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Concepts of poverty and social exclusion in Europe

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Abstract

This paper provides a critical analysis of the concepts of poverty and social exclusion in three parts. First, it examines the relationship between poverty and social exclusion, a distinction that has been the subject of analysis, debate and controversy. Second, the concepts of poverty and social exclusion as used in the European policy discourse are analysed, and how changes in terminology, links to the economic growth agenda, and emphasis on employment as a response can be noticed. The recognition of the 'territorial dimension' of poverty and social exclusion has been an increasingly important feature of EU discourse and actions. Third, the paper explores the inherent territoriality of poverty and social exclusion, which has paved the way for localised spatial responses. The authors argue that economic concerns have triggered a continuous tendency to narrow down the focus of definition and action, in order to offer clarity of scope to researchers and policy makers, but that such narrowing could also undermine our ability to address a complex multi-dimensional process. In particular, prioritising economic dimensions to the neglect of the other aspects of social exclusion is problematic in dealing with major social problems.

The global economic crisis of 2007-8 has had a major impact on Europe. As expressed by the European Commission, "The crisis has wiped out years of economic and social progress" (EC, 2010c, p.5). The problems of social exclusion and poverty, which had persisted even in the best of times, have come back to the centre stage with a much higher magnitude and urgency. In this paper, we offer a critical analysis of the concepts of poverty and social exclusion in three parts. First we examine the relationship between poverty and social exclusion, a distinction that has puzzled the academic researchers and policy makers alike. This paves the way for an analysis in section 2 of the concepts of poverty and social exclusion as used in the European policy discourse, and how changes in terminology, links to the economic growth agenda, and emphasis on employment as a response can be noticed. One finding is that the recognition of the 'territorial dimension' of poverty and social exclusion is a new and important feature of EU discourse and actions. Therefore, in section 3, we explore the inherent territoriality of poverty and social exclusion, which has paved the way for localised spatial responses. We argue that economic concerns have triggered a continuous tendency to narrow down the focus of definition and action, in order to allow researchers and policy makers a clarity of scope, but such narrowing could also undermine our ability to address a complex multi-dimensional process. In particular, prioritising economic dimensions to the neglect of other aspects of social exclusion is problematic in dealing with major social problems.

1. Poverty and social exclusion
The fuzzy boundaries between the concepts of 'poverty' and 'social exclusion' have generated different analytical responses: Some commentators describe them as 'chaotic' concepts (Samers, 1998), some argue forcefully for keeping them distinctive, and others prefer to integrate them into a single 'poverty and social exclusion' concept.

Poverty

Research into poverty has a long history, exemplified by the seminal work of Booth and Rowntree who studied poverty in England in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Ruggeri Laderchi et al, 2003). Both defined poverty as being more than simply lacking financial resources: adverse living conditions were also an important feature. A lack of financial resources was accompanied by poor health and housing, a lack of education and few services (Shucksmith, 2012).

Poverty is a widely-used term, but one that is given many meanings: the definition of poverty is often contested and the concept has evolved and changed over time (Pantazis et al, 2006, p.14). Misturelli and Heffernan's discourse analysis (2010) of 159 documents focusing on poverty in developing countries demonstrated how usage differed over time and between stakeholder groups, and how many different constructions of the problem were to be found under the rubric of 'poverty'. Pragmatically, Van den Bosch claims that "it cannot be defined in any way one likes" and goes on to propose the "everyday meaning of the word" as most appropriate (quoted in Veit-Wilson, 2006, p. 318). Veit-Wilson sees this customary meaning as "the enforced lack of resources demonstrably needed for respect and inclusion" (ibid, p.318). However, the UN uses a different, but also commonly accepted, definition of poverty as "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information" (United Nations, 1995, p.57).

The difference between these two 'everyday' meanings demonstrates how normative constructions of poverty are, even in academic debate; we are urged to recognise poverty research as an "inescapably political act" (O'Connor, 2001, p.12). The UN uses an absolute poverty definition which serves to highlight the plight of those in parts of the world where such catastrophes as famine and drought have disastrous consequences. In these absolute terms, the UN claims poverty hardly exists in Europe. However, European governments and their people are also concerned about inequalities *within* their states and *within* Europe, and therefore use a relative definition of poverty where the norms of each society are important, hence the emphasis of many authors on the poor not only having material resources but that these should be at a level that allows them to enjoy the everyday lifestyles of the majority in their society (e.g., Veit-Wilson, 2006; Jonkaryte and Stankuniene, 2003; Trumm, 2011).

While definitions of poverty typically refer to 'a lack of resources', these are commonly operationalized in research as a lack of income or a lack of consumption. For some commentators, this reflects a belief that the "cure for this ordinary poverty is high income" (Veit-Wilson, 2006 p.319). For others the choice of income is thought to be driven by pragmatism: income data is regularly collected and analysed by governments (Levitas, 2006) and is therefore available to be used as a proxy for wider aspects of welfare and poverty (Ruggeri Laderchi et al, 2003). In some European countries, the approach is to rely more on data about those who apply to the state for social assistance (e.g., Golinowska, 2002). Relative poverty as a lack of income resource is how official statistics across Europe have operationalised an 'at-risk-of-poverty-rate', defined as an income below 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers). An alternative approach to identifying levels of relative poverty is to draw up benchmarks of what are perceived as basic necessities for living a normal life; in Europe these typically refer to activities such as having a week's holiday, and the quality of basic resources such as food, rather than simply whether or not a person has enough basic resources to survive. The relative poverty of individuals is then monitored against these benchmarks.

