of sex or skill. It seems, therefore, that exclusion

based on `race' or age is likely to have its source in the legal/political dimension,

though this should not be taken to imply that it is less deep-rooted or less

impervious to change. There are those who argue that the capitalist labour process is inherently racialized , particularly in the US (Leiman, 1993), but it is

difficult to see how capitalist exploitation in a racially divided country is

radically different from that in one which is racially more homogeneous.

Ideological Analysis

Other levels of analysis are possible apart from labour process analysis and

social reproduction analysis (see Katznelson, 1986), but they are not the particular

concern of this paper. There remains, however, the moral/ideological dimension

of social exclusion to be explained, and the applicability of the general

theory then needs to be demonstrated in relation to specific excluded groups. Returning to the comments at the beginning of the paper, it was stated that there were types of moral or ideological factors which function as justifications or explanations for people being excluded from the benefits of social citizenship. These factors are all based on a fundamental ideological assumption of

individual responsibility, which according to Allen (1997) is a core ideology of capitalist societies. In reality, however, the exercise of individual responsibility

is never completely free, but is always constrained, not least by the systems of exploitation and patterns of social reproduction discussed above. Subject to

these constraints, however, it is plausible to argue that there may be processes of what may be called moral exclusion which to some extent cut across divisions of social class. Many, and perhaps most, of them will derive from legal and

governmental arrangements, for example, the exclusion of criminals by the law

and system of justice. In general, the existence of rules of any kind tends to be associated with exclusionary treatment of those who do not conform to the rules. The important distinction to make, therefore, is probably between, on the one hand, rules and practices which have the effect of reinforcing existing systems of exploitation and unfair discrimination, and on the other hand, those which are

required for, or tend to promote, freedom from exploitation and social exclusion. For example, taking from the rich to give to the poor would be progressive, while taking from the poor to give to the rich would be reactionary.

It is interesting to note that the ideology of individual responsibility is in fact

gendered and familialised. Responsibility lies with the individual household, and within each household responsibility is divided between men and women, and between parents and children. In this sense, the moral dimension of social exclusion tends to reinforce the patterns of domestic exploitation identfied

earlier in this section. Similarly, patterns of exploitation in capitalist labour processes are reinforced by the assumption that workers are paid fairly, according to their skills, experience, and effort, that is according to the value of their

individual labour. It follows that the groups most likely to be socially excluded

are people burdened with domestic duties (for example, carers), lacking job

skills (for example, untrained or impaired in some way), lacking relevant experience (for example, school-leavers or those made redundant in declining

industries), and the lazy, the workshy, and the criminally-inclined. Other groups could be excluded on grounds of age (for example, people under 18 and over 65) or `race'. The former is often justified, though unconvincingly, on grounds of

skills and ability (immaturity of the young, declining faculties of the old); while

the latter is more clearly morally unacceptable.

The Patterning of Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is therefore generated from a number of different sources, the most important of which are the (dual) labour process, the legal/political

process, and prevailing core ideologies. Exploitation in the capitalist and domestic labour processes gives rise to characteristic patterns of social division and

exclusion based on class, sex and skill. Current changes in capital and

relations in a variety of countries can be explained by reference to the articulation

of such characteristic patterns. It is primarily the dual labour process which

determines the tendency for the social exclusion of people who are female, unskilled, or so-called `economically inactive'. This represents the first level of

social exclusion construction. Social division and exclusion which originate at this first level are then largely

conserved and reproduced through social institutions outside of the labour process, in particular through law, politics, education and welfare, with these

institutions themselves assuming the form of capitalist and domestic labour processes. The vying for power among different groups at this second level, for example, between employers' and workers' organisations, or between middle

classes and working classes, then produces two types of exclusionary effect. The

first type are modified forms of old exclusions deriving from the exploitation of

labour, for example exclusions of women and unskilled, and the second type are new exclusions, for example, of foreigners, immigrants and non-whites, or of

young or old people, which are generated primarily at the level of politics and

culture. Finally, further exclusions are created at the moral or ideological level. Here, prevailing assumptions about appropriate roles in the domestic and capitalist

labour processes, as well as in social reproduction more generally, give rise to

the negative labelling, punitive treatment, and possible exclusion of those whose

characteristics or behaviour does not conform to the expected norms (as mediated

through legal, political, cultural and communications systems). All three

levels are in reality overlapping and enmeshed together, and can be distinguished

from each other only for the purpose of conceptual analysis.

