Notion of Social Exclusion and its application to studies of Youth

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i. to advance the knowledge base that underpins the formulation and implementation of relevant policies in Europe with the aim of enhancing the employment of young people and improving the social situation of young people who face labour market insecurities, and

ii. to engage with relevant communities, stakeholders and practitioners in the research with a view to supporting relevant policies in Europe. Contributions to a dialogue about these results can be made through the project website http://www.except-project.eu/, or by following us on twitter @except_eu.

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Responsibility for all conclusions drawn from the data lies entirely with the authors.
Abstract

This working paper reviews the conceptual and theoretical literature on the social exclusion with the aim to discuss peculiarities of application of this framework for the comprehensive understanding of experiences and consequences of job insecurity and unemployment of young people. In this way paper is aimed to contribute to the development of the conceptual theoretical and methodological framework for the research project “Social Exclusion of Youth in Europe: Cumulative Disadvantage, Coping Strategies, Effective Policies and Transfer, EXCEPT”. Paper starts with the description of the emergence of political discourse on social exclusion as the response to the challenges faced by the welfare state in the context of profound economic restructuring. In the next section of the paper the ways in which social exclusion had been (conceptually and operationally) approached generally in the literature are discussed. Then the application of the social exclusion framework to the research on youth is explored and conclusions are made.
Process of profound economic restructuring and emergence of social exclusion as a new conception of social disadvantage

While the historical roots of the concept of social exclusion have been traced back to Aristotle (Sen 2000) or Plato’s work *I nomoi* (see e.g. Omtzigt 2009), social exclusion is not a concept rooted in the social sciences, but “an empty box given by the French state to the social sciences in the late 1980s as a subject to study” (Murard 2002:41, referred by Mathieson et al. 2008). The origin of the contemporary concept of social exclusion is usually traced back to the 1970s French social politics and its emergence is approached in the context of profound economic restructuring that the advanced capitalist democracies have been undergoing since the mid-1970s (Silver 1994).

Thus, in the book of Jean Klanfer (1965), the term 'social exclusion' referred to people who could not enjoy the positive consequences of economic growth due to irresponsible behaviour (referred by Beland 2007). But the exclusion discourse did not become widespread until the oil crisis in the 1970s (Silver 1994). The result of the economic downturn was not just a lack of income or wealth for certain people or groups. More and more people suffered from insecurity, were dependent upon “residual” means-tested programmes, or were without any form of social protection. With the weakening of social ties in general due to rising individualism and family ties in particular, the consequences of joblessness resulted in a process that fully or partially excluded individuals or groups from social, economic and cultural networks and has been linked to the idea of citizenship (Lee & Murie 1999). Former notions of poverty no longer adequately captured this process or state (Omtzigt 2009). These transformations were giving rise to new conceptions of social disadvantage: the “underclass”, the “new poverty”, and “social exclusion”. In France ten years after publication of Klanfer’s book, Lenoir (1974), then Secretary of State for Social Action in the French government, conceived the excluded as those citizens who were separated from mainstream society because of factors like disability, mental illness and poverty; Lenoir’s explanations were focused on social and economic conditions rather than personal responsibility (referred by Beland 2007).

It was only the late 1980s and early 1990s that the idea of ‘exclusion’ became a central political issue in France (Silver 1994). During the 1980s and 1990s, due to the prevalence of long-term unemployment and growing concerns about racism and discrimination, the meaning of social exclusion changed, being increasingly defined as the lack of social integration due to limited access to labour market. Long-term unemployment had been seen as a major source of social isolation (see Beland 2007, p.127).1

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1 It had been argued that, in France, the growing emphasis on social exclusion during the 1980s and 1990s helped move the social and political debate away from class inequality and income distribution at large (eg Friot 1998). According to Beland (2007, 128), the focus on social
From France the use of the term social exclusion spread through the European Union’s institutions. Jacques Delors, the Frenchman who was President of the Commission between the late 1980s and early 1990s managed to transform the Poverty Programme into a fight against ‘social exclusion’ (Silver 2010). Just as in France, long-term unemployment was the initial focus of the EU’s fight against social exclusion. But this focus gradually shifted from the Employment Strategy to become part of welfare state reform (Esping-Andersen 2002). Fight against social exclusion became part of the European Social Model that linked economic growth with job creation and social cohesion (Silver 2006).

As the social exclusion discourse spread beyond France, the meanings attached to the concept were adapted to reflect prevailing political and cultural contexts. In line with the liberal tradition, Anglo-American social policy was focused on ‘poverty’ as associated with welfare dependence or individual problems. It was very different from the French understanding of social problems brought about by economic transformation which was captured by the notion of social exclusion, especially by its emphasis on exclusion from full participation in society due to structural unemployment. In the United Kingdom (UK), when the term was first taken up in the 1980s by the Conservative government - resistant to the suggestion that income poverty was a significant problem - the emphasis shifted from social cohesion to individualism (Hills et al. 2002). But until the late1990s, a debate raged over the idea of ‘the underclass’ (Silver 2010). However, when the New Labour government was elected in 1997, the meaning of concept shifted again to reflect a more social collective ideology. By the time the New Labour government entered its third term in office, the language of social exclusion has become commonplace in public discourse (Levitas 2005).