The use of relative poverty indicators by the EU obstructs comparisons between Member States and makes it hard to establish which countries have the most people in 'absolute' poverty (Jeheol-Gijsbers and Vrooman, 2007). High income countries like Luxembourg sometimes find discourses of relative poverty inappropriate; a speech by the Prime Minister (Ministere de la Famille et d l'integration, 2010)

differentiated between the statistical at-risk-of poverty measure for the EU and 'real poverty', suggesting the former should be noted, but only the latter should be addressed.

The tendency to reduce poverty to income deprivation is critiqued/resisted by a number of commentators. Naude et al (2009) explain how in development studies poverty was initially associated exclusively with adequate income (or consumption) but is now understood as a multidimensional concept. Ruggeri Laderchi et al (2003) discuss a number of definitions of poverty, only one of which is the monetary approach. Within this they outline Sen's capability approach, used as the basis for the UN Human Development Index, which rejects the monetary approach's use of income as a proxy for wellbeing and instead focuses on "the freedom of individuals to live lives that are valued" (p.253). They also include the concept of social exclusion (discussed in more detail later in this paper) in their approaches to studying poverty, particularly its focus on processes of becoming poor and how it makes a social perspective central. For Wagle (2002), the differences between income, capabilities and social exclusion approaches can be explained as the prominence of different social science disciplines: economics, social psychology, and sociology/anthropology respectively. Townsend himself, who is often held to be instrumental in how the EU conceptualises poverty (Shucksmith, 2012), in fact defines people as in poverty when their relative lack of resources means that they are "in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities" (quoted in Levitas 2006, p.125) so going well beyond a narrow 'income' definition.

A focus on poverty and social inequality is perceived as an Anglo-Saxon preoccupation (Jehoel-Gijsbers and Vrooman, 2007) and is sometimes associated with Marxist thought, although there is also a strong connection to Christianity, with both Rowntree and Booth having strong religious convictions. In this, poverty and inequality are seen as inevitably produced by capitalist societies: in particular, social inequality is "a spur to greater efforts on the part of wage and salary earners" (Peet, 1975 p.566) and capitalist economies need an 'industrial reserve army', "a pool of poor people who can be used and discarded at the capitalist's will" (p.567). However, according to Marxist theory, the ruling class in capitalist societies also needs consumers (this is also the basis of Keynesian economics), so it has a concern about how many people are poor and support the idea that some form of welfare system is in place. The concern with relative income poverty within Member States is a relatively new concept for the post-socialist countries, which historically had had a more equalised income distribution. 'Poverty' did exist under the old regimes, but related not to income, but to life cycle stages, such as being elderly (Vecernik, 2004).

Social Exclusion
The concept 'social exclusion', although having "alternative, shifting and contested meanings" (Levitas, 2006, p. 125) is indisputably associated in the literature with Durkheim's work on how social cohesion and integration can be achieved. In this, cultural integration is important alongside the provision of material benefits (Levitas, 1996). The term 'social exclusion' is of recent origin (Samers, 1998), and generally attributed to French discourse from the 1960s onwards, and associated with the work of Lenoir (1974). Swiss researchers have more recently been drawing on the concepts and theories of Foucault, Luhmann, Bourdieu and Castells to develop the inclusion and exclusion concept further (Bohn, 2008; Windolf, 2001; Stichweh, 2009).

Silver (1994) identifies three paradigms of social exclusion: solidarity; specialisation; and monopoly. "In the solidarity paradigm …. exclusion is the breakdown of a social bond between the individual and society that is cultural and moral, rather than economically interested" (p.570). Here the focus is on the relationship between individual and society. Under the 'specialisation' paradigm, exclusion is caused by relationships between individuals and the scope for discrimination within the sphere of civil society. The 'monopoly' paradigm stresses how "powerful groups, often displaying distinctive cultural identities and institutions, restrict the access of outsiders to valued resources" (ibid).

Silver's paradigms stress a number of important facets to the concept of social exclusion: that it is *relational*, with the power in the relationship resting with the 'included'; that the relationships exist at a number of societal levels (such as with society, with institutions, with powerful groups, with individuals); that social and cultural factors are at least as important as economic ones. Such aspects of social exclusion are articulated by many commentators (e.g. Atkinson, 1998; Samers, 1998). The emphasis placed on the *dynamics* of the process by which people/groups become excluded, rather than simply on describing the outcome is stressed by many commentators (e.g., Room, 1999; Einasto, 2002; Havasi, 2002). The *multifaceted* and cumulative nature of social exclusion is another dominant theme in definitions in the literature (e.g., Room, 1999; Beland, 2007; Trbanc, 2001; Szalai, 2002). Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) elaborate upon what Silver called the 'solidarity' paradigm, outlining how solidarity could be *within* groups or could be *societal* solidarity and how these two types are likely to conflict.

Conceptualisations of social exclusion stress that the power relationships are often not between individuals: 'institutionalised discrimination' (Mignione, 1997) is a key cause of exclusion. For Madanipour (2011, p.189), exclusion is "an institutionalized form of controlling access: to places, to activities, to resources and information". Atkinson and Davoudi (2000, p.438) describe the breadth of what might be included as institutionalised exclusion by drawing on the work of the Irish Poverty 3 researchers and the Observatory on National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion: exclusion from the democratic and legal system; exclusion from the labour market; exclusion from the welfare system; exclusion from the family and community system.

