1 Introduction: a Concept in Search of a Constituency?

The concept of social exclusion has emerged relatively recently in discussions about poverty, inequality and justice in the context of social and economic changes in the North. Since the Social Summit, there has been increasing attention paid to the possible relevance of the concept to social policy analysis in developing countries (IILS 1997; IDS 1998). However, the transferability of the concept is not at all clear. In fact, the danger is that, given the roots of the concept in northern social policy discourse, it will simply serve to relabel long-standing and locally developed approaches to social problems or, alternatively, that it will promote a tendency to assess southern realities in terms of the extent to which they converge, or diverge, from some 'standard' northern model.

Consequently, as De Haan and Maxwell (1998) suggest, a key question that has to be answered before incorporating 'social exclusion' into the development lexicon is: what is the value added? Would it add to our understanding of poverty, given that poverty is now recognised to be multidimensional? How useful is the concept where poverty is a mass phenomenon rather than the characteristic of a small 'underclass' (Gore 1994)? If poverty implies a concern with ensuring the satisfaction of basic needs, is not a focus on poverty sufficient to ensure a concern with justice? And finally, are all forms of exclusion necessarily 'bad' and all forms of inclusion necessarily 'good'?

Recent work commissioned by the International Institute for Labour Studies (IILS) in a number of low and middle income countries does not throw a great deal of light on these questions. The different ways in which the notion of social exclusion was interpreted and operationalised in the different country case studies meant that the studies did not cast much light on what was distinctive about the concept of social exclusion. Instead, the term was used to refer to:

- problematic groups (e.g., beggars, rural landless or asset-poor, the long-term unemployed, retrenched women workers, ethnic minorities)
- problematic conditions (poverty, unemployment, ghettoisation, family breakdown, isolation)
- problematic processes (political, social, economic).

Social Exclusion, Poverty and Discrimination

Towards an Analytical Framework

Naila Kabeer

Despite these caveats, I would be in favour of retaining the concept for social policy analysis for a number of reasons. First, it captures an important dimension of the experience of certain groups of being somehow 'set apart' or 'locked out' of participation in social life. Secondly, a focus on processes of exclusion is a useful way to think about social policy because it draws attention to the production of disadvantage through the active dynamics of social interaction, rather than through anonymous processes of impoverishment and marginalisation. However, the potential of a social exclusion perspective is unlikely to be realised if it does not help to make the connections between the various categories of people, problems and processes listed above, rather than treating them as disparate ways of thinking about exclusion. This article attempts to develop a framework which may help to promote such 'joined-up' thinking. Although exclusion occurs at global, national and local levels, I believe that the real value added of the concept lies at the meso-level, in the analysis of institutions. As the IILS study points out: 'Institutions are important in processes of social exclusion as they structure the relationship between macro-economic change and the pattern of economic growth, on the one hand, and the changing life circumstances of individuals, households and groups on the other hand' (IILS 1997: 15).

The article is structured as following. Section 2 classifies different categories of disadvantage which underpin patterns of inclusion and exclusion in different contexts. Section 3 focuses on the asymmetries of access embedded in institutional rules and norms; Section 4 looks at the dynamics of group behaviour in different institutional contexts, while Section 5 describes some examples of the social practices of exclusion. The concluding section discusses how a social exclusion perspective might enrich social policy analysis, drawing attention to both the positive role that public policy can and does play in countering exclusion, as well as the negative role that it can play, and often has played, in exacerbating it.

2 The Social Exclusion Problematic: Redistribution and Recognition

Fraser's analysis (1997) of different forms of injustice offers a useful way of integrating insights from

literatures on different forms of disadvantage. It suggests a conceptual spectrum stretching from primarily economic forms of injustice at one end to primarily cultural forms at the other (see Figure 1). Primarily economic conceptualisations of injustice deal with exploitation (the appropriation of the fruits of one's labour), marginalisation (exclusion from the means of livelihood or confinement to poorly paid, undesirable forms of work) and deprivation (being denied an adequate standard of living). At the 'cultural' end of the spectrum are forms of injustice stemming from social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. These are manifested in the ways in which dominant social groups invisibilise, seek to impose dominant values, or routinely devalue and disparage certain categories of people.[1] Such practices have profound effects on those who are treated this way:

> [W]e owe our integrity…to the receipt of approval or recognition from other persons. … Negative concepts such as 'insult' or 'degradation'… are related to forms of disrespect, to the denial of recognition. [They] are used to characterise a form of behaviour that does not represent an injustice solely because it constrains the subjects in their freedom for action or does them harm. Rather, such behaviour is injurious because it impairs these persons in their positive understanding of self – an understanding acquired by inter-subjective means (Honneth, cited in Fraser 1997: 14).

Different forms of disadvantage give rise to different kinds of disadvantaged groups. The problems of the working classes within Marxist analysis and of 'the poor' as a category defined by their lack of adequate material possessions would place them at the economic end of the spectrum of disadvantage. But while economic disadvantage may be seen to be rooted in the distributional system of a society, the working classes in advanced industrialised countries (referred to in the British literature as 'the great unwashed'), as well as 'the poor' in lower-income countries, are often depicted in derogatory ways, and face various forms of social discrimination.