Thus, the concept of social exclusion was originally inspired by the recognition of inability of welfare state to adjust to structural economic transformations and to mitigate new social risks. The term social exclusion emerged to denote the changing nature of social disadvantage in the West, but the way how it is/was used and defined may have important political implications (Silver 1994).

By the first decade of the 2000s the impact of the pursuit for ‘flexibility’ and deregulation of labour market on the social fabric has become possible to study. In Britain, labour market consequences of these changes had been seen in three major

exclusion is compatible with moderate interpretations of economic liberalism, which are grounded in the assumption that the state should find deprivation but not income inequality at large. For Silver (1994) the way social exclusion was understood in France, has many affinities with French Republican thought, especially the concepts of solidarity and the social bond. Its sociological pedigree is clearly Durkheimian (see also Levitas 2000). According to Silver, social exclusion may also be conceived in terms of Max Weber’s concepts of status groups and social closure.
areas (see Bailey forthcoming in 2016). First, the distribution of income from work has become more unequal (Machin 2011). Second, security of employment had been reduced, particularly for those in lower-paid employment, with the rise of ‘non-standard’ employment contracts. There is a particular concern about a growing number of people who cycle repeatedly between short spells of insecure employment and unemployment – the ‘low pay, no pay’ cycle – as well as rising numbers of ‘zero hours’ contracts (Thompson 2015). Third, there have been more varied trends in relation to other aspects of work: on the positive side, working hours have fallen, and more workers enjoy rights to paid holidays as well as parental leave. On the other hand, there have been declines in worker autonomy or control over tasks and increasing intensification of work, both of which contribute to rising levels of work-related stress (Green 2011; Eurofond 2012). This changed labour market context offers new challenges for the conceptualization and development of the concept of social exclusion. So does such conceptualization of divisions arising from the ‘flexible labour market’ as social precarity or the ‘precariat’ (Gallie and Paugam 2003; Standing 2011) as well as the recent economic crisis (see Gallie 2013). As due to the recent crisis many European countries face the outlook of a prolonged period of high unemployment, policymakers will need to respond to the potential negative consequences of labour market exclusion (see Canduela et al 2015:571).

Different understandings of social exclusion

There is a multitude of different definitions of social exclusion. It is a term with many interpretations. According to Mathieson et al (2008: 11-12) definitions of ‘social exclusion’ variously emphasise:

- The **groups at risk** of being excluded: for example, Lenoir (1974) quoted in Silver (1994:532) wrote: ‘the excluded made up one-tenth of the French population: the mentally and the physically handicapped, suicidal people, aged invalids, abused children, drug addicts, delinquents, single parents, multi-problem households, marginal, asocial persons, and other social misfits’

- **From what** people are **excluded**: for example, Silver (1994: 541) notes that: ‘the literature says people may be excluded from: 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’, Kronauer (1998) distinguishes political, social, economic and cultural dimensions of social exclusion
The problems associated with social exclusion: for example, England’s Social Exclusion Unit (SEU’s) defined social exclusion as: ‘a shorthand for what can happen when people suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown’ (SEU 1997);

The processes driving exclusion and the levels at which they operate: for example, Estivill (2003:19) argues that: ‘Social exclusion must ... be understood as an accumulation of confluent processes with successive ruptures arising from the heart of the economy, politics and society, which gradually distances and places persons, groups, communities and territories in a position of inferiority in relation to centres of power, resources and prevailing values’

The agents and actors involved: for example, Mike Rann, Prime Minister of South Australia commented that: ‘social exclusion is created by harsh and unjust economic conditions compounded by difficult social environments and made worse by insensitive government policies and government neglect...’ (South Australian Labor Party 2002).

Despite a wide range of differences in conceptualization of social exclusion, Graham Room’s (1992,1995) understanding of social exclusion as multidimensional, dynamic and relational concept became the ‘common ground’ of most of definitions (Mathieson et al 2008). In their often cited definition, Silver and Miller (2003) argue, that social exclusion has two additional defining characteristics: it is also active and relative to context. “Social exclusion is (1) multidimensional or socioeconomic, and encompasses collective as well as individual resources, (2) dynamic or processual, along a trajectory between full integration and multiple exclusions, (3) relational, in that exclusion entails social distance or isolation, rejection, humiliation, lack of social support networks, and denial of participation, (4) active, in that there is a clear agency doing the excluding, and (5) relative to context” (Silver and Miller 2003: 8)

Multidimensionality

Multidimensionality means that exclusion combines economic and social (including political and cultural) deprivation (Silver 2006). The economic or structural dimension usually refers to a lack of material resources associated with exclusion from the labour market. There is more variety in approaching the social dimension, so that it might be broadly characterized as a non-economic one. Analysts disagree whether exclusion is