A further refinement of this analysis has been produced by Reimer (2004) and Philip and Shucksmith (2003) with the processes of social inclusion/exclusion portrayed as operating through four social systems: market relations, or private systems; bureaucratic relations, or state administrative systems; associative relations, i.e., collective action processes based on shared interests; and communal relations, based on shared identity, among family and friends networks. These "represent four relatively coherent ways in which people organise their relationships to accomplish tasks, legitimise their actions, allocated resources, and structure their interactions. Exclusion and inclusion can occur with respect to any or all of these types of relationships, simultaneously creating both distributional and relational manifestations of the problem" (ibid, p.78). One's sense of belonging in society, as well as one's purchase on resources, depends on all these systems. When combined, these forms of exclusion can create an acute form of social exclusion which keeps the excluded at the very margins of the society, a phenomenon all too often marked by a clear spatial manifestation in deprived inner city or peripheral urban areas (Madanipour, 2012a).

Reimer's systems draws attention to how the institutions of exclusion can be at a variety of levels (Jehoel-Gijsber and Vrooman, 2007), from the capitalist system of labour markets down to the micro-level of the family and community. People may be excluded when one or more systems that should guarantee the social integration of the individual or household breaks down or malfunctions (Berghman, 1995); Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) draw attention to the 'chain reaction' of breakdowns. The lists of social systems also highlight how institutions of the state are implicated in exclusionary processes. While some commentators perceive these as unintended consequences, for O'Brien and Penna (2008) this "is not a by-product of system malfunction, it is woven into the fabric of those institutions … that are offered as the means to resolve the problem of exclusion" (p.89).

Discourses of social exclusion are often constructed in contrast to poverty discourses (e.g., Shucksmith and Chapman, 1998; Jehoel-Gijsber and Vrooman, 2007; Trbanc,2001; Paas, 2003) which help to make the conceptual differences clearer. While the notion of poverty is primarily distributional, the concept of social exclusion focuses primarily on relational issues (detachment from labour markets, low participation, social isolation and especially the exercise of power). It is less about the 'victims' and more about the processes which cause exclusion. It includes but goes

beyond income levels or access to services such as health, education and housing. Economic, political, and cultural arena are recognised as the broad spheres of social life in which social inclusion and exclusion are manifested and, therefore can be analysed and understood (Madanipour e al, 2003).

Shucksmith and Chapman (1998) endorse Berghman's argument, defining poverty as "an outcome, denoting an inability to share in the everyday lifestyles of the majority because of a lack of resources (often taken to be disposable income)", as distinguishable from social exclusion which is "a multi-dimensional, dynamic concept which refers to a breakdown or malfunctioning of the major societal systems that should guarantee social integration of the individual or household. It implies a focus not only on 'victims' but also on the system failures" (p.230). In a similar vein, Jehoel-Gijsber and Vrooman (2007), in their discussion of distinctions made in the literature between poverty and social exclusion, list static condition vs dynamic process; absolute vs relative concept; unidimensional vs multidimensional disadvantage; distributional vs relational focus; and endogenous vs exogenous agency (pp.13-14).

What it is that people are excluded from is often conceptualised at a high and abstract level, e.g., normal citizenship (Mignione, 1997), and normal living patterns of the mainstream society (Room, 1995). Silver (1994) ponders on a more operationalisable listing, and in so doing demonstrates the range of exclusions that might occur: "a livelihood; secure, permanent employment; earnings; property, credit or land; housing; the minimal or prevailing consumption level; education, skills and cultural capital; the benefits provided by the welfare state; citizenship and equality before the law; participation in the democratic process; public goods; the nation or the dominant race; the family and sociability; humane treatment; respect, personal fulfilment, understanding" (p.541). Burchardt et al (2002) suggests that this is one way of thinking about social exclusion; the other is to focus on the relatively small groups whose problems are extreme or intractable.

However, there is no single conceptualisation of the people who are socially excluded. Apart from difficulties with agreeing on what terms like 'normal citizenship' mean , Silver (1994) demonstrates how those identified as excluded in French discourses has shifted over time, in particular as a response to the prominent social problems at each point in time. Those identified by Lenoir (1974), the 'founding father' of the French discourse, perhaps best reflects Burchardt et al's proposed approach of thinking of small groups with intractable problems. His groups included suicidal people, multi-problem households, abused children, drug addicts, and delinquents. The conceptualisation of social exclusion as a process rather than an outcome (Madanipour et al, 2003) also mitigates against viewing people as 'excluded' in an absolute sense. Commentators prefer to talk about people who are 'at risk' of exclusion. This is usually couched in terms of identifiable social groupings which typically include significant numbers of individuals at risk of social exclusion, the risk increasing with the overlay of groupings. For example, in post-Socialist countries, the groups at risk of social exclusion often include: the Roma population, people living in small villages, people with disabilities and families with children (Trbanc, 2001; Szalai, 2002). Helping such marginalised groups out of exclusion necessitates understanding the processes of exclusion and inclusion for each separate group (ibid).

Society's and individuals' beliefs about the responsibility for social exclusion tend to two extremes. One view is that individuals bring it upon themselves. The 'underclass' approach views the excluded as deviants from the moral and cultural norms of society, [and] exhibiting a 'dependency culture' (Philip and Shucksmith, 2003, p.463). In this approach, people are blamed for their own poverty and/or social exclusion, although little empirical support has been found for underclass explanations (Shucksmith and Schafft 2012). An alternative view highlights "the role of institutions and systems, or perhaps of more powerful individuals and groups in society" (Shucksmith et al, 2006 p.680) in causing exclusion.

Poverty and Social Exclusion
Concepts of both poverty and social exclusion, then, are very fuzzy and overlapping. Although some authors have identified distinctions between them (see Shucksmith and Chapman, 1998 and Jehoel-Gijsber and Vrooman, 2007 above), there are also those who critique these distinctions. Jehoel-Gijsber and Vrooman (2007) in their review of the literature, provide many examples of the critiques. For instance, how social exclusion is not only a dynamic process, but can be an outcome of historical developments, an end state, and how research into poverty can focus on the process of becoming poor or moving out of poverty. How poverty is often conceptualised in much broader terms than simply income poverty has already been rehearsed in the section on poverty above.