Groups who share what Fraser (1997) describes as 'socially despised sexualities', as well as those suffering from stigmatised forms of illness – leprosy, AIDS, and so on – are generally located at the cultural end

Figure 1

Economic	→	←	Cultural
Interests	→	←	Identity
Redistribution	→	←	Recognitition
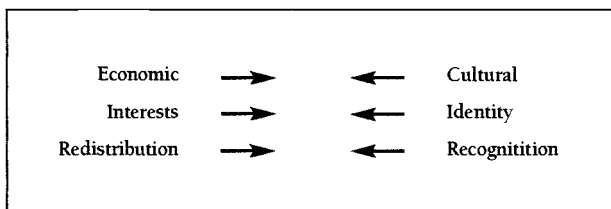
of the spectrum. Leprosy has near-mythical status as a synonym for extreme social exclusion (Silla 1998; Rao 1996). As a Ghanaian informant interviewed as part of the World Bank's consultations with the poor remarked: 'It is neither leprosy nor poverty that kills the leper but loneliness'. While cultural disadvantage is primarily associated with despised identities, it is frequently accompanied by economic discrimination: such groups face greater difficulties in finding employment and a greater likelihood of losing it. Thus, a study in Tanzania found that between 60 and 90 per cent of beggars interviewed in two urban areas suffered from leprosy (Taijage and Tibaijuka 1996).

Somewhere between primarily economic and primarily cultural forms of injustice are hybrid forms of injustice which give rise to what Fraser (1997) calls 'bivalent collectivities', social groups for whom economic disadvantage is bound up with cultural-valuational disadvantage. Gender, for instance, can be seen to have a political-economy dimension in that it is a key structuring principle in the distribution of labour, property and other valued resources in a society. It structures the division between productive and reproductive labour, giving women the primary responsibility for the latter. It structures an unequal distribution of land and property in many societies so that women either receive no rights to property, fewer rights than men or else their entitlements are mediated by male family members. It also structures the labour market, generally assigning men to higher-paid, formal sector and managerial positions and women to lower-paid, casual work, often in various forms of self-employment.

However, along with this economic dimension, gender also encompasses elements of injustice which stem from the dominant values of a society. The devaluation of women is expressed in the 'range of harms' that they are found to suffer in different societies, including trivialising, disparaging and demeaning representations of things coded 'feminine', attitudinal discrimination, sexual harassment, domestic violence and denial of full citizenship rights.

Ethnicity is another bivalent category, taking different forms in different contexts. In the US, race structures the division within paid work between low-paid, low-status, menial, dirty and domestic occupations held disproportionately by people of colour and higher-paid, higher status, white-collar, professional, technical and managerial occupations held disproportionately by 'whites' (Fraser 1997). Moreover, race also structures access to official labour markets, rendering large segments of the population of colour as surplus, an underclass, not worthy even of exploitation. When viewed from this perspective racial disadvantage is an economic phenomenon. At the same time, race also has cultural-valuational dimensions which make it a problem of recognition. The pervasive devaluation of all traits not associated with 'whiteness' which leads to a range of harms inflicted on people of colour, including demeaning stereotypical depictions in the media, violence, harassment and disrespect in all spheres of everyday life, attitudinal discrimination, and exclusion or marginalisation in public spheres and deliberative bodies.

From a very different context, Mamdani's analysis of the post-colonial state in Africa provides an eloquent exposition of the intersection of economic and cultural exclusion, in which race played a central role. He traces the present segmented nature of African societies to the structure of colonial rule, a period when members of the white colonial elite were treated as economically and culturally

privileged 'citizens' and those of the colonised black majority as devalued 'subjects':

> What we have before us is a bifurcated world, no longer simply racially organised but a world in which the dividing line between those human and those less than human is a line between those who labour on the land and those who do not. This divided world is inhabited by subjects on one side and citizens on the other; their life is regulated by customary law on one side and modern law on the other; their beliefs are dismissed as pagan on this side but bear the status of religion on the other; the stylised moments in their day-to-day lives are considered ritual on this side and culture on the other; their creative activity is considered crafts on this side and glorified as arts on the other; their verbal communication is demeaned as vernacular chatter on this side but elevated as linguistic discourse on the other; in sum, the world of the 'savage' barricaded in deed as in word from the world of the civilised. (Mamdani 1996: 61)

While race is no longer the principle exclusion defining the relationship between individuals and the state in post-colonial Africa, the legacy of a bifurcated society persists. It underpins the current division to be observed in many African states between 'citizens', who work in the core segments of the labour market, enjoy decent wages, job security, working conditions as well as social benefits and 'subjects', who occupy the marginalised, often rural, segments which are characterised by informal livelihood strategies and inadequate government provisioning.

Caste, in the Indian context, is also a 'bivalent' collectivity. It is partly rooted in economic disadvantage, the religiously sanctioned segregation and ordering of occupations, with the lowest castes associated with the most stigmatised occupations. In addition, caste embodies various forms of symbolic devaluation which serve to define lowest castes as a despised category or having no caste at all, and to legitimate various forms of injustice, including physical harm, towards them (Nayak 1994). Contact of any kind through touching, worshipping, sexual relations, dining, drinking from the same well and so on between institutionally dis-
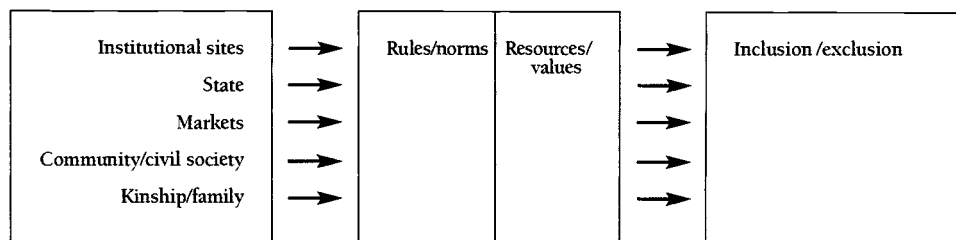
tanced castes would result in the higher of the two castes being polluted. Along with the spatial segregation of residence, with untouchables confined to the margins of villages which other villagers will not have to pass through, fears of pollution also regulate any form of physical interaction between castes.