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2 For some exclusion (deprivation) might occur in the economic, social and political sphere (de Haan 2000), for others it has economic, social, cultural and political dimensions (Mathieson et al 2008). According to Kronauer (1998), social exclusion is a product of people’s relationships with the labour market, consumption, institutions, social relationships, culture and
always a cumulative process of multiple, interrelated disadvantages. For instance, Kronauer (1998) argues that social exclusion arises when a marginal economic position and social isolation combine, for him social exclusion is about “underclass”. For Vleminckx and Berghman (2001) exclusion implies entrapment of intergenerational transmission. But as Silver (2006) emphasizes exclusion along one dimension may increase the risks of exclusion along other dimensions, but there are many more people who are socially excluded in some respects than there are people excluded in all respects. Moreover, according to de Haan (2000), the extent to which these dimensions overlap is rather an empirical question to be answered based on research.

The accumulation of social disadvantage across many dimensions (suffering from a combination of linked problems\(^3\), entrapment or intergenerational transmission\(^4\)) is a big risk for youth. Although learning to separate oneself from one’s parents is the first and necessary developmental stage to becoming an adult, sorting the world into friends and strangers gives rise to the pattern of differential interaction, later on to the creation of distinction between insiders and outsiders, and further to social boundaries. Thus, the question is raised which innumerable bases for social exclusion ought to receive greater attention in the research on social exclusion of youth (see for example Table 1).

geographical space. According to extensive review of literature on social exclusion performed by Jehoel-Gijsbers (2004), social exclusion theoretically refers to four dimensions. Two of these concern forms of socio-cultural exclusion (limited social participation and a lack of normative integration) and the two other dimensions are structural-economic (material deprivation and inadequate access to basic social rights). Social exclusion theoretically occurs if a person is deprived simultaneously on several of these dimensions (referred by Vrooman and Hoff 2012).

Levitas et al (2007) suggested 10 dimensions or domains of potential importance in social exclusion: Resources (Material/economic resources; Access to public and private services; Social resources); Participation (Economic participation; Social participation; Culture, education and skills; Political and civic participation); Quality of life (Health and well-being; Living environment; Crime, harm and criminalisation). On the basis of analysis of employment in post-deregulation context or ‘exclusionary’ employment, Bailey (2016) suggests extensions of this framework: ‘quality of working environment’ could be seen as an additional domain. Alternatively the conception of ‘living environment’ might be expanded so that it encompasses home, neighbourhood and, for those in employment, workplace.

\(^3\) According to definition of Britain’s Social Exclusion Unit, social exclusion is “a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combinations of linked problems”

\(^4\) See Vleminckx and Berghman (2001)
Social exclusion is usually defined as the accumulation of multiple dimensions of disadvantage. *Mechanisms* of exclusion include “cumulative continuity”, which results from individual and family values inducing people to live in compatible environments, reinforcing dispositions. By contrast, “cumulative disadvantage” results when so-called problem youth associate with others like themselves in inner city neighbourhoods, where they also lack family support.

*Risk of exclusion* or the incapacity to participate fully in society may be based on personal characteristics. For example, they can include health, disability, gender, age, place of residence, discrimination against one’s social and cultural background, spatial inaccessibility, ineligibility for resources or opportunities, legal obstacles and cultural constrains, social isolation, and basic poverty.

A wide range of social institutions also can contribute to exclusion in both public and the market sector, but also in civil society institutions.

**Processes**

While social exclusion may be considered as both a condition and a process, it is most frequently treated in dynamic terms (Silver 2006). The *dynamism* of social exclusion refers to its changing and interactive nature along different dimensions and at different levels over time (Mathieson et al 2008). As a *dynamic process*, social exclusion of youth is about the respective trajectories over the life course of youth. Researchers disagree about the importance of persistence over time: some conceive it as the integral part of social exclusion (Room 1995), others (Levitas et al 2007) find that the criterion of persistence over time is neither theoretically nor empirically based.

The ways how broadly defined dimensions of social exclusion interact is also rather problematic (Levitas et al 2007). It remains unclear how the many dimensions of social exclusion are interrelated over time; economic and social aspects of exclusion have reciprocal effects, which makes it difficult to attribute causality to any one factor (Silver 2007). Even when disadvantages accumulate, a self-reinforcing cycle makes it difficult to attribute causality to any one factor\(^5\). There is little consensus over what are the most important dimensions of social exclusion (Silver 2006). With this regard three main approaches might be distinguished. One of them emphasizes the economic dimension, another places more emphasis on the social one (Hargie et al 2011). According to the former, to be socially excluded means to experience (different kinds of)