Social Exclusion and Housing

Housing seems an appropriate choice for illustrating the applicability of the

theory to specific sets of social relations. This is because housing is both an

essential element of the domestic labour process and an important product of capitalist labour processes (the housebuilding industry). It also provides a link

between the level of the labour process and the level of social reproduction,

through the mediation of tenure forms. Finally, because of its fixed character, housing is particularly relevant for deciding the question of whether there is a

connection between social mobility and spatial mobility, which could represent another possible source of social exclusion. What, then, is the relationship between housing and social exclusion? Brie¯y,

housing can be analysed as a set of social relations, including characteristic networks and patterns of activity, which cuts across the three levels identfied in

the previous section. Housing processes can be understood as types of processes which either promote social inclusion or contribute to social exclusion. Social exclusion through housing happens if the effect of housing processes is to deny

certain social groups control over their daily lives, or to impair enjoyment of wider citizenship rights.

Social Exclusion and Housing Production

Social exclusion through housing could happen in a number of different ways, and some of these can be grouped under the headings of production and

distribution. For example, the planning and production of housing could be organised so that there are continual housing shortages, or so that poor housing

conditions persist, or so that the price of housing remains beyond the reach of

certain types of household. In each of these cases, the opportunities for those households who lose out are systematically reduced relative to the rest of the population. From 1945 until the 1970s considerable progress was made in Britain

in addressing these issues, by means of the mass provision of council housing of

good quality and at affordable rents, and by the clearance of the worst of the

slums. Since the 1970s , however, there is evidence to suggest, for example, from

successive English House Condition Surveys, that conditions have improved no

further, and may have deteriorated, while at the same time housing costs, especially for poorer households, have escalated (Wilcox, 1997). A long historical

process of social inclusion through housing has therefore been followed by a process of increasing social exclusion. A good example at the national level of social exclusion through housing

planning is the failure to design and build housing which is accessible to people with disabilities. This failure helps to ensure the continued isolation of many

disabled people and their dependence on others for carrying out the most basic of everyday tasks. At the local level a good example of such social exclusion is

the phenomenon of `nimbyism'. This can be represented as a strategy of more powerful residents in a particular area to exclude new housing development

from the area, especially housing for lower-income households. If successful, such strategies have the effect of exacerbating housing shortages in the area, thus

forcing people either to leave or to lack a decent home of their own classic expressions of enforced social segregation and social isolation.

Social Exclusion and Housing Tenure Under the heading of distribution, a well-discussed possible source of social exclusion is housing tenure. Certain writers such as Ball & Harloe (1992) have argued that there exist distinctive ª structures of housing provisionº (SHP), and

if this is the case one might expect them to have characteristic exclusionary

effects. In practice, these SHP seem to be tenure-related, for example Ball (1983)

talks of an owner occupied and a local authority SHP. Harloe (1995) holds that

decommodified forms of (housing) provision are potentially less exclusionary

than commodified forms, so council housing, where rents are not determined by

the market, is in theory less exclusionary than owner occupation, where prices are so determined. This claim arises from the assumption that because generalised commodity production and exchange give rise to social division and

exclusion, then decommodification of the means of exchange at least should

serve to reduce such division and exclusion. Owner occupation and council

housing have different exclusionary implications, since access to each tenure is

based on quite different criteria. In the case of owner occupation, access is based

primarily on income and wealth, so people who cannot afford to buy are

excluded. In the case of council housing, access is typically based on need and

the ability to wait, although the needs of some groups such as young single people are frequently ignored (Anderson & Morgan, 1996). The result is exclusion of those who cannot afford to wait, the transient, those who are perceived as not capable of managing a tenancy or not deserving of a tenancy, and those whose needs are not recognised within the council' s allocations categories, for example, disabled people, certain ethnic groups, and people with mental health problems. Overall, therefore, owner occupation appears more exclusionary, because it

denies access to a broad range of the poorest households, whereas council

housing excludes only selected groups of them (and similar arguments apply to

housing association housing). Owner occupation as a tenure does little more

than reflect and reinforce prevailing social inequalities and exclusion deriving

from the (dual) labour process. For example, skilled workers are much more

likely to be able to afford to buy housing than unskilled workers, and many women are unable to afford to buy housing in their own right. In concentrating

on owner occupation in general, however, there is a danger of downplaying the

significance of social differentiation within the tenure. For example, there are owner occupiers who live in poor housing conditions and who cannot afford to undertake essential repairs, or who may live in very overcrowded conditions but cannot afford to buy housing large enough for their needs. Although not excluded from owner occupation, some of these households may be socially

excluded, for example certain ethnic minority groups or older people whose housing circumstances make it impossible for them to exercise a reasonable

degree of control over their lives. Inclusion within owner occupation, therefore,

is not the same thing as social inclusion. This argument works in reverse, that is exclusion from owner occupation is not the same thing as social exclusion. For example, a household which cannot

afford to buy its own home may not be socially excluded if it can find good

quality secure accommodation at a rent which it can afford. On the other hand,

it cannot be taken for granted that inclusion within rented housing will also mean social inclusion. Some tenants may still be socially excluded, for example

if their rents are excessive, or if their living conditions make `human flourishing'

