

DFID and social exclusion

The use and otherwise of a concept in international aid

Author: Arjan de Haan, DFID-China

Presenter: Andrew Shepherd,
Director CPRC

Outline



- The rise of social exclusion thinking in international development
- Promoting the social exclusion framework in DFID
- Assessing & analysing the impact to date

Conclusions



- General: SE implies focus on causes of poverty and inequality & exploration of macro-micro links.
- DFID: Describes social relations keeping people deprived
 - India and Latin America: group based disadvantages & discrimination
- Social inclusion as the answer is reformist not transformative – social inclusion in what? On whose terms? In whose interests?
- Has not moved the debate away from the quantitative, residual poverty approach, but has been
- More than a buzz word/fad, even if gets reduced to a ‘tool’ for quality assurance

Defining 'social exclusion'

'the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live'

- The multiple dimensions and sources of exclusion
 - Political, economic, social, cultural
 - Rights, resources and relationships
- A mixed intellectual heritage
 - Draws on Marx, Weber and Durkheim, and means different things within different political cultures/political economies (Silver 1994)
- Focus on causality: the underlying roots of deprivation

How did the concept arrive into poverty analysis?

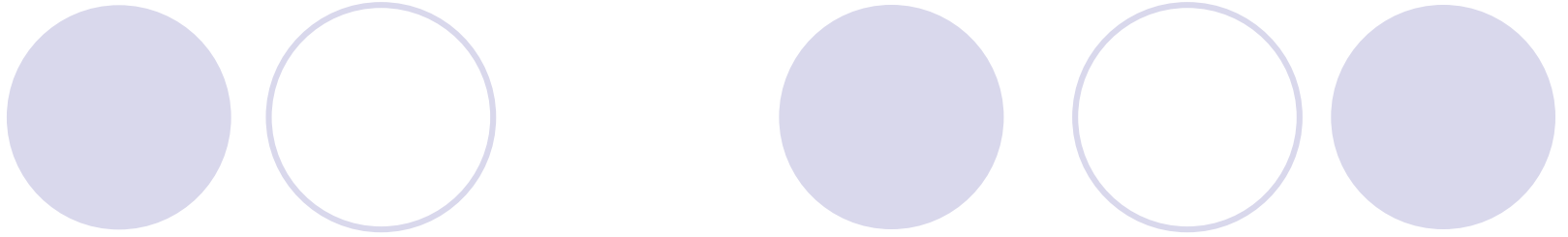
- Origins in 1970s France: '*les exclus*' ...EU take up 1990s
- UK: Social Exclusion Unit estd. in Downing St, 1997
- ILO studies on SE in mid-1990s, in preparation for Copenhagen 1995: the Social Summit
- IDS Bulletin Special on social exclusion (1998)
- Referenced in *WDR 2000/1 Attacking Poverty*
- Links to concepts of 'relative poverty' and 'capabilities'
- Joining up residual and relational concepts of poverty?

Institutionalising SE in DFID (1)

- 1997: new government with a minister for international development from a deprived inner-city area of the UK
 - Short, C., 'Poverty Eradication and Social Integration: the Position of the UK', *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 162, pp. 467-72.
- 1998: ILO research gains purchase within DFID
- Early 2000s: SE focus resonates with DFID focus in Latin America and South Asia in particular
 - New workstreams available, the SD team bid for work on SE
 - Review of the India Country Assistance Plan gives SD team an opportunity to link the SE agenda to internal India debates on 'excluded groups, including Adivasis, Dalits, and Muslims, which then forms key part of DFID assistance strategy
 - A high-profile workshop in India gives this visibility
 - Discrimination emerges as a key theme for DFID thinking on SE

Institutionalising SE in DFID (2)

- Team on SE formed within Policy Division (from within the then joint Governance and Social Development group)
- DFID Policy Paper 2005: *Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion*
 - 'Gender and Social Exclusion Guidance' framework developed for country programmes; undertaking this is compulsory for the South Asia office. This feeds into the compulsory Country Governance Assessment framework, which also includes exclusion-related questions
 - Disability framework
 - SE team part of Quality Assurance process
- 2006: Social exclusion and adverse incorporation as a key theme within DFID-funded CPCR



- “Arguably, the social exclusion notion was a convenient way for DFID as a diverse institution to ensure that distribution remained on the agenda alongside both economic growth and poverty reduction (while for example ‘inequality’ was much more disputed, and ‘rights’ continued to remain outside the mainstream debate)”.

○ A. De Haan

Key impacts to date

- Where institutionalised within country offices, it has helped to capture and highlight deprivation as directly linked to group-based disadvantages and discrimination (e.g. India, Nepal, Latin America)
 - e.g. SE assessment informs the PRSP in Nepal
- Less take-up in contexts of 'mass deprivation', esp. sub-Saharan Africa
 - But work here increasingly on related issues of disability, voter participation etc.
- Inspired conversations on power relations and discrimination within DFID and has helped to keep social analysis in the frame
 - Although less influential than social capital within mainstream development, which is more amenable to the bias in poverty analysis towards methodological individualism
- Institutional presence maintained and to some extent mainstreamed
 - Workstream on Gender and Social Exclusion within the 'Equity and Rights Team' in the Policy Hub.
 - Concept used within Conflict and Fragile States Policy team
 - Growing stream of work on Youth Exclusion
 - Economic Growth team see its relevance in terms of employment.
- But not systematic (e.g. compared to Gender which is now fully mainstreamed as a corporate priority and which has high-level support)
- Plus, little impact on moving the poverty debate away from the predominant quantitative and 'residual' approach.

Analysis: still on the margins?

- The 1995 Social Summit gets swallowed up by the Poverty/MDG agenda
 - The increased focus on outcomes has crowded out a focus on causes (e.g. capabilities)
- The language that dominates the key policy debates is not favourable to SE
 - Residualist approaches still dominate mainstream debates on poverty
 - Anglo-Saxon focus on 'poverty-as-income-deprivation' clashes with the multi-dimensional perspective of SE
 - Return of the growth agenda and continued reluctance to discuss inequality
 - The safety nets approach to social protection agenda promotes a more conservative agenda than that demanded by an SE approach
 - The 'social' prefix is a problem – 'why don't you focus on growth'? Can force it into a 'Social Development silo' whereas it should have relevance for economics and governance work also
- Some resistance from 'progressives'
 - Assumption that joining the 'mainstream' is unproblematically a 'good thing', e.g. sets gender analysis back to the days of WID; could be taken to insist on conformity with the mainstream
- Where influential it has led to a reformist focus on social *inclusion*
 - Is social *cohesion* a better antidote to SE? Implies co-operation rather than enforced integration

Overall...



- “...the use of SE within DFID has helped to demonstrate that if we are doing poverty reduction we need better forms of poverty analysis to establish who is not being reached. ‘Discrimination’ has become a very useful idea here: we need to understand how this is working if we want our programmes to reach everyone. The concept of social exclusion helps to focus on both the underlying processes (e.g. discrimination) and on marginal groups (e.g. PWDs)”
 - Workstream Leader on Gender and Social Exclusion, Equity and Rights Team, DFID