\(^5\) Poverty may produce unemployment (e.g., by way of inadequate schooling) and unemployment will produce poverty in the long run (in the absence of family assistance, charity, or welfare state). Lack of social contacts makes it hard to find a job and without a job, one’s social life is curtailed. Sometimes, even social assistance and youth insertion programs can produce exclusion through stigmatization of participants. Exclusion dynamics exist at the collective – national, urban, neighbourhood – as well as the individual level.
poverty, while according to latter, social exclusion is about isolation, loneliness, little involvement in the wider society. According to third approach, which of the dimensions of social exclusion is central is dependent on the context: “in some societies or among some groups labour market participation may form the crux around which other elements of deprivation revolve; whereas elsewhere or among other groups religious identity is more important” (de Haan 2000). For de Haan (2000) whatever the “most important” dimension is, studying social exclusion suggests a certain research emphasis: to reveal the processes that lead to it. Silver also argues that to follow individual trajectories through time, revealing how disadvantages accrue over the life course is the solution to the dilemma of causal direction of exclusion dynamics. Paugam’s (1995) research on social exclusion in France described as ‘spirals of precariousness’ and Castel’s ‘disaffiliation’ approach are usual examples of process-centred analysis of social exclusion. There are spirals of disadvantage in which one problem gives rise to another. Youth is an especially critical age when one mistake can be paid for repeatedly throughout one’s life.

**Relationality**

*Relationality* refers to the critical conceptual shift from the focus on distributional outcomes within a poverty discourse (i.e. the lack of resources at the disposal of individuals, households and/or wider social groups) to a focus on social relationships (Mathieson et al 2008). As Touraine (1991) puts it, exclusion is an issue of being in or out, rather than up or down. Silver (2006) links her understanding of social exclusion as broken relationships to the dichotomy of excluders versus excluded. Two interpretations of the relational perspective can be distinguished (see Mathieson et al 2008). One focuses attention on (individual) disadvantage brought about by the rapture of relationships between people and the wider society. From this perspective social exclusion is typically understood as a ‘state’ of multiple disadvantages experienced by particular population groups existing outside the mainstream of society unable to participate and without rights. Alternatively, the other relational perspective highlights exclusionary processes embedded in unequal power relationships operating at many levels and producing a continuum within and between societies characterised by

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6 Paugam shows how in deprived neighbourhoods loss of unemployment tends to be accompanied by loss of income and by social and psychological forms of deprivation, such as marital problems and loss of social capital.

7 According to Castel it is important “…to look for the relationships between the situation in which one is and that from which one comes, not to autonomies the extreme situations but to link what happens in the peripheries and what arrives to the centre (Castel, 1997: 16-17, cited by Mathieson et al 2008, p.13)
unequal conditions of inclusion and exclusion rather than a dichotomy of included and excluded people (Piachaud et al 2009).

This social relationship might be approached in terms of outsiders and insiders: adults as insiders usually hold the keys, regulating access of youth to adult roles, might deny youth (as outsiders) equal rights and even derive benefit (resources such as income, power, etc) from exclusivity. Youth as outsiders suffer multiple disadvantages that may accumulate over time.

Moreover, as a social relationship, exclusion of youth has two parties: adults as excluders and youth as excluded. Here institutional and interpersonal discrimination and barriers to participation are the central objectives of analysis. At the same time research shows that the construction of meaning of exclusion and its impact on the young people differ between generations and age groups, particularly between excluded youth and adults-excluders (Hargie et al 2011).

Focus on social relationship between adults as excluders and youth as excluded accentuates the mechanisms of social exclusion that must be addressed by policies. Rejection, isolation, humiliation are some of the micro-level mechanisms that exclude (young) people from full participation in society. At the macro level denial of human rights, imprisonment, exile are about the extreme processes of exclusion.

Thus, according to Silver (2007), a Social Exclusion Framework is compatible with the two most familiar approaches to studying youth – human capital theory and the life course perspective – and transcends them. The framework controls for background characteristics shown to be important in human capital research of youth, it also emphasizes the contextualization and institutionalization of trajectories emphasized in the life course research of youth. It offers a dynamic perspective on multiple dimensions of exclusion from both economic and social spheres of social activity, indicating that causality between these spheres is reciprocal. The framework distinguishes the dimensions of exclusion from adult roles from the consequences of that exclusion (poverty, delayed household formation, mental illness, etc.). It also specifies the ways in which exclusion may feed back on itself, multiplying the dimensions of rupture and closed opportunities over time, whether through unemployment, migration, loss of social ties, or poverty.

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8 On the one hand, the employers, training providers, and community group leaders emphasized the importance of employment opportunities for young people as a way of alleviating exclusion. On the other hand, young people themselves saw no direct linkage between being unemployed and being excluded (Hargie et al 2011).
Agency

Active is usually understood as a question of “who is doing the excluding?” (Atkinson 1998). The active role has been attributed to very different actors ranging from multinationals and international agencies (e.g., World Bank and IMF) through nation states and their institutions, to excluded individuals/groups themselves.  