The distinction made between economic and cultural disadvantage is thus heuristic rather than real, since the two tend to be interrelated, sometimes inseparably so. Nevertheless, different forms of injustice have their own distinctive logics and strategic responses. Where disadvantage is largely economic, disadvantaged groups are likely to mobilise around their *interests*, and to formulate their demands in terms of *redistribution*. Where disadvantage is largely valuational, mobilisation is more likely to be around the question of *identity*, and demands to be formulated in terms of *recognition*. Where disadvantage is hybrid, mobilisation will encompass material interests and social identity and demands for justice will straddle the politics of redistribution as well as of recognition. However, as Fraser (1997) points out, this leads to a potential tension. The logic of resource-based disadvantage is egalitarian. It requires redistributional remedies which would close the economic gap between the advantaged and the disadvantaged. The logic of identity-based disadvantage is diversity. It demands value to be given to groups who had been previously disparaged. For such groups, inclusion would be problematic if it entailed a denial of their identity and difference. For bivalent collectivities, the situation is likely to be particularly problematic because the logic of their situation demands both redistribution, which recognises their right to be treated equally, and recognition, which requires respect for their specific identities. We will return to the dilemma that this presents for public action in the concluding section.

3 Social Exclusion and Institutional Rules

Disadvantage results in social exclusion when the various institutional mechanisms through which resources are allocated and value assigned operate in such a way as to systematically deny particular groups of people the resources and recognition which would allow them to participate fully in the life of that society. The analysis of exclusion can

Figure 2: Institutions, access and exclusion

Institutional sites	→	Rules/norms	Resources/ values	→	Inclusion /exclusion
State	→			→	
Markets	→			→	
Community/civil society	→			→	
Kinship/family	→			→	

therefore be seen as a particular aspect of institutional analysis, one centrally concerned with the dual processes of entitlement and disentitlement. A starting point for such an analysis would be North's (1990) widely cited definition of institutions as the 'rules of the game'. Institutions distribute resources, both symbolic and material, so that institutional rules are, among other things, rules about membership and access. Institutions vary as do their rules as to who has access, on what terms and with what degree of certainty. Thus access on the basis of claims which rest on membership of kinship and community, the claims of the 'moral economy', are very different from contract-based and legally enforceable entitlements which may operate in markets and civil society, and both in turn differ from access based on the idea of rights which have an a priori and guaranteed status and are justiciable if not observed.

Principles of membership, and the forms of access they imply, are also simultaneously principles of exclusion, since they distinguish between those who can enjoy the benefits of belonging, and those who cannot. The institutional matrix in Figure 2 attempts to represent these relationships schematically. However, a two-dimensional matrix cannot capture the way in which differing principles of access intersect and overlap, rather than operating in distinct and compartmentalised ways. Access and exclusion in one institutional domain can be offset or exacerbated by access and exclusion in another: for instance, the disadvantages associated with caste or gender within the household or community may be offset by the ability of the disadvantaged category to access resources in the market place or as a result of legislation, or they may be deepened through discrimination in the market place or within the legal system. Thus, along with the

endowments that individuals or groups start out with, the norms, entitlements and rights which prevail in a society serve to systematically differentiate their access to other resources, and hence their ability to improve on their situations in the course of their lives.

The intersecting nature of different forms of exclusion and inclusion results in the segmentation of society, and in clusters of advantage and disadvantage, rather than in a simple dichotomy between inclusion and exclusion. There are various ways in which these segments can be characterised. For instance, we can think in terms of *privileged* inclusion, *secondary* inclusion, *adverse incorporation* or *problematic inclusion, self-exclusion* and *'hard-core' exclusion*. Privileged insiders are those who occupy the central positions within mainstream institutions of a society, and whose collective influence shapes the framework of rules and norms within which all the key decisions of social life are made. 'Secondary' insiders occupy a more peripheral position in relation to this group, but they nevertheless enjoy some of their privileges: for instance, workers within the formal sector may be subordinate to management but are set apart from informal sector workers because of their organised presence, job security and access to social benefits.

Then there are the more complicated categories of inclusion and exclusion. There are those whose problem has been identified as less one of exclusion, than of the problematic terms on which they have been included (Gore 1995; Wood forthcoming). One of the recurring themes in the early gender and development literature was that the problem for women was not so much that they had been excluded from development, but that they had been incorporated into it on adverse terms (Kabeer

1994). A somewhat different perspective has been recently offered by Jackson (1999) who suggests that the failure to allow for the possibility of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion has led to the treatment of women as just one more excluded category. Noting that the policy implication of a dualistic social exclusion paradigm is assimilation, she points out why such treatment is problematic:

> The excluded are brought in, included, offered access to the resources and relations of power. The poor, by inclusion for example in employment, become non-poor. Yet in gender terms what might this mean? Gender identities of women are positive, and valued by women, at the same time as they may be devalued in hegemonic ideologies. Might inclusion involve loss or transformation of these identities and what might that mean? ... Gender difference is an issue of social recognition and valuation, and not simply a social problem. (Jackson 1999: 132)

A simple insider/outsider model would also fail to accommodate those who could be described as self-excluded, who may be devalued by dominant social groups, but nevertheless prefer their outsider status because it allows them to define their own values and priorities. Thus, while nomadic pastoralist groups like the Turkana in East Africa are frequently represented as poor and marginalised, they themselves conceive of wealth largely in terms of cattle, contrasting their prosperous life with the 'poor' life of farmers and others (Broch-Due 1995, cited in White 1999).