However, much of the conventional wisdom is that social exclusion is a broader concept than poverty, and incorporates the material deprivations associated with poverty (see for example, Silver's list above of what people might be excluded from (Silver, 1994)). In this context, the separate concept of 'poverty' could be seen as rather redundant: it can either be subsumed under a 'social exclusion' heading, or dealt with as part of composite 'poverty and social exclusion'. In the policy circles of some parts of the EU, this would appear to be the approach taken. In Belgium, for example, a single cohesive concept has been developed (Vranken 2010) in which poverty is described as "a network of forms of social exclusion that extends over several areas of individual and collective existence. It separates the poor from the generally accepted modes of existence in society, creating a gap that poor people are unable to bridge on their own". The EU itself has produced a single concept of 'poverty and social exclusion' which again avoids the need to differentiate between the two overlapping terms, or to resolve the lack of consensus over their relationship one with the other (Andriani and Karyampas, 2010).

However, in some Member States the distinction between poverty and social exclusion is stressed by academics (e.g., in Germany and the Netherlands see Bohnke, 2001; Haussermann and Kronauer, 2009; Vrooman and Hoff, 2004). There are also a number of commentators who are insistent that they should be conceptualised separately. For example, for Beland (2007) social exclusion is "based on a horizontal, spatial metaphor" (p.127) with people moving in or out of mainstream society; poverty is based on a "vertical model of inequality … [and people move] 'up' or 'down' the class or the income distribution structure" (Ibid). For O'Brien and Penna (2008), social inclusion/exclusion is "the extent to which individuals are (or are not) incorporated within a moral and political community" (p.85) which is totally distinct from the economic distributional issues of poverty. There is concern that "those who focus on social exclusion excessively underscore social orders and institutions, thereby downplaying the role of one's economic and individual capacities" (Wagle, 2002, p.161). Class politics are the issue for Samers (1998): "has the term social exclusion (a bourgeois term?) served to supplant a radical/working class discourse?" (p.128). For Veit-Wilson (2002), in modern states "adequate income is the clean water of poverty policy" p.543). The identification of some people as excluded "carries an implicit notion that all but a few are included in a cohesive society undifferentiated by class or social division" (Shucksmith, 2012, p.4). The literature from post-Socialist countries suggests the need to assess them separately because the resolution of such exclusionary factors as unemployment and homelessness is so much more long term than the distributional problems of (income) poverty (Szalai, 2002). Both concepts, meanwhile are criticised for focusing on a narrow social group and failing to address wider social inequalities and the processes underlying these, whereas attention should be paid to "a more fluid, reflexive notion of class as manifested in culture, identities, lifestyles and everyday life" (Shucksmith, 2012, p.6).

Both poverty and social exclusion are persistent problems in European society. While some people move in and out of poverty and social exclusion, others get caught up by cumulative and cyclical interdependencies (Bradshaw, 2006) and poverty and social exclusion is passed from generation to generation (Jamet, 2007; Rodrigues et al, 1999). In some discourses, people can become socialised

into what Oscar Lewis (1959) termed a 'culture of poverty', often associated with 'the underclass'. This is something of a paradox in terms of exclusion: these people, it is argued, are excluded from mainstream society, but thoroughly integrated in their community/underclass.

As a pan-European concept, some consideration should be given to the geography of conceptualisations. As has already been mentioned, the origins of the poverty discourse are Anglo-Saxon, and the origins of the social exclusion discourse are French. However, a review of the literature from different European countries (David, 2005) found an almost total absence of conceptual differences between Member States. Far more important to conceptualisations were the needs and agendas of the commissioning institutions, the aim of the study and the position of the researcher. A review of literature for Italy demonstrates the differences of approach to the definition of poverty by researchers within the same country – a monetary approach (either income or consumption) (e.g., Addabo, 2000; Brandolini et al, 2001; Franco et al, 2008) is critiqued by other Italian academics, who use a multidimensional approach (e.g., Mendola and De Cantis, 2004; Quintano et al, 2004).

Poverty and social exclusion are closely related, but nevertheless they are distinct phenomena. Poverty tends to focus on the conditions of individuals and households, while the starting point of social exclusion is society as a whole. Poverty focuses on distributional issues, while social exclusion attends to relational issues. Within a policy context, at least, poverty is usually considered a relatively narrow income-based concept, which is amenable to quantification and definition according to specific benchmarks. The major issue for research is how to address the comparability issue associated with relative poverty being defined in national contexts, and in this respect two approaches have emerged in the literature (Bradshaw and Mayhew 2011) – a re-specification of the relative poverty definition, using an EU-wide benchmark based on a budget standard; and a deprivation approach based on the ability to afford a basket of 'essentials'. Social exclusion, on the other hand, is a multi-dimensional process, defined according to context, and often assessed in more qualitative ways. Measurement is made the more difficult by the fact that social exclusion is often a process rather than simply a state at a point in time: it refers to both processes and consequent situations (EC 1992, 8). Poverty and social exclusion are not necessarily associated or co-located, since social exclusion is not always a function of low income. Finding quantifiable indicators of social exclusion as a relational and multidimensional process will therefore be a major challenge.

2. Concepts of poverty and social exclusion in European policy discourse

Elaboration of poverty and social exclusion policies in the EU is a major exercise. As the EU has no formal 'competence' over social policy, the policies of each member state are also pivotal. Nor do policies associated with poverty and social exclusion reside in a single policy domain of the EU: they are closely associated with economic competitiveness policies and with the cohesion policies of the EU. Most poverty and social exclusion policy is reliant for implementation by the Member States. Here different approaches to the appropriate way to govern lead to different types of welfare regimes (Esping Andersen, 1990; Arts and Gelissen,2002). These may influence the proportion of GDP that each country assigns to its welfare system, but this is also likely to be influenced by the comparatively low level of GDP per head available in some Member States.