(Healy, 1997) impossible, or if they are isolated from the means by which they

can empower themselves. It is necessary, therefore, to consider social differentiation

among tenants as well as among owner occupiers. A number of writers have commented on the prevalence of institutional

discrimination within council housing in particular. Such discrimination has

occurred on grounds of class, `race' and gender, and has been mediated largely

through ideologies of respectability (Henderson & Karn, 1987). The problem is

that council housing is not homogeneous, but highly variable in quality, so that

some prospective tenants have to be channelled into less desirable property in

less desirable areas. The research has indicated that there are a variety of labels

that may signify that a person is less `deserving', and therefore more suitable to

occupy the lower quality housing. This suggests that there exist degrees of social exclusion, depending upon the number and strength of the labels applied. Other writers have discussed the causation of this discrimination, for example in terms of the exclusionary strategies of the working class (Mann, 1992), the bureaucratic paternalism of `public landlordism' (Cole & Furbey, 1994), and the gatekeeper

role of social housing organisations generally (Sahlin, 1995). Interestingly, the patterns of social exclusion which result are what one would expect on the basis of a conflation of the three levels of exclusion. For example, those who are most

likely to suffer from discrimination are those who are unwaged, unskilled, non-white, not in a two-parent family, and especially those who are seen not to

have acted `responsibly' (for example, a homeless single mother or an economic migrant).

Social and Spatial Exclusion A number of writers, particularly in the US, have argued that space, especially

residential space, is extremely important in the causation of social exclusion

(Massey & Denton, 1993; see also Smith, 1989). This argument can be pitched at a local, regional, national or international level, but has perhaps been most

developed at local level. For the purposes of this paper, it can be admitted that

the labour process is inherently spatialised, but that the most significant aspect

of this is that the capitalist and domestic labour processes are spatially separated.

It is through this spatial separation, which takes place at a local level and

indeed helps to define what a local level is, that the reproduction of wage-labour

is alienated from its exploitation (and similarly the exploitation of domestic

labour is alienated from the means through which it is reproduced). Much of the argument in the literature relates to the confinement of poor people to specific neighbourhoods. As Marcuse (1993) has pointed out, however,

this is not a new phenomenon. It is commonly assumed that such confinement

results in their exclusion from many of the markets and services vital to human development and the pursuit of a decent lifestyle (Wilson, 1987). Empirical

studies, however, have suggested that the effects of so-called `poverty neighbourhoods' are negligible (Friedrichs, 1997, p. 149). This is therefore an issue which requires closer attention. Friedrichs (1997, p. 151) has indicated that the effects of poverty neighbour- hoods in fact cease to be negligible if certain thresholds are crossed, for example

if the residence of professionals and managers in the area falls below a certain proportion or if the incidence of teenage childbearing rises above a certain rate. The argument is that neighbourhood effects are real because social interaction

occurs at this level and because the visibility of certain characteristics in the area

(such as litter, physical decay, visible aggression and crime, and drug use)

affects human behaviour (Skogan, 1990). These effects become stronger where

the residents' opportunities for interaction are more confined to the neighbourhood, as is the case when they are poor. Social isolation and exclusion will

therefore follow where certain thresholds are exceeded. The types of threshold

concerned are precisely those which are to be expected on the basis of the theory

of social exclusion developed in this paper, namely thresholds defined in terms of labour market skills and household structure. Traditionally, residents in poverty neighbourhoods have been divided between

`respectables' and `roughs' (Klein, 1965; Stacey, 1969). Paugam (1991)

distinguishes between the `organised' , who manage their lives according to mainstream norms, and the `banned' or excluded who do not. These form two

separate groups because the former take care to avoid contacts with the latter, and to inhibit contacts among their children (Friedrichs, 1997, p. 152). The

ideological gulf between the two groups can be explained by reference again to

the dual labour process, with the `organised' (or included) consisting largely of economically active nuclear family households (or retired people who used to

head such households), and the excluded comprising economically inactive

`non-traditional' households. It is the balance between these two groups of

residents which determines the viability of a particular neighbourhood or the

sustainability of a particular local community. Finally, it should be noted that the discussion of poverty neighbourhoods is not tenure-specific, that is these processes of social exclusion can occur within

tenure contexts of varying types. Housing tenure therefore functions as a differential opportunity structure for neighbourhood residents, leading to different outcomes for households of different types, but it is probably simplistic to

talk of any tenure in itself as being more or less exclusionary than another. Tenure affects the way in which residents of any neighbourhood are socially

included or excluded, but the nature of its contribution to social exclusion or

inclusion is complex and dependent upon the specific institutional arrangements and housing conditions in that neighbourhood (for example, the state of the local

housing market, or the allocation practices of local landlords).