We can also think in terms of hard-core exclusion, the product of the 'destructive synergies' between different kinds of disadvantage (Gore and Figueiredo 1997: 43). Hard-core exclusion occurs when principles of unequal access in different institutional domains reinforce, rather than offset, each other, creating situations of radical disadvantage. So while poverty is widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, variations within poor communities in the capacity to work, vulnerability, and access to social networks create considerable differentiation, with some groups more disadvantaged than others. This is evident in Hill's description of the 'interlocking array of exclusions from opportunities' which face resource-poor Hausa households in Nigeria:

> Poor men applied less manure to their farms and obtained lower yields per unit of effort; poor men were those who sold their grain immediately after harvest when prices were lowest; poor men had unremunerative types of non-farming occupations; poor men often had 'no time to farm' – their granaries being empty soon after harvest, they were obliged to pick up a living from day-to-day by working in odd jobs for others or by collective 'free goods' such as grass or firewood; poor men (being farm sellers) often owned insufficient manured farmland to get their sons to work; poor men could seldom borrow money, being considered bad risks. (cited in Gore 1994: 41–42)

Gender by itself does not translate unproblematically into exclusion. However, gender can differentiate, and exacerbate, other forms of disadvantage, and thus feed into the destructive synergies which underlie hard-core exclusion. For instance, while the stigma of leprosy operates regardless of gender, gender mediates and exacerbates it. Both Rao (1996) and Vlassof et al. (1996) found that various forms of restrictions related to personal contact operated against both women and men with leprosy, but that these restrictions were much greater in the case of women.

Female-maintained households often appear in the literature as examples of radically disadvantaged groups. My own research among Bangladeshi women factory workers identified female heads of poorer households as a 'radically disadvantaged' group. These were invariably women who had been forced to assume headship as a result of having been widowed, divorced or abandoned by husbands with no adult male child to take his place as family 'guardian' (Kabeer 2000). In a society where the adult male guardians of the family are women's key source of provision as well as protection, the loss of male guardianship leads to both economic hardship as well as social vulnerability, particularly for poorer women, whose kin are themselves too poor to give the women shelter. To illustrate what 'hard-core exclusion' might mean for a woman attempting to survive on her own in urban Bangladesh, let me cite the words of one of them.

Renu came from a poor, landless background and had been married off young to a man who worked

intermittently and beat her regularly. When it was clear that giving birth to a child was not going to change either his economic irresponsibility or his physical violence, Renu left her child in the village and came to the city to work in a garment factory. This was how she expressed the fear and anxiety that accompanied a woman on her own:

> I would not have had to work if I had a father or a husband. When I was married, even if I was not earning, at least I was with him. No one could say anything to me. Now, even if they say nothing, I feel afraid, I feel they might. That fear is always there. Don't all women have this fear inside them. I am a woman on my own; I have to go to the bazaar, I have to go here, I have to go there; men stare at me, they pass comments. Don't I feel the shame? What if someone lies about me, makes things up, what response can I make? If I lived with my parents, then no one could say anything. I am alone; wherever I go, I go alone. If someone kills me, no one will know. My mother and brothers will get to hear of it, but by then I will be dead. If I could, I would have gone back to the village; no one talks to women like that in the village. In the village, they only talk about the village.
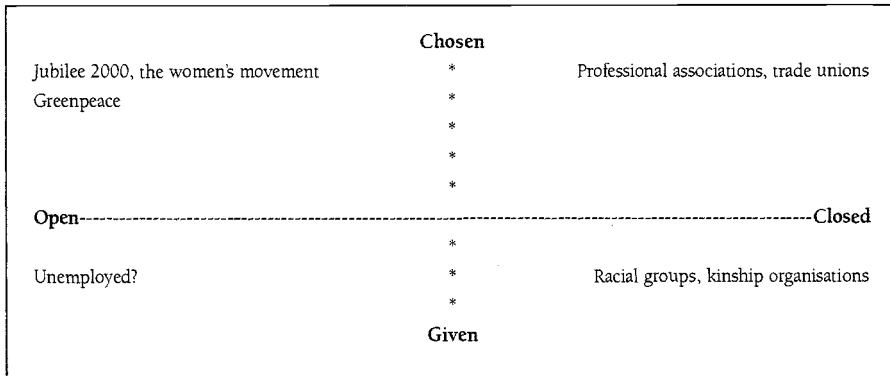
4 Social Exclusion and Group Dynamics

While institutional rules and norms can spell out particular patterns of inclusion and exclusion, they cannot *cause* them to happen. It is the social actors who make up these institutions, the collectivities they form and the interactions between them, which provide the agency behind the patterns. As Folbre (1994) points out, institutions embody different patterns of rules, norms and asset distributions, which together help to spell out people's membership of different kinds of social groups, shape their identities and define their interests. Social exclusion is a group rather than an individual phenomenon. When we talk about social exclusion, we are distinguishing those who belong to groups which enjoy access to resources and respect and those who do not. Consequently, we need to know more about these groups, what lies behind their formation, their rules of membership and how they relate to patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

Jordan (1996) has considered how economic theories of groups and collective action can be used to explain social exclusion. He cites in particular Olsen's analysis of 'distributional coalitions', groups who use membership rules and selective incentives to overcome strong disincentives against individual members acting in the collective interest. Examples include monopolies, cartels, trade unions, closed shops, and vested interest lobby groups. Formation of such coalitions allows their members to capture the 'rents' which arise as a result of successfully restraining competition between members of the group and excluding non-members from the benefits.