Relatively little empirical research had been devoted to the potential for agency amongst groups most severely affected by exclusionary processes (Mathieson et al 2008). An important issue here is also the linkage between discourses and action. Based on an analysis of the political discourse in Britain over the past two decades, Ruth Levitas (2005) shows how three different social exclusion discourses constitute ways of both description of world and acting in it, so both open up and close down the possibility for action. Despite the potential of notion of social exclusion to recognize the relational character of multiple disadvantage, where people in society could be excluded, marginalized and discriminated against by those people, groups, institutions or markets that had the power to exclude, the excluded are often discursively denied agency and social inclusion had been positioned unproblematically as a ‘benign effort on the behalf of these exclusionary agents to include’ (Spandler 2007, p.3). In case of young people, the terms social exclusion/inclusion are defined by adults and imposed on young people, influencing in that way their potential agency. As studies show (e.g. Rose et al 2012) the application of the societal discourses of inclusion had the potential to leave

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9 For typology of actors and actions to tackle social exclusion, see for example Appendix 1.

10 According to Levitas, within a redistributive discourse (RED), poverty is seen as a key cause of social exclusion, although inequalities and discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, (dis)ability and sexual orientation also contribute. If poverty is principally about resources to which people (do not) have access, social exclusion is primarily about what they are (not) enabled to do. RED addresses social, political, cultural and economic citizenship, broadening out into a critique of inequality (Levitas, 2005:14). In social integrationist discourse (SID), the emphasis is on social inclusion or integration through paid work. Here the ways in which paid work may fail to prevent exclusion (by being, for example, poorly paid) or even cause it (where long or asocial hours or the nature of work itself block other forms of social participation) are largely neglected. So is the role of unpaid work. According to Levitas, In addition to Britain, this discourse can also be find in EU policy documents. The MUD (moral underclass discourse) emphasises moral and cultural causes of poverty, whereby the excluded are to blame for their fate. It is much concerned with the issue of dependency (welfare benefits are seen as bad as they undermine people’s ability to be self sufficient). Given normative nature of these discourses, it is difficult, as Levitas notes, to justify a specification of the nature and types of participation deemed necessary for ‘inclusion’ at any given time and place, just as it is for the level and quality of material resources deemed minimally sufficient.
young people, particularly those who are not in education, employment or training, feeling excluded, isolated and distressed.

**Context-specificity**

According to Silver and Miller (2003:9), social exclusion is a relative, intrinsically social term because it takes on different meanings, depending upon context or the point of reference for inclusion, reflecting national and ideological notions of what it means to belong to society (cultural context) as well as the peculiarities of national and local conditions. As to peculiarities of conditions, they might differ not only across countries, but also across regions and localities. Local and national contexts are embedded in larger transnational networks and identities (immigrant, transnational, religious communities, etc.).

The most common comparisons are across welfare regimes or based on the employment (Korpi 1983, 2006; Esping-Andersen 1990, Gallie 2007) or on production regimes perspective (Hall and Soskice 2001). Research increasingly is taking neighborhood effects into account as well (e.g. MacDonald et al. 2005). Poor jobless neighbourhoods being result of rapid, widespread de-industrialization or segregation of ethnic and racial minorities, might nevertheless provide youth with neighbourhood-based sociality and mutuality, while at the same time further socially isolate residents and limit networks. Here the alternative social norms and peer effects might emerge. Interactions between individuals’ characteristics and the peculiarities of the neighbourhoods might generate distinctive coping patterns, leading to more or less successful life course transitions, e.g. from school to work (e.g. Hubner-Funk 1987).

The importance of cultural-ideological context was convincingly demonstrated by Hilary Silver (1994) in her analysis of three paradigms of social exclusion. The Solidarity paradigm is embedded in the French Republican tradition, with its emphasis on solidarity and the idea of the state as the embodiment of the general will of the nation. Exclusion is primarily viewed as the rapture of social bond – which is cultural and moral – between the individual and society. This paradigm draws on Durkheimian social theory. National solidarity implies political rights and duties. Social distance, marginalization, and inadequate integration are the expressions of social exclusion. The poor, unemployed and ethnic minorities are defined as outsiders.

The Anglo-Saxon tradition is characterised by Silver as a Specialisation paradigm, drawing on liberal thinkers like Locke. This perceives social actors primarily as

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11 As Silver (1994:539) writes: “Each paradigm attributes exclusion to a different cause and is grounded in a different political philosophy: Republicanism, liberalism and social democracy. Each provides an explanation of multiple forms of social disadvantage – economic, social, political and cultural – and thus encompasses theories of citizenship and racial-ethnic inequality as well as poverty and long-term unemployment”.

individuals, who are able to move across boundaries of social differentiation and economic divisions of labour. The causes of exclusion are to be found in unenforced rights and market failures. In this paradigm, exclusion is a form of discrimination, the drawing of group distinctions that denies individuals full participation in exchange or interaction. This paradigm emphasises the individual and micro-sociological causes of economic exclusion.