Social Exclusion and Residential Mobility

The issue of the importance of housing mobility (or immobility) for social exclusion has been examined in particular in relation to council housing in

Britain, and this turns the discussion to a rather different issue associated with

housing tenure. Watt (1996b) refers to the `trapped tenants' thesis, according to which ª not only are the adult sons and daughters of council tenants likely to

enter social renting themselves, but that once they are in this tenure there is little mobility out of the tenureº (p. 15). Even if they opt to buy the council house in which they live, they may not actually move out of the area. Studies of mobility

and council housing in Guildford and Camden, however (Savage et al., 1990;

Watt, 1996a), have found substantial rates of intergenerational mobility out of council housing, and a national study of life-course housing mobility (Ermisch

et al., 1995) has found substantial levels of mobility out of council housing, even

allowing for the effects of Right to Buy tenure switches. The `trapped tenants'

thesis therefore does not appear to be valid at national or local authority level, and this casts doubt on whether the process of residualisation of council housing

is (yet?) leading to the formation of a council tenant `underclass' or something

similar at either of these levels. This leaves open the question of whether tenants may still be `trapped' at the

level of particular neighbourhoods and estates, and consideration of this question leads us back to Wilson (1987), and also to Lash & Urry (1994) and Byrne

(1995), because of their emphasis on the spatial character of `underclass' formation

(or what Byrne calls the ª dispossessed working classº). The extensive

literature on `problem housing estates' (Reynolds, 1986), however, suggests once again that poverty neighbourhood residents are not a homogeneous group.

Research which has been conducted, for example for Priority Estates Project

(Power & Tunstall, 1995), or under the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Action on Estates Programme (Taylor, 1995), indicates that the `trapped tenants' thesis may well be a myth. However, it could be that it is only the `organised' who are

residentially mobile, while the `excluded' are indeed `trapped' for example,

they may be unable to achieve transfers off the estate, and may have little or no

social interaction with anyone outside the estate. Such entrapment or exclusion

could be the result of a specific and contingent spatial separation of domestic

labour from capital-labour relations. In such circumstances, the `trapped' residents could as well be poor private tenants or poor outright owner occupiers as council tenants, and this suspicion is confirmed by recent work on the geography of social exclusion (Lee & Murie, 1997).

Interestingly, therefore, the role of space at different scales in mediating social exclusion and in `underclass' formation is not very well understood. This is

possibly due in part to the prevailing confusion concerning the processes of mediation, that is it reflects our lack of detailed knowledge of social relations at

the residential and neighbourhood level. It is important to recognise that it is not merely due to a lack of empirical evidence concerning the social interconnections occurring at different spatial levels, but relates to a failure to distinguish the

theoretical bases for inclusionary and exclusionary effects. The theory outlined

in the previous section does not have any concrete spatial connotations, so there

is room for the development of further theory which will (among other things) make sense of the spatial relations between domestic labour processes and

capitalist labour processes.

Social Exclusion and the Home Housing is a crucial element of the domestic labour process. In fact, apart from

the daily and generational reproduction of human beings, domestic labour

involves the maintenance and general upkeep of the housing itself. How can

such processes lead to social exclusion? Perhaps the exclusionary potential can

be revealed only in comparison with those who are not involved in typical

domestic labour processes, for example the homeless, those following a nomadic way of life, and those who are living in long-stay institutions. The theory developed in this paper suggests that social exclusion in a housing

context is likely to arise where, for whatever reason, the system of domestic exploitation has broken down. For example, children may have been thrown out

by their parents because those parents can no longer `afford' to keep them. In

other words, the exploitation by the children of their parents has become

intolerable although whether children actually leave will depend, among other

things, on whether they can `afford' to do so (Jones, 1995). Or again, households of homeless lone mothers may be created because of the breakdown of relationships

where the father has been unable to secure a `breadwinning' role (Wilson, 1987). These points suggest that, although it should not automatically be assumed that premature departure from home or the break up of a home give