Complementing this analysis is Buchanan's theory of 'clubs' which analyses the provision of a range of goods through interactions which occupy an intermediate position between public and private allocation. Whereas earlier work on public choice theory focused on the differences between public and private goods,[2] Buchanan suggests that any good which could be supplied exclusively could qualify as a 'club' good through group rules which (a) made its use non-rivalrous among a limited number of members, but (b) closed it off from others whose use of it would diminish its value to members. The example used was of a swimming pool, jointly financed by club members but with a fence to avoid congestion by others who did not contribute. Jordan added the example of health insurance, technically a private good, which, as US President Clinton found out when attempting to push through his health reform package, could be turned into a 'club' good through the operation of private schemes which were able to select good risks and exclude bad ones. Such action made it difficult for non-profit organisations to supply health insurance to excluded groups at low cost, and impossible for government to mobilise political support for a redistributive national health service (Jordan 1996: 9).

The particular benefits which bring people together as a group will define the extent to which rules of membership are exclusionary. Olsen distinguishes between closed groups (those best able to achieve objectives by limiting membership on the basis of some technical, economic or social criteria), and open groups (best able to achieve objectives by expanding membership). Until racial discrimination was made illegal, whites-only golf clubs in the

Figure 3: Groups, access and exclusion

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                                            Chosen
Jubilee 2000, the women's movement             *          Professional associations, trade unions
Greenpeace                                     *
                                               *
                                               *
                                               *
Open---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------Closed
                                               *
Unemployed?                                    *          Racial groups, kinship organisations
                                               *
                                            Given
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United States operated as closed groups using multiple criteria – economic status (steep membership fees), social status (residential qualification or nomination by peers) and racial identity – to keep their membership exclusive. However, even without explicit racial restrictions on membership, prevailing links between income and residence are likely to ensure such clubs remain exclusively or predominantly white. In open groups the cost of bringing in new members tends to be low, and far outweighed by the benefits: such groups include political parties, social movements and certain categories of lobby groups.

Although Jordan recognises the importance of the cultural dimensions of exclusion, he focuses primarily on economic motivations for group formation and the possibilities for minimising economic costs or maximising economic benefits. Folbre (1994) focuses on a wider range of social inequalities. She sees group membership as not simply a matter of shared economic positions, but also shared perceptions of self in relation to society, in other words, shared identities. She distinguishes between 'given' and 'chosen' groups, and hence between given and chosen identities. A chosen group is one which individuals join and can exit of their own accord (e.g. National Organisation of Women). A 'given' group is less easily joined and abandoned, although here too there may be some room for manoeuvre. The idea of given identities points to the existence of group-based constraints on individual choice, and remind us that such

constraints are not always purely economic. Caste is a given category: people are born into their castes and, in terms of the internal logic of the system, their only hope of escaping the implications of their fate is in another life. However, with the democratisation of Indian society, caste distinctions have become more muted and a somewhat wider range of life-chances is very gradually opening up to those born into lower castes.

However, it should be borne in mind that the boundaries between 'chosen' and 'given' are not always clear-cut (see Figure 3). Folbre (1994) points to religious heritage as an example of this. There are others we might think of, groups who are constituted through no choice of their own but as a product of forces beyond their volition: sometimes the workings of the economy, as with the unemployed, sometimes life cycle events, as with female-headed households. However, while these groups have not chosen their situation, they cannot be regarded as 'given' groups because their membership is subject to change in a way that caste and race are not. Here a distinction suggested by Saith[3] between 'mutable' and 'immutable' provides a further way of classifying forms of exclusion: unemployment and female-headship differ qualitatively from race and caste as identities and potentials for exclusion because they are mutable, they do not form the basis of a lifetime of experience. Gender and race, by contrast, are immutable aspects of a person's identity and the associated discriminations are likely to be experienced at a deeper and more personal level.

Although the extent to which these different kinds of groups promote or counter social exclusion is a matter for empirical investigation, it is possible to make a number of speculative propositions. For instance, we would expect closed groups to be associated with the defence of privilege. Open groups, on the other hand, are counter-exclusionary in their logic, and more likely to feature as part of attempts to resist exclusion, to redistribute resources or correct for past inequity. Open groups are also more likely to embrace diversity. Closed groups require greater policing of their boundaries and hence function most effectively when they are internally homogenous, with clearly shared and stable interests.

The implications of given and chosen groups for patterns of access and exclusion are less clear-cut. Both are equally capable of mobilising to exclude, or challenge, exclusion. While the idea of 'choosing' to set up, or to join, a group suggests a more active pursuit of group interests than that involved in the quiescent acceptance of a given group identity, there are no a priori grounds for suggesting that this pursuit of interest will be either exclusionary or counter-exclusionary. However, it is probably the case that many more, and many more different kinds of, chosen groups flourish within democratic and open societies and that this, to some extent, undermines the existence of deeply entrenched and stable forms of oppression and exclusion which are based on given identities. Given identities do not disappear in such societies, but they may be less closely bound up with relations of inequality and exclusion.