Common EU objectives for social inclusion were agreed in December 2000 in Nice as: facilitate participation in employment and access by all to resources, rights, goods and services; prevent risk of exclusion; help the most vulnerable; and mobilise all relevant bodies. What can we understand from the various stages of EU's social policy development about how poverty and social exclusion are conceptualised? There are three significant themes in policy analyses: First, whether or not the changes in terminology from poverty to social exclusion (and back again?) are significant changes in conceptualisations; second, about the linking of poverty and social exclusion with an economic growth

agenda; and third, about the development of 'active inclusion' through employment as the main pathway out of exclusion.

Changes in terminology

Early manifestations of EU Social Policy addressed 'poverty' (e.g., early poverty programmes). From the start, when Ireland first proposed an anti-poverty programme in 1972, Germany resisted any EU action to address poverty, fearing that they would bear the cost of expenditure and that this would set a precedent "in committing the Community to the well-being of a social group defined by reference to their conditions of life, rather than their relationship to the labour market, the limit of the existing mandate of the European institutions in social policy" (Room 2010, 9). Nevertheless a small pilot grew during the 1970s and 1980s into an anti-poverty programme of action-research, handicapped by inherent tensions which have been elaborated by numerous authors (Room 2010, Bauer 2002). The redirection of this discourse from poverty to social exclusion is mainly attributed to the Delors presidency (from 1985 to 1994) and its concern for social inclusion (Ferrera et al, 2002) and to British and German sensibilities around the idea that poverty existed in their countries. Meanwhile, the growing pressure to develop a social dimension to EU policies led by 1989 to the Council of Ministers Resolution on combating social exclusion, which brought these issues one step closer to the main EU policy agenda. Subsequently, "social exclusion became a formal concern of EU policy under the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997. At least as important, however, was the Lisbon process, the so-called 'open method of coordination' (OMC), which developed during 2000, and which took policies for social inclusion as a major point of reference" (Room 2010, 16).

Indeed, in 2000, "the European Council made a commitment to making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and to deploy a novel policy coordination technique—the OMC—to that end. This attention towards issues of poverty formed the social strand of the EU's overarching 'Lisbon strategy' launched in 2000, aiming to reconcile economic and employment objectives— 'competitiveness' and 'more and better jobs'—with concerns about social cohesion and social protection. Rather than transferring legislative competence to the EU in areas of social welfare, the EU sought to Europeanize domestic social policies through policy coordination" (Armstrong 2010, 2-3). Through a variety of mechanisms, such as indicators and targets, "the process of coordination does not impose a harmonized European solution on Member States but rather encourages a process by which states open their domestic systems of strategy-formation and policy-making to a range of influences from both within and without the state" (ibid, 3). The apparent incoherence of European policy terminology is therefore no accident (Copeland and Daly 2012; Peña-Casas R. 2012). Ferrera et al (2002) agree that the ambiguity of EU social policy is strategic: "the OMC can be considered one of those 'framing' mechanisms of Europeanisation that Radaelli (2000) deems to be 'subtle yet powerful' insofar as they are potential channels of 'cognitive convergence' between domestic policymakers" (p.230) and so can be interpreted differently by each Member State.

There was clearly a shift in nomenclature from poverty to social exclusion in the 1990s. In part this was a semantic shift (Room 2010), reflecting different national political perspectives as we have seen. "Social exclusion appeared to offer a less emotive, perhaps less understood and therefore less politically contentious alternative concept to poverty" (Atkinson and Davoudi, 2000, p.436). Levitas (2006) has also expressed scepticism on these grounds. Nevertheless, this was also a shift of some substance. For Room (1995) it signified a shift from the focus on distributional issues of poverty to a "focus primarily on relational issues, in other words, inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power" (p.5). Commissioned research of the European Commission (1998) produced a framework of the causal factors that lead to social exclusion (a very different list from the causes of poverty):

1. *Social*: e.g., family, labour market, neighbourhood, society (global participation);
2. *Economic*: e.g., resources (wages, social transfers, savings, assets), goods and services;

3. *Institutional:* e.g., justice, education, health, political rights, bureaucracy;
4. *Territorial:* e.g., demographic (migration), accessibility (transport, ICT), society in general (deprived areas);
5. *Symbolic references:* e.g., identity, social visibility, self-esteem, basic abilities, interests and motivations, future prospects (p.21).

It is interesting to reflect on the way in which the concept of social exclusion was institutionalised in its adoption and promotion by the EU. Armstrong (2010, 18) argues that "this 'institutionalization' of the language was also advanced by the establishment of the European Observatory on Policies to Combat Social Exclusion... the combined effect of funding action programmes and of establishing the Observatory was to create a means by which the very language of social exclusion might be diffused through a European academic research community and gradually taken up by political actors. It is difficult to imagine that the language of 'social exclusion' could have made the direct leap from French social policy into domestic policy contexts without the mediation of European structures and European programmes."