rise to social exclusion, such crises place women and young people at the greatest risk of social exclusion. Homelessness itself, however, although likely to be associated with social exclusion, is not to be equated with it. For example, far from homelessness being

the problem to which housing is the solution, it may be (as in the case of women

fleeing violent men or children running away from abusive carers) that in some

cases housing is the problem (or the location of the problem) to which homeless- ness is the solution (Tomas & Dittmar, 1995). The key factor giving rise to

homelessness in these different contexts is probably the failure to maintain the

stability of the domestic labour process. This failure can lead to social exclusion, but not inevitably so. Homelessness legislation, even in its watered down form (Somerville 1994b, 1998), confers legitimacy on certain households who leave accommodation which it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy. In this respect, it

promotes social inclusion, but only for nuclear families and those deemed to be

`vulnerable' for whatever reason. Households entitled to settled accommodation

also have to be `deserving' in the sense that they have not become homeless

intentionally, and asylum seekers are specifically excluded from being considered

at all. This is therefore a good example of action which is simultaneously

inclusionary and exclusionary. It attempts to redress exclusion arising from the

labour process hence the priority given to vulnerable people and those with

childcare responsibilities. At the same time, however, it represents another expression of the ideology of individual responsibility hence the exclusion of

the `irresponsible' intentionally homeless. Finally, the national exclusivity of the

legislation is revealed through its uncompromising attitude to those who are

classified as `foreigners'.

Conclusion

This paper has been wide-ranging in its scope, in order to do justice to the issue of social exclusion as a whole. The social construction of social exclusion has been examined at three levels; namely labour processes, politico-legal interactions,

and cultural or ideological formations. The argument in the paper underlines

the importance of labour process analysis , but this old Marxian theme is

given a new shape by the concept of a duality of interrelated labour processes. The causation of social exclusion in contemporary society is seen as deriving

from the complex interconnection between the labour processes in the so-called

`formal economy' and those in the domestic economy. Using this concept, it is

possible to show that the position of women in society (for example) is

irreducibly different, so that the exclusion of women from economic and

political power is a predictable effect of labour process organisation. Similarly,

the potential of the education system for the liberation of oppressed people can

be shown to be limited not only by established capitalist `opportunity structures' but also by the capacity of the domestic economy to take advantage of the opportunities presented. The exclusion of the `unskilled' therefore cannot be

remedied simply through an expansion of training programmes and job opportunities,

although these are certainly important. Exclusion at the political and ideological levels appears to be mainly a

reflection and reinforcement of exclusion at the economic level, although the

extent to which this occurs in practice must always be a matter for empirical

investigation. Titmuss' `division of welfare' and the effects of `core' individualistic

ideologies have been discussed as examples of how such reinforcing forms of exclusion operate. Again, it is shown that women and unskilled people are most

at risk from the exclusionary processes concerned, although it is possible that at

these levels other factors can come to assume an equal, if not greater, importance

(for example, racial and `lifestyle' differences). Finally, the paper considers a number of housing applications of the theory of social exclusion developed. These applications relate to housing production, housing tenure, spatial fixity, and the home. Such applications are potentially useful for throwing further light on the mechanisms by which social exclusion

takes place. In each case, it is shown that housing does not give rise to distinctive bases of social exclusion but rather expresses, in different ways, the exclusionary

effects arising from labour process organisation, legal and political structures and action, and ideological formations. For example, in the case of housing production, social exclusion can occur

through the built form of housing, its physical condition, its `exclusive' location, and its price. With regard to housing tenure, the discussion suggests that caution

is advisable in making generalisations about the effects of tenure-specific entry

criteria and so on. In order to identify the processes and causes of social exclusion, more attention needs to be given to the complexity of differentiation within and across tenures. In relation to spatial fixity, it appears that the arguments on `ghettoisation' need to be rethought to allow for a richer conceptualisation

of social relations at the level of small residential areas, taking

account of spatial variation in the relation between capitalist and domestic

labour processes. Finally, in relation to the home, the theory implies that an

improved understanding of the dynamics of the domestic economy is essential

for explaining key housing processes such as leaving home, becoming homeless, and returning home. A test question for the theory could be: are the groups of people who are

socially excluded through housing the ones which would be expected on the basis of the theory? Not surprisingly, perhaps, the answer is yes, because it is

largely women and unskilled people who lose out in the housing system. However, the housing applications do point to the need to investigate more

closely the precise characteristics and circumstances of those who are socially

excluded, and in particular the formal and informal social networks in which

they participate.

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