Finally, unlike members of privileged 'chosen' groups, members of privileged 'given' groups often do not need to actively pursue their interests. They can rely on the given nature of their privilege to ensure that their interests prevail. And while it might be in the interests of members of subordinate 'given' groups to engage in collective forms of action to contest privilege, such forms of action are often hardest for them to organise. Indeed, it is their exclusion from mainstream forms of organisation, their dispersed and disorganised character, which underlies their subordinate status and vulnerability to exploitation.

Nevertheless, there are examples of subordinate given groups coming together, often against great odds, to engage in collective action in order to press for the re-evaluation of devalued identities or the redistribution of valued resources. The women's movement is an obvious example, as is the civil rights movement in the US, and the growing politicisation of caste issues in India. All of these are examples of subordinated 'given' groups coming together in collective action to claim their 'given' identities, transforming them into chosen ones, and to extend the possibilities available to them rather than submitting to socially ascribed limitations. What is also common to these forms of collective action is that they all combine the struggle for symbolic revaluation (through theatre, language, texts and so on) with a struggle over distribution of material opportunities in relation to the labour market, political office, and representation.

5 Social Exclusion and Social Practice

We have analysed social exclusion as the product of institutional rules of membership and access and looked in detail at how membership of different kinds of social groups are implicated in this process. I want to turn now to the actual practices through which group behaviour generates patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Three categories of such practices have emerged from my reading of the literature, distinguished from each other by the extent to which they are conscious or unconscious, intended or unintended, explicit or informal.

The first refers to what has been described as the *mobilisation of institutional bias* (Lukes 1974). Bachrach and Baratz define it as 'a predominant set of values, beliefs, rituals and institutional procedures ("rules of the game") that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense of others. Those who benefit are placed in a preferred position to defend and promote their vested interests' (cited in Lukes 1974: 17). Institutional bias can operate to exclude those who might threaten the status quo without conscious decisions being taken by those who represent that status quo, or indeed any awareness on their part that they are under threat.

Acker's (1990) analysis of gender hierarchies in the occupational structure in advanced industrialised contexts is an example of this. She points

out that the logic of public organisations is to create 'empty places' which are hierarchically organised on the basis of neutral characteristics such as skills, complexity and responsibility rather than as expressions of managerial values and preferences. However, while the concept of the job is presented as gender-neutral, it is premised on the notion of a disembodied worker who exists only for the job. Because women are so often given the primary responsibility for taking care of men's needs, homes and children, the male worker comes closest to this model of a disembodied worker. Thus gender does not have to be a contractual aspect of a particular position in the occupational structure for it to enter nonetheless through the way in which rules of recruitment are specified.

The result is not so much that women are totally absent from paid employment but that they are 'present differently' and unequally (Fraser 1989: 124), an example of adverse incorporation: in 'supervised' rather than 'supervisory' tasks; in unskilled rather than skilled labour; in 'feminised', often sexualised, service work or in the 'caring' professions; targets of sexual harassment; in part-time, casual rather than full-time, permanent work, and so on. They also tend to earn far less than men. As women's organisations have become more aware of the way in which organisational cultures have worked against their interests, they have sought to promote more substantive notions of equality at work, but progress has been slow and uneven.

A second form of exclusionary mechanism is that of *social closure* through which 'social collectivities seek to maximise rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles' (Parkin 1979). Unlike the mobilisation of institutional bias, social closure is usually a deliberate strategy of exclusion and virtually any group attribute – race, language, social origin, religion – can be seized on for 'the monopolisation of specific, usually economic opportunities'. The practice of social closure clearly corresponds with the closed groups we discussed earlier whose rationale for existence derived from the 'rents' which accrue as a result of restricting access to valued resources and opportunities.

Parkin uses the example of 'credentialism' to illustrate a widely utilised means of social closure through which middle-class professional groups in countries like the UK seek to limit entry into their occupations. 'Credentialism' refers to the practice of demanding entry qualifications and procedures which far outweigh the actual skills and qualifications required for a job. By protecting themselves from having to compete on the open market, credentialism allows members of various professions, through their membership of club-like associations, to enjoy salaries higher than merited on productivity grounds alone. Parkin's analysis has clear relevance to many developing country contexts. The 'credentialist' tactics practised by many public service professionals in Third World countries has obvious implications for their ability to fulfil their responsibility to the public since such tactics create artificial scarcities in the number of suitably qualified personnel to carry out the relevant functions.

The appeal of China's model of 'barefoot doctors' for a number of developing countries lay precisely in its demystification of medical expertise, its delineation of health provision into those, often preventive, aspects which could be handled by primary health care providers with some basic training, and those, often curative, aspects which would need much longer and more specialist training. However, attempts to emulate versions of this model have met with considerable resistance from those who have a strong stake in maintaining credentialist practices. In Zimbabwe, before independence, given the racial and gender segmentation of the labour market, nursing offered one of the few opportunities for professional employment for educated black women. Since independence they represent a powerful professional association which has successfully resisted attempts to increase the roles and responsibilities of sub-professional cadres. In Bangladesh, the proposed introduction of a health policy which would have diluted the power of the medical establishment by shifting many of their functions to lower-level paramedics led to powerful resistance from the medical establishment and ultimately to the fall of the government in a political movement sparked off by their protests.