Since that time, the terminology used has been extended to include other related terms (e.g., cohesion, integration, inclusion) and more recently there has been an increasing usage of the term 'poverty' or ' poverty and social exclusion' combined.   Interestingly, the language of the Europe 2020 agenda changes: the Europe 2020 document (European Commission, 2010c) set a target of raising 20 million people out of *poverty* (p.5) and heralded the setting up of the European Platform against *poverty* (p.19); the Europe 2020 website has the target as 'at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of *poverty and social exclusion'* and the European Platform is now against *poverty and social exclusion* (European Commission, 2010b). A number of commentators had previously highlighted the slippery usage of poverty and social exclusion terminologies in EU policy. Atkinson and Davoudi (2000), for example, think a clear definition of social exclusion is elusive, and that there is a tendency to use poverty as a proxy for social exclusion. As an example, in its Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010b), the Commission acknowledges the multidimensional nature of social exclusion, but then bases its headline targets for combating poverty and social exclusion on a combination of three, income- and consumption-related, factors: the at-risk-of-poverty rate (after social transfers), the index of material deprivation (lacking 4+ deprivation items) and the percentage of people living in households with very low work intensity (Bradshaw and Mayhew, 2010).

While social exclusion is perhaps less politically contentious between Member States, O'Brien and Penna (2006) argue that it is highly contentious for those classified as 'excluded'. "Contemporary forms of exclusion and the pursuit of particular processes of incorporation are embedded in an international political economy of domination and subordination" (p.91) with the institutions of Europe and Member States themselves being exclusionary forces. This is in part because of the history of European modernity as "the exercise of power by certain social groups and nations over others" (p.87) and by the setting up of the binary categories of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' "(irrational, regressive, alien, excluded)" (ibid).   The outcome is stigmatisation of the 'outsiders' which has serious consequences for those who are labelled. While this is unarguably true, the introduction of the relational concept of social exclusion was intended to move the focus away from 'victims' and towards the underlying social, economic and political *processes* of exclusion (Room 1995).

Linkage to economic growth agenda
Many commentators see Lisbon as something of a watershed: "a crucial step in the evolution of social policy in the EU" (Ferrera et al, 2002, p.230); an "ambitious agenda" (Zeitlin, 2008). However, while there were a number of tangible manifestations of the ascendancy of social policy (e.g., Social Protection Committee, OMC, NAPs/incl), Lisbon was also the point at which the development of social policy became directly entwined with the economic growth agenda although it had previously been regarded as a threat to economic growth and competitiveness (Atkinson and Davoudi, 2000). For

some critics, social rights appeared "as essentially subservient to economic considerations" (Veit Wilson, 2006, p. 330). This concern was exacerbated in 2005 when the Lisbon strategy was reviewed and "although the importance of the social cohesion side of the Lisbon triangle was reiterated under the Luxembourg presidency … concerns remained that the commitment to social policy within the Lisbon strategy had been weakened" (Armstrong, 2006, p.83). For Bernhard (2006), "establishing the goal of economic growth as an issue of overriding importance deprives social inclusion of its status as an end in itself" (p.48). The more recent 'inclusive growth' of the Europe 2020 agenda is clearly a further iteration of the relationship of poverty and social exclusion to the economic growth agenda, though Copeland and Daly (2012) argue that while this may appear to give new priority to a social agenda, in reality it signals a continuation of the neoliberal priorities of recent years.

Active inclusion through employment
The third conceptual strand to EU social policy that commentators often refer to is that the main pathway out of poverty/exclusion is through employment. Van Oorschot (2002) identified this as a pan-European trend in the 1990s and saw this as directly linked to countries' welfare reform programmes. Taylor-Gooby (2008) also notes this trend: "there is considerable evidence that many European countries are moving in a general common direction, away from passive and towards active measures that sharpen work incentives for those on benefits, and towards provision to integrate high-risk groups " (p.20/21). According to Daly (2007), the Lisbon re-launch was when the term 'active social inclusion' was introduced, "defined to mean participation in the labour market" (p.7). This was reinforced in the 'Recommendation on the Active Inclusion of the People Excluded from the Labour Market, 2008/867/EC (EC 2008), which built on discourses developed through the OMC to propose 'three pillars' of active inclusion (adequate resources, inclusive labour markets, access to quality services). While it may still be too early for significant commentaries on the Europe 2020 priorities, this approach is clearly a prominent feature of the current social policies.

Criticisms are levelled at this 'active inclusion' approach. Integration through employment is deemed to ignore the social and multidimensional aspects of how people are excluded (Pantazis et al, 2006; Philip and Shucksmith, 2003) and the fact that people can also be' badly employed': those on the margins of the labour market doing "gendered low social status,[with] low wages, precarious employment conditions and lack of career opportunities" (Soysal, 2012, p.8). Levitas (1996) also draws attention to all those for whom paid work is not necessarily an option – women, ethnic minorities and disabled people – because of their lack of (equal) opportunity in the labour market. She also demonstrates how the time spent in paid work can "simultaneously create acute problems of work-life balance, reducing the time necessary for social participation and social support" (p.155).

The shift to active inclusion can be seen as a shift from unconditional social rights which were the EU's focus in earlier iterations of social exclusion (Jehoel-Gijbsers and Vrooman, 2007) to an emphasis on personal responsibility as a moralistic discourse (Taylor-Gooby, 2008). Armstrong (2010) also highlights the tension between this 'activation paradigm' and a 'social citizenship' paradigm, which looks beyond issues on income poverty to the whole range of barriers to inclusion and the power relationships that perpetuate exclusion. He argues that this tension will continue to inform EU activities, requiring ambiguity and incoherence, under the OMC.

Few critical reviews have yet been written by policy analysts on the 'inclusive growth' prioritised in Europe 2020 (but see Copeland and Daly 2012; Armstrong 2012; and the results emerging from the FP7 COPE project); nor is this new agenda's relationship to the older systems of the Social Protection Committee, the OMC and National Plans for inclusion easy to understand. In addition to its analysis above under the three conceptual issues, it is worth highlighting what is novel: the setting up of a target for the reduction of poverty (and social exclusion), and the recognition of a territorial dimension "as the "poorest people" are often concentrated in particular regions or even smaller areas (European

Commission, 2010b, p. 3). Whether, in the present economic crisis, it will be possible to make headway on the target is debatable, with the final report on the First Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion noting that the EU target of lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020 would not be reached based on current national targets (Polish Presidency and the European Commission, 2011, p.5).