The *Monopoly paradigm* draws heavily on the work of Weber, and, to a lesser extent, Marx, and is particularly influential on the European Left, especially in northern Europe. It views the social order as imposed through a set of hierarchical power relations. Exclusion arises from the group monopolies: powerful groups restrict the access of outsiders through social closure. Inequality is mitigated by social democratic citizenship and participation in the community. In this paradigm, theories of labour market segmentation provide explanations of the link between social closure and economic exclusion.\(^{12}\)

Silver’s analysis of the role of political ideology in generating different understandings of the nature and causes of social exclusion had been criticised on the grounds that it presents social exclusion as based on social relationships between only two groups (the included and excluded), while it fails to take account of (a) the social gradients in access to resources and power and (b) the differential emphasis placed in different paradigms on the potential for agency by the excluded. In this way she implicitly follows the “labelling approach” distinguishing ‘the excluded’ from the rest of the society (see Mathieson et al 2008, p.18-19). Despite these weaknesses, Silver’s analysis has important implications for research on social exclusion. Most nation-states construct their own selective historical narratives of what it means to be American, French or German, these narratives are taught to citizens and may encompass justifications for internal social distinctions (Silver 2007). This poses a serious challenge to comparative social exclusion research, as it calls for analysis of what it means to belong to society in every country. Moreover, according to de Haan (2000:28), this emphasis on paradigms (as expression of relative to context nature of concept) helps to stress that “social exclusion is a theoretical concept, *a lens through which people look at reality, and not reality itself*.\(^{12}\)

\(^{12}\) With the spillover of concept all around the world, the paradigmatic differences in approaching the notion of social exclusion might have become more blurred. For European regions (Nordic countries, Central European countries, Mediterranean countries and East European Member States) see Appendixes to TiPSE “The Territorial Dimension of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe” project. Different question is that whatever the paradigmatic preference is, the empirical studies of social exclusion tend to focus on certain specific categories: the long-term or recurrently unemployed; those employed in precarious and unskilled jobs; the low paid and poor; the landless; the unskilled, school drop-outs; the mentally and physically handicapped and disabled, etc (see Silver 1994).
Contrary to de Haan (2000), the dominant understanding is that social exclusion is useful as both a conceptual framework to approach inequality and poverty as well as description of reality to denote marginalisation of individuals of groups because of specific social characteristics (e.g. gender or ethnicity).

Just as in case of formation of values and beliefs, there might be generational (age group) differences in constructions of what it means to be part of a given society.

The main analytical strength of this approach is exactly attributed to its above mentioned ‘common ground' features: understood as multidimensional, dynamic, relational, active and relative to context phenomenon, it has the potential to provide new insights into the nature, causes and consequences of deprivation, poverty, inequalities and discrimination, and give new direction to remedial policies (see Mathieson et al 2008; Babajanian & Hagen-Zanken 2012).

But there are many critics of the idea of social exclusion as well. According to Silver (2006), central among them is the argument that it distracts attention from social inequality and class conflict. Accordingly it may be used as a blaming label to make poor responsible for their condition (Mathieson et al 2008). In addition, inclusion is usually a euphemism for rejoining the labour force. Lack of theory that identifies the causes and consequences of exclusion is also seen as the important shortcoming of usage of this notion.

**Operational measures of exclusion**

There have been relatively few attempts to move from conceptual frameworks to definitions which can support operational measures of exclusion at the individual level. Despite of consensus about the dynamic, processual nature of notion of social exclusion, the attempts to operationalise social exclusion end out treating concept as a state, outcome of condition of being, rather than a process (Mathieson et al 2008, Fischer 2008). Studies tend to examine the dimensions that are easiest to measure with available data, first of all with indicators of extending poverty and unemployment. Many studies rely on baskets of indicators to track changes in different aspects of exclusion over time (Levitas et al 2007). Unemployment, and, in some cases, inactivity for those of working age are approached as indicating exclusion while some also pay attention to exclusion within employment, notably through low pay jobs but also job insecurity (for example, Aldridge et al 2013). Since indicators come from diverse sources, these studies are not able to identify the extent to which different dimensions overlap in individual lives and hence the overall scale of exclusionary employment (Bailey 2016).

More work has been done on the measurement of social exclusion in Europe than in any other global region and there are also more theory-driven approaches to measurement here than elsewhere. An example often cited is Paugam’s (1995) multi-dimensional approach to the measurement of what he refers to as ‘social
disqualification’ in France. Theory-driven approaches to measurement of social exclusion developed in the UK (see Table 1) are among the most cited ones.