A third category of mechanisms through which exclusion occurs is that of *'unruly practices'* (Fraser 1989; Gore 1993). These refer to the gap between rules and their implementation which occur in practice in all institutional domains. For instance,

contrary to the premise of legal positivism which characterises Sen's analysis of entitlements, in reality 'courts only apply the rules when they want to and ... the judiciary bends the rules to support particular class, gender or ethnic interests whilst invoking the rules to maintain an illusion of impartiality' (Gore 1993: 443). Similarly, one cannot assume that publicly-provided goods and services will be allocated strictly according to bureaucratic or administrative rules. In reality, there are likely to be various unofficial norms which will shape actual provision and will mediate people's ability to gain access to goods to which they are officially entitled.

Exclusionary outcomes in the public sector frequently take the form of unruly practices because of the particular character of public provisioning as institutional practice. Private corporations and employers are primarily interested in profit maximisation; they do not generally consider their role to be meeting social need or overcoming social exclusion. If they practice discrimination, it is likely to be only as long as it does not interfere too radically with their pursuit of profit. By contrast, public service providers in the social sectors are officially contracted to meet social need and address social exclusion within the community. Unruly practices as mechanisms of social exclusion are much more likely to apply in the public sector precisely because the official rules dictate otherwise.

Manifestations of unruly practice are evident in a number of studies of health service delivery. Lucas and Nuwagaba (1999) found health providers in rural Uganda were generally viewed with suspicion rather than trust because of various forms of illicit practices. The demand by health workers for illicit forms of payments before a patient could be seen was reported as a long-standing practice which pre-dated the recent official introduction of user-charges. People in the community complained that the quality of care at public facilities depended on the amount offered for treatment. Booth *et al.* (1995) reported on the widespread failure of health service providers in Zambia to inform the public that there were grounds for exemption from newly introduced user charges. As a result, poorer patients with serious illnesses who felt that they could not afford to pay simply waited at home to die.

Studies of the delivery of public education in the Indian context also throw up many examples of how the organisation of a service interacts with the existence of formal and informal interest groups, both within the system and outside it, in determining issues of access and quality (PROBE Team 1999). Perverse forms of teacher behaviour included widespread absenteeism, often to work on other economic activities, drunkenness during schools hours and pressure on pupils to supply them with liquor, and using children to run errands and do domestic chores for them. In addition, teachers also acted directly as agents of exclusion. There were still villages where *dalit* (scheduled caste) children sat separately from others, or sat on the floor while the rest sat on benches. Discrimination also took other more hidden forms. Higher caste teachers considered *dalit* children 'uneducable', ignored them, made them feel unintelligent and inferior and used them for menial chores. Harassment from upper caste children was also common.

As the PROBE report points out, the fact that teachers are a powerful organised group in India and wielded considerable political clout partly explained why they could not be held to account by parents. Teachers' unions have been extremely active around the issues of salaries and working conditions. While this is understandable, given the nature of trade unions as social organisations, they have seldom used their political power in ways that might further the cause of education. The asymmetry of power between what, in terms of the analysis in this article, is essentially a closed and chosen organisation, operating to further the interests of its members, and the dispersed and generally unorganised pupils and parents, who they are supposed to serve, may help to explain why the educational system in India has failed to meet its stated goals of universal primary education and why it is the children of poor and socially excluded groups who have been most excluded from its efforts.

6 Conclusion: Social Exclusion and Social Policy Analysis

A social exclusion perspective helps to highlight a particular set of challenges for those concerned with making policy. The rationale for social policy lies in the recognition that neither individual need

nor the collective good can be left solely to private initiative and that there is a case for purposive public action to be taken to ensure that both are addressed and reconciled as far as possible. The needs of excluded groups are particularly likely to be overlooked or ignored, in the absence of such purposive effort, since, almost by definition, their excluded status is the product of the asymmetrical workings of the mainstream. Yet the persistence of social exclusion, and the social inequalities which underpin it, has profound implications for the collective good. In symbolic terms, it provides a revealing barometer of a society's willingness to tolerate deprivation and discrimination in its midst. More pragmatically, to continue to overlook and ignore the needs of the excluded, and their sense of exclusion, is likely to generate a range of unruly practices on their part, from petty crime to organised violence to civil war, activities with negative implications for the security, safety and peace of mind of all sections of society.

The remit of social policy therefore has to encompass the causes and consequences of social exclusion in the past, the present and the future. Many societies have inherited long-established patterns of discrimination and exclusion. Most now have legislation barring overt forms of discrimination; some go further in seeking to compensate for the effects of past exclusion: reservations for women and members of scheduled castes in public sector employment and local government in India is one example. In addition, social policy also has to struggle with the challenge of dealing with new forms of exclusion and insecurity which are thrown up by the vagaries of markets which have become increasingly unregulated. The recent financial crisis in East Asia has drawn attention to the need for safety nets to protect livelihoods in times of crisis.

Social policy also has to be forward-thinking in its attempts to overcome exclusion, anticipating the problems of the future rather than confining itself to the immediate and the short term. Given the high rates of time preference which appear to characterise those whose livelihoods are precarious, and their tendency to prioritise the immediate future, they are least likely to express a preference for long-term investments. Social policy can play a role here in countering potential adverse effects. Education, for example, may not be perceived as a need by excluded groups who have no reason to believe that it is worth the sacrifice of current income or consumption. Yet the decision to educate children today should not be based on what the present looks like to their parents, but to prepare them for a world that may not yet have come into existence, and for opportunities that their parents could not imagine. The absence of at least basic education would put the children of the poor at a much greater disadvantage when they grow up than it did their parents, and would perpetuate the inter-generational transmission of disadvantage.