Copeland and Daly (2012, p.273) are sceptical about this target in Europe 2020, noting how it arose as "a result of a political opportunity seized upon by a number of pro-social policy actors (some in the European Commission, the Parliament, certain Member States as well as non-governmental organizations), rather than an agreement to further Europeanize social policy." They also argue that the target is a chaotic compromise encompassing income poverty, severe material deprivation and household joblessness, while also leaving considerable flexibility to Member States in how they interpret the target. As a result, they conclude, "the target risks both incoherence as an approach to social policy and ineffectiveness in terms of precipitating significant action by the Member States to address poverty and social exclusion."

For some commentators, a search for conceptual developments within EU social policy might be something of a diversion. Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) suggest that "social exclusion may in part be seen as a form of symbolic politics" (p.436) so that politicians can be seen to be doing something about everyday problems of people. For Veit-Wilson (2006) "it is arguable that the unrealisable symbolic assertions of rights to human dignity and social inclusion are deliberate displacements because they divert attention from the political failure to introduce remedies which are essential for either to be achieved" (p.333). Copeland and Daly (2012, 280) point out, correctly, that for EU leaders "poverty is a concept with limited political appeal, not least because it has proved extremely resistant to policies to counter it. Also, and this is especially important in the context of the EU, poverty resonates differently across social policy models," necessitating ambiguity and flexibility in concepts, definitions and targets if political agreement is to be reached.

3. Territoriality of poverty and social exclusion
In the 1990s it was possible for Berghman (1995, p.15) to write that "the spatial dimension [of social exclusion] is receiving growing attention" and that "the notion of spatial exclusion has been launched, referring not so much to spaces where there are poor persons but to 'poor spaces' themselves." While there have subsequently been several EU actions with a potential anti-poverty component undertaken by through cohesion policy (eg. URBAN, URBACT, LEADER, EQUAL), in the main, social policy and spatial policy have tended to proceed independently of one another.

"The question of social exclusion and integration", it has been argued, "largely revolves around access. It is access to decision-making, access to resources, and access to common narratives, which enable social integration. Many of these forms of access have clear spatial manifestations, as space is the site in which these different forms of access are made possible or denied" (Madanipour, 2011, p. 191). That there is a spatial dimension to the distribution of poverty and social exclusion within Europe is widely accepted. Not only are there significant differences between individual Member States but also groupings of Member States highlight significant East-West contrasts (ESPON 2013 Programme, 2010). Concentrations of poverty and social exclusion are also to be found within Member States. The Fifth Cohesion Report (European Commission, 2010a) maps the regional variations in incidence of various social indicators, including material deprivation, across EU Member States. At a more localised level, "while most people in disadvantaged conditions live in major urban centres, in relative terms, they tend to be over-represented in rural and geographically isolated areas and communities. In some Member States the poverty risk in rural areas is double that of urban ones" (European Commission, 2010b, p.13).

All of the above statements about the geography of poverty and social exclusion beg the question of whether they simply signify a concentration of individual poverty and social exclusion in certain places or whether, additionally, place itself becomes an important site of exclusion. This might occur "if people are deprived in part because of where they live, and because available services and opportunities prevent them from getting out of poverty" (Stewart, 2003, p.338). Although empirical studies struggle to disentangle any neighbourhood effects from those produced by non-spatial factors (e.g., Ellen and Turner, 1997), a significant school of thought argues that 'excluded spaces' (Kristensen, 1997) are another dimension of social exclusion, interacting and intensifying the effects of individual social exclusion and contributing to a 'spiral of decline' (Atkinson and Davoudi, 2000, p.441).

There is clearly spatial differentiation within Europe of the endowment of natural resources. Some parts have high quality agricultural land or are rich in extractable resources. Some are water-rich (including some having problems with flooding); some have good access to the sea, and so on. Such natural assets have influenced the history of settlement patterns and industrial development. But the relationship is not simply that space drives social organisation: social processes also form and change space (ESPON 1.4.2, 2006). This produces the rich tapestry of regions and places that exist today. These can be categorised in various ways, including urban or rural, core or peripheral, which are pertinent to the arguments about the 'spaces for the excluded' (Sibley, 1998, p.119).

Densely-populated areas have had a larger proportion of people who are materially deprived than their less populated counterparts in the EU-15 (European Commission, 2010a). According to the Social Exclusion in European Neighbourhoods project, in European cities there are "the symptoms of growing social exclusion in their depressed neighbourhoods: increasing rates of long term unemployment, male joblessness, the feminisation of an increasingly casualised labour force, widening gaps in income levels, increasing disparities in education attainment, deteriorating health and life expectancies for the poorest members of society" (Cars, 1998, p.19; Madanipour et al, 2003). 'Urban exclusion' (Silver, 1994) has been the focus of much research (Geddes, 2000). However, most commentators identify small scale neighbourhoods in urban areas as the sites of exclusion: 'deprived outer suburbs' (Silver, 1994), 'social housing estates (Atkinson and Davoudi, 2000), 'slum areas of large cities' (Adaman and Keyder, 2006), for example. This segregation of poor and excluded people into declining parts of cities (Cars,1998; Madanipour et al, 2003) is the result of two processes (Madanipour, 2011): "a land and property market which sees space as a commodity and tends to create socio-spatial segregation through differential access to this commodity, and a town planning and design tendency to regulate and rationalize space production by the imposition of some form of order. When we look at these two processes together, the picture which emerges is a collectivization of difference, or exclusion, which can lead to enclaves for the rich and the creation of new ghettos for the poor" (p.193). This may be further exacerbated by processes of "territorial stigmatisation" (Wacquant 2007).