A common feature of these approaches is that rather than relying on a small number of idiosyncratic and separate indicators of social exclusion, they all involve an attempt to theorise key domains of social exclusion and seek to describe the relationship between them. These approaches use somewhat different labels for the domains they identify. However, there is a shared focus on four ‘arenas’ of participation: financial, labour market, services and social relationships whilst two of the three also make explicit references to political participation. The Bristol Matrix also emphasises cultural aspects of exclusion and the causal pathways between resources, participation and outcomes (see also Figure 1 which according to Levitas et al 2007 illustrates the potential complexity of interactions between domains of social exclusion).
### Table 1 Theory Driven Approaches to Measuring SE

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<td>Dedicated cross-sectional survey conducted in 1999; Representative sample of 1,534 UK households. Eight indicators used to develop measures of four dimensions of social exclusion: • impoverishment; • labour market; • services; • social relations.</td>
<td>Used longitudinal secondary data from British Household Panel Survey to measure social exclusion along four dimensions of participation: • consumption; • production (including social activities); • political engagement; • social interaction</td>
<td>SE might be measured in 10 domains: <strong>Resources:</strong> • Material and economic • Access to services • Social relationships <strong>Participation:</strong> • Economic • Social • Cultural, education, • Political civic participation <strong>Quality of life impact</strong> • Health &amp; Well being • Living environment • Crime, harm, criminalisation</td>
<td>Material distribution measures: LM unemployment, inadequate standard of living, income poverty, no vocational training, poor housing conditions, unsafe, poor neighbourhood Relational measures: No social relationships, political pessimism and disinterest, anomie and loneliness, depression</td>
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*Source: Popay et al 2008, p.79, Silver 2007, p.25*
The multidimensional and relational nature of notion of social exclusion is also well captured in the World Health Organization Social Exclusion Knowledge Network’s (SEKN) model of social exclusion and its impact on health inequalities (see Figure 2). The strength of this model is that it highlights differential inclusion and/or exclusion and in this way suggests that the focus for policy and action should be the conditions on which people are included in society – i.e. socio-economic inequalities – rather than the conditions on which exclusion is experienced by particular multiply disadvantaged groups.

According to Levitas et al. (2007) even if appropriate domains of investigation are identified, estimating or tracking social exclusion depends on the prior understanding of the causal relationship between domains. They suggest, that it is likely that future research will reveal, that some domains (see Figure 1) are more important risk factors than others, and some are effectively outcomes with lesser causal effects. They argue that the present state of knowledge is such that it would be risky to make assumptions and to regard some domains as having lesser importance. At the same time it is known that income poverty and material deprivation constitute a driver for most other domains of exclusion. Thus, to explore social exclusion as a multidimensional process one...
needs substantial arguments for selection of the interacting domains/dimensions, while knowledge about possible interactions is quite restricted. Under these conditions the criteria “most important domain/dimension” seems to be rather inapplicable. Such criteria as the “widespread exclusive processes” or “exclusive processes/states defined/perceived to be social problem” might be a justification for the selection of some “central” exclusive process/dimension/domain for which interactions with possibly wide range of domains should be explored.

All these models allow to approach labour market exclusion just as one aspect of social exclusion in a complex way being linked to other domains and dimensions. Another important implication of these approaches, that they do not preclude the binary oppositions of ‘included’ versus ‘excluded’ or employed versus non-employed but allow to approach peculiarities of employment (particularly in the case of exclusionary employment, suggested by Baily 2016) as relevant to the risk of being excluded along other dimensions of social exclusion.

*Figure 2 The SEKN model of social exclusion*
Application of social exclusion framework to the research of youth

Since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008, young people have experienced difficulties in gaining a foothold in the labour market. While the situation has improved in recent times, in some Member States the youth unemployment rates are still a cause for concern. As a result of the crisis, young people are seen now as the group at highest risk of social exclusion in Europe (Eurofound 2015).

There are seem to be two kind of reasons for such concerns: those related to the peculiarities of youth as the life stage per se and those related to current economic and social conditions, i.e. peculiarities of current context of becoming adult. Roughly, causes and consequences of unemployment and labour market insecurity of youth are approached by two strands of literature: youth studies and research on social exclusion. The way how each type of studies conceive the role of welfare state in the aggravation and/or mitigation of labour market situation of youth in wider economic, cultural and institutional context is of particular importance for the looking for political responses to „youth’s risks of social exclusion”.

Experiences of unemployment and more generally, those of social exclusion are seen as especially harmful for youth because of the peculiarities of this life stage. Depending on the conceptualization of this period, transition from adolescence to adulthood is seen as a stage where various of investments are made and young persons’ place in social space is defined; or as a period of formation of identity, struggle with social interactions and negotiations over moral issues (Erikson 1968). Forming and maintaining social relationships is of particular importance during this stage (Kagan and Gall 1998). Unemployment of young people tends to have ‘scarring’ (i.e. persistent negative) effects. Accordingly the consequences of economic and social disengagement of young people might have wide-ranging effects over the life course (Eurofound 2015), accelerating or even trigger the long-term processes of cumulative disadvantage. Moreover, it has been argued that an individual’s perceptions of themselves in relation to society and the future affects their sense of exclusion (Abrahamson 1995) and those who feel excluded may go on to become objectively so (Lessof & Jowell 2000). It has been suggested that certain nowadays discourses around young people who are defined as excluded may be active processes in their

Further, within youth studies, two traditions had been distinguished: youth transitions and youth cultures (Furlong et al 2010; MacDonald 2011). Conceptualisation and studying labour market issues of youth is approached mainly by youth transition studies that largely rely on application of life course approach to youth. Still, some research within youth cultures tradition do widen traditional focus on cognitive and behavioral functioning of young adult to address those culturally rooted factors that create challenges for positive labour market outcomes (e.g., Devadason, 2008; Staff et al 2010). Moreover, studies on labour market outcomes of youth that attempt to transcend the boundaries between these two traditions are emerging (e.g., Shier et al 2015), but here we focus on youth transition approach.
exclusion that, given the nature of the life stage, may have long-term implications for their identity, well-being and relationships with social services (Rose et al 2012).