To sum up, therefore, a social exclusion perspective opens up a larger and more complex domain of disadvantage for policy-makers to grapple with than does the conventional focus on poverty. It adds concerns with social inequality to longstanding concerns with poverty and it draws attention to the importance of respect and recognition in strategies for addressing disadvantage, along with more conventional preoccupations with the technicalities of needs identification and service delivery. In addition, however, a social exclusion perspective can also help to promote a more self-reflective role in the policy domain by drawing attention to the operation of social policy as a mechanism of exclusion itself.

Responsibility for social policy has traditionally rested with the state and, as Barbara Harriss-White (1995) points out, the state remains the only institution with the capacity to side-step disempowering market and customary social relations. With evidence that older systems of intra-household and community networks of support are increasingly under strain and that markets cannot be relied on to achieve equitable access, (Devereux 1999; Vasavi 1999) the state's ability to take up, or to ensure, responsive action is clearly vital. In practice, however, the state has not only often failed to address problems of poverty, exclusion and social injustice, but also actively served to reinforce them.

Widespread evidence of institutional bias and unruly practices draws attention to the need for improved governance at the meso-level. It is important to remember that, whatever the claims made for its efficiency and effectiveness, the private sector has never been renowned for its adherence to such collective goals as equity, social justice or social

inclusion. To rely primarily or solely on market forces in the distribution of resources which contribute to meeting these goals would clearly jeopardise their achievement. An alternative route might be to import aspects of private sector practice into the public sector without undermining its overall collective mission. This has been the main rationale for many of the changes collectively referred to as new forms of public management. But the 'vision' of social justice and good governance which informs attempts to reform the public sector will clearly play an important role in shaping the direction that such reforms take. And it has been argued that in stressing the efficiency and choice aspects of public sector reform, not enough attention has been paid to the other dimensions of the new public management (NPM) agenda: trust, accountability and transparency (Mackintosh 1997). New forms of public management need to combine a vision of service and accountability to the public they are intended to serve along with the practical incentives which would operationalise this vision in the most effective and cost-efficient ways.

Finally, let me return to the policy dilemma highlighted by Fraser (1997) in her discussion of the bivalent forms of exclusion. Versions of this dilemma have also been noted by others. Silver (1977), for instance, notes that a social exclusion perspective highlights the tension between individual rights and the need and justification for 'group' rights. Iris Young (1990) also points to the tension between universality as generality, an emphasis on what citizens share, and universality as equality of treatment, which may require a differentiated notion of citizenship. Experience has shown that simply bestowing equal rights based on some universalist notion of citizenship does not guarantee equal agency, opportunity, influence or outcome.

In her attempt to resolve this dilemma, Fraser (1997) suggests a distinction between 'affirmative' and 'transformative' remedies for injustice. Affirmative remedies are those which aim at correcting for the inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying institutional framework which gave rise to them, while transformative remedies aim to correct for

inequity by restructuring the underlying framework. Affirmative remedies for cultural injustice are associated with revaluing unjustly devalued identities but leaving intact the contents of their identities, and group differentiations which underlie them. Transformative remedies would seek to *destabilise* existing group identities and differentiations, raising not only the self-esteem of currently devalued groups, but also changing *everyone's* sense of self. Affirmative remedies for economic injustice seek to raise the consumption share of the economically disadvantaged through special programmes of assistance, but leave untouched the system of production which gave rise to disadvantage. They can end up stigmatising the disadvantaged, adding the 'insult of misrecognition to the injury of deprivation' (Fraser 1997: 27). Transformative remedies, on the other hand, would seek to challenge the hegemony of market forces, to destabilise the distinction between economic growth and social welfare through the adoption of macro-economic policies aimed at creating full employment, steeply progressive taxation, significant public and/or collective ownership, a large non-market public sector, democratic decision-making about basic socio-economic priorities and universalist social-welfare programmes (Fraser 1997: 26).

Affirmative approaches to economic and social injustice pull in different directions, and it is difficult to reconcile the demands of similar treatment implied by economic injustice with the demands for differentiated treatment implied by cultural injustice. By contrast, there is an internal coherence between transformative approaches to economic and cultural injustice since both move away from the politics of special group treatment, and towards a more consistent notion of universality. Clearly, the specific policies that Fraser (1997) suggests are not high on the development agenda today and, indeed, border on the utopian in the present 'post-socialist' climate. Nevertheless, Fraser's arguments remind us that a radical social policy has the potential for transcending the long-established, but essentially artificial, distinction between the economic and social aspects of our lives, by turning itself into a new way of thinking about how economies are managed, in whose interests and by whom.

Notes

1. Beall and Clert (2000) classify categories of social exclusion in terms of 'who you are' and 'where you are from'. The approach adopted here can be seen as focusing on a continuum of injustice stretching from 'what you have' to 'what you are'.

2. According to public choice theory, whether goods should be distributed by private efforts or not depends on the costs of excluding others. If it is possible, and goods are divisible enough, private property rights allow individuals to decide how much to produce and consume. If it is difficult to exclude others or the good can be consumed without depleting supplies, private property does not develop and collective or political decision-making has to come into play.

3. Comment made by Ashwani Saith at a seminar presentation of this paper at the ISS, the Hague, 1 May 2000.

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