That there is also poverty in, and of, rural places in the EU is highlighted in the report on Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas (Bertolini and Peragine, 2009). The decline of these areas, again, is significant in understanding these excluded places. In some cases, places have been reliant on large scale extractive industries which once in decline leave a degraded landscape and communities "blighted by widespread unemployment, long-term sickness and poverty a decade after the collapse" (Bennett et al, 2000). In some countries, notably the UK, the land and property market and development regulation (as discussed above in the urban context) have served to perpetuate rural areas as elite spaces with hidden poverty and social exclusion (Philip and Shucksmith, 2003). In other rural areas, the decline of agriculture has led to 'land abandonment' and an outmigration of a significant proportion of the population. Here, the problem is that some (vulnerable) people remain trapped by their lack of opportunity and their lack of mobility (Shucksmith et al, 2011).

Some of the issues for rural places are about their remoteness from the 'core' of their nation; this is equally an issue for some islands and border/periphery regions. Distance from services (public and private) and lack of access is described by a number of commentators (e.g., European Commission, 2010a; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007). And while much emphasis is placed on the potential for ICTs to bring services to remote places, the reality of the market rollout is of a rural broadband gap (European Commission, 2006a). In their study of a number of islands and border regions of the EU, Leontidou et al (2005) draw the distinction between the experience of geographic isolation and that of social or cultural exclusion from 'the national centre'. Research subjects in some of their case study areas perceived both geographic isolation and social and cultural exclusion; in some others they did not perceive either isolation or exclusion; in a final case it was clear that they felt a strong sense of geographic isolation without a strong sense of social and cultural isolation.

There is a significant literature that portrays excluded places (mainly urban) as 'new ghettos' (Madanipour, 2012a). This extends the arguments about the physical segregation of the excluded within cities. Such places are "avoided or viewed with apprehension" (Sibley, 1998, p.120) by outsiders. This is because a "stereotype of a despised group combines with and reinforces a negative stereotype of place" (ibid). This is suggestive of the perception of many that these places have cultural homogeneity, although research has found a fragmented and divided population within excluded areas (Cars, 1998; Madanipour et al, 2003). However, they share features of "being different and disadvantaged, neglected, or at worst, despised" (Madanipour,2012a, p.288). Some have even argued that, "the majority of society excludes, discriminates or disregards the individual because of the place/geography in which she lives" (Adaman and Keyder, 2006, p.128). Discourses of social exclusion are often linked to a crisis of social order in which the excluded are seen as a menace to ordinary citizens (Beland, 2007); in this way excluded places become a focus of public attention and fear. However, "state agencies are accused of withdrawing and leaving beleaguered communities to their own devices" (Geddes, 2000, p.783).

Those on the inside can be viewed as trapped within the ghetto by such stigmatisation and exclusion, or they can be portrayed as making choices to perpetuate the segregation of the ghetto, although there is little empirical evidence to support the latter position: they still have the same culture, and are part of the same mainstream society. Within this voluntary segregation discourse, the ghetto is viewed as one type of social context in which poor people "develop a shared set of beliefs, values and norms for behaviour" (Bradshaw, 2006, p.8). Such a subculture might "challenge the cultural norms and stereotypes of the dominant society" (O'Brien and Penna, 2008, p.90), or be part of a strategy of survival (Sibley, 1998). Such strategies range from the innovative and alternative to the illegal and deviant, which serve to reinforce the popular external perception of excluded places as places to be feared. When state intervention has targeted the excluded places, as evident in regeneration policies of a number of countries in the last two decades for inner cities, the impact has been gentrification, giving the impression that the problem has been solved, but also displacement and dispersal, rather than providing a solution to the problems of the socially excluded (Economist, 2014).

Conclusion

The two concepts of poverty and social exclusion point to different foci and priorities, one used to describe economic deprivation and raise concern about distribution of resources, while the other to draw attention also to relational issues involved in social, cultural and political disadvantage, whether conceived under an activisation paradigm or a social citizenship paradigm. Neither of the two terms, meanwhile, can be limited to narrow definitions, as they include elements of the other concept, and therefore they overlap to a great extent, necessarily so in terms of the EU policy context. Together, they cover the processes that discriminate against some individuals and groups, the range of multi-

dimensional problems that the vulnerable parts of society suffer from, and the challenges facing society as a whole.

In the European policy discourse, alongside the reform of the welfare concepts and provisions, and as a result of the global economic crisis, it is possible to see a change in terminologies, explicit concerns for economic growth, and emphasis on poverty reduction through employment. In the EU discourse on poverty and social exclusion at least two major terminological shifts can be noticed: an earlier shift from poverty to social exclusion, and a more recent shift that combines the two in the concept of poverty and social exclusion, acknowledging the overlaps between the two concepts. Meanwhile, addressing poverty and social exclusion has been increasingly linked to the economic growth agenda. Active inclusion through employment and the emphasis on economic growth have transformed the earlier ideas of social rights in a social Europe. There has been a growing priority for addressing economic problems, which could be at the cost of undermining the other aspects of a multi-dimensional problem, or emptying the concepts from their full content.

Acute forms of poverty and social exclusion tend to find spatial expression, either in concentrations of disadvantage in some urban areas or in limited access to services and resources in remote areas. The emphasis on a spatial focus to combat poverty and social exclusion has been a growing trend in the EU social policy discourses. The spatial response has been the regeneration of some deprived areas, a strategic measure that could address some of the problems, but could also displace populations as a result, not necessarily solving their problems.

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