The lack of power to influence these processes of becoming an adult is also characteristic for this stage of life. A social idea of what it means to be an adult varies across cultures and over time (Hogan & Astone 1986), so does the experiences of becoming an adult shaped by the countries-specific packages of social institutions (see Working Paper on Mechanism and Institutions of EXCEPT project). Every society draws boundaries around the rights and responsibilities of full adulthood from which youth are excluded. It is the intersection of youth with other dimensions of disadvantage (e.g., labour market exclusion) that makes social exclusion a useful framework for analysis (Silver 2007). Socially excluded are considered to be those young people who are unable to participate in activities institutionally identified and normatively excepted from young people (Silver 2010). Thus, important question is, in what kind of institutional identification and normative expectations the transition to adulthood is embedded in.

The very fact of significant labour market disadvantage of youth as social group is the evidence of inadequacy of the ways welfare state manages the social risks faced by young people. At the same time the existent data about the differences in scope of youth labour market disadvantage and differential impact of recent economic crisis on the labour market situation of youth show that the contextual differences, welfare state institutions and policies being important part of them, matter.

While in EU non-employed youth is seen as a clear emergency since the late 2000s, in France young people (those leaving school without the adequate skills to obtain a job) were in focus of political discourse related to issues of social exclusion and inclusion ("insertion") since the early history of the term (i.e. early 1980s) (Paugam, 1993, referred by Silver 1994). Although the general issue is the same - the changing profiles of social risks in the context of high labour market insecurity and difficulties with the meeting of this challenge by welfare state - the whole context had changed since that time. Processes of globalization and neoliberalization that are seen to be the main driving forces behind the social exclusion (Bhalla and LaPeyre 1999) have intensified. At the same time according to evidence, particularly to the conclusions of the international project GLOBALIFE, young people might be considered as the losers of globalization, as uncertainty due to globalization was particularly channeled towards young people everywhere (Blossfeldt et al 2005). This had changed the whole process of transition to adulthood. According to results of GLOBALIFE project, youth do develop rational responses to uncertainty, which were identified in the form of diverse behavioral strategies, including remaining in the education system, postponing family formation, taking on multiple roles, or engaging in flexible partnerships (Blossfeldt et al

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14 For the comprehensive analysis of the labour market exclusion and labour market uncertainty of recent school leavers see Working Paper 1 of EXCEPT project.
2005). Given the context-sensitive nature of the concept of social exclusion, the strengths and limitations of its application to studies of youth under changed economic and social conditions is of a great relevance.

Conclusions

The concept „Social exclusion“ is contested, and has multiple meanings. This is one of the few shared understanding related to this concept. Some consensus is also arrived with regard of the basic features of this concept: social exclusion is conceived to be „(1) multidimensional or socioeconomic, and encompasses collective as well as individual resources, (2) dynamic or processual, along a trajectory between full integration and multiple exclusions, (3) relational, in that exclusion entails social distance or isolation, rejection, humiliation, lack of social support networks, and denial of participation, (4) active, in that there is a clear agency doing the excluding, and (5) relative to context“ (Silver and Miller 2003: 8). Although there are a lot of discussions with regard to the meanings and definitions attached to this features and their relative importance in the understanding and description of social exclusion, they constitute the useful conceptual basis for development of theoretical and methodological framework and structuring the research on social exclusion.

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To apply this conceptual basis for the research on youth, peculiarities of youth as the life stage and those related to current economic and social conditions of becoming adult should be taken into account. Thus, peculiarities of institutional identification and normative expectations in which the transition to adulthood is embedded, should be explored.

The lack of power to influence processes of becoming an adult is the main disadvantage of youth as a stage of life which makes the youth as a group especially vulnerable to exclusionary processes, particularly to that of discrimination. Thus, the holistic exploration of the nature of these processes and their outcomes should be part of the research on social exclusion of youth.

Unfortunately the operationalization of the concept of social exclusion is even more contested and less developed, while is largely driven by the pragmatic consideration of the availability of (especially quantitative and comparative) data. It poses a serious challenge to the research on social exclusion in general and social exclusion of youth in particular.
References


Appendix 1

Figure 3 A typology of actors and actions to address exclusionary processes

Source: Popay et al. 2008, p. 89