



SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND YOUTHS IN GLOBAL ERA: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Youth is a phase in the life-course between childhood and adulthood and the grounds for social exclusion of adults and youngsters are largely the same. Chronic and repetitive experiences of discrimination increase the probability of experiencing social exclusion. In recent decades, the effects of globalization and de-industrialization have resulted in youth transitions becoming extended. The paper debates at the importance of the social inclusion of youngsters from different perspectives. It is highlighted that unemployment is a central risk factor for young people, which in the long term threatens the overall integration of young people into society. The main determinants of social exclusion are rooted in social inequalities, such as obstacles to accessing quality education and training, securing adequate employment, suffering from discriminatory practices and attitudes, as well as being subject to exclusionary processes based on residence and/or citizenship.

Key words: *Youth, social exclusion, life course perspective, globalization*

Introduction:

Post-industrial society is characterized not only by prosperity and life-style experimentation amongst the middle classes, but also by segregation and social inequality, marginalization and exclusion processes. This society also displays large differences in young people's living conditions. Simultaneously people all over the world have high hopes that the new technologies will lead to better quality of life in terms of greater social freedom, increased

knowledge and livelihoods that are more productive. However, today technology deserves special attention because digital breakthroughs are pushing forward the frontiers of how people can use technology to eradicate poverty, discrimination and exclusion. Nevertheless, youth participation in development will strengthen young people's abilities to meet their own subsistence needs; prevents and reduces vulnerabilities to economic, political and socially unstable environments; promotes ownership and sustainability of interventions; helps gain entry into target communities and builds up trust and social capital.

The UN defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24. Youth do not constitute a homogeneous group; their socio-economic, demographic and geographical situations vary widely both within and between regions. Notwithstanding these differences, regional-level analysis provides a general understanding of their development profile. Some 87 per cent live in developing countries and face challenges deriving from limited access to resources, education, training, employment, and broader economic development opportunities. In general there is a reduced demand for traditional skilled manual labour - predominantly men; and a growth in flexible work, notably part-time, contract and temporary work; to date women have accounted for the majority of the increase in these forms of work, but more recently men have been catching up.

Young people are in the process of establishing a sense of identity in what is essentially an insecure world, and this underlying instability may serve to magnify the tensions and lack of control they experience on a daily basis. As Zygmunt Bauman notes, what is interesting about globalization is that the uses of time and space are "sharply differentiated as well as differentiating"

Keeping in view the drastic changes owing to globalizing processes, there has been a growth in policies from bilateral, regional and multilateral agencies, specifically discussing youth in developing countries. They offer a rich source of information on the situation facing youth and how the issue of youth can be strategically managed. "These policies have been used as a basis for the literature review of the guide. One of the core policies is, The World Programme of Action for Youth WPAY (2007)', it provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support, to improve the situation of young people around the world. Implementation of WPAY requires the full enjoyment by young people of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and also requires that Governments take effective action against violations of these rights and freedoms and promote non-discrimination, tolerance,

respect for diversity, with full respect for various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of their young people, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all young women and men.

Theoretically speaking, most people would agree that the principle of children's right to equal life chances is indispensable. Even in modern democracies, however, there remain significant correlations between the current socio-economic position of parents and the future socio-economic position of their children (Bowles et al., 2005). The existence of intergenerational inequality across a range of areas makes it reasonable to suppose that pathways to adult social exclusion are founded in early experiences, abilities, and resources (Hobcraft, 1998; Bynner, 2001).

In recent decades, the effects of globalization and de-industrialization have resulted in youth transitions becoming extended. Alternatives to the traditional, quick movement from school to work made by working-class young people have evolved in which longer spells of post-16 training and further education play a greater part. Summarizing much recent youth research, Jones (2002) stresses the hardening up of 'the youth divide' and the social polarization of young people's experiences and life-chances. Those who make the speediest transitions into a youth labour market that has virtually 'collapsed', to parenthood and to independent living face far greater risks of the negative outcomes associated with social exclusion (Catan, 2003; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997).

Extended youth transition is not just a social justice issue. Ultimately, socially excluded groups place significant cost burdens on society in relation to publicly-funded health services, social security and justice system costs and the downstream impact of decreased individual earning capacity, lost productivity and decreased tax revenue. For this reason, many countries are now investing substantial resources in developing the capacity of the not-for-profit sector to provide more holistic, community-based responses to social exclusion, particularly among young people.

In brief, 'social exclusion' and 'extended youth transitions' are widely used – sometimes together – in policy, practice and academic debates. Government policy usually stresses the social exclusion of people because of their lack of paid employment. Other approaches emphasize the importance of helping the poor through redistributing wealth. Finally, descriptions of the socially excluded 'underclass' sometimes suggest that the socially excluded – and their alleged 'cultures of poverty' – are responsible for their own predicament.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND YOUTHS:

What does the term 'social exclusion' actually mean or who is socially excluded or even what is the basis of social inclusion? The society offers a bundle of essential rights to the individual to explore his/her potentials or to enjoy his or life to its fullest. In other words, we can say that the process which helps the individuals to attain the full membership of the society. Those basic social rights or process can be access to power, status, wealth and income. Without the access of those social rights the individual can't be the full member of the society and thus in absence of any of those rights he/she gets excluded from the society. There are numbers of occasions where the member of any society is denied to access power, status, wealth and income. We can divide those occasions into segments like caste, class, ethnicity, gender etc. Denial to those rights on the ground of those segments leads to an inequality in the society and the social inequality eventually social exclusion. Amartya Sen classified the social exclusion into active and passive forms. In case of active social exclusion the individual is directly debarred from taking part in any social process or his/her right is revoked by the state. We can take the example of migrant workers; their civil and political rights are directly denied by the state. And thus they are not eligible to be the full member of the society. On the other hand passive social exclusion comes through a process where no deliberate attempt is made to exclude the individual from the society or denied to be the full member of the society. But the existing set up nullifies his/her right to become a full member of the society. We can take the example of poverty. Due to poverty the individual remains outside the political and other civil rights.

Social exclusion is a thus a relative concept, in the sense that an individual can be socially excluded only in comparison with other members of a society: there is no 'absolute' social exclusion, and an individual can be declared socially excluded only with respect to the society of which he is considered to be a member. An additional relative feature is that social exclusion depends on the extent to which an individual is able to associate and identify with others. The UK's Social Exclusion Unit has defined social exclusion as a label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown (Cabinet Office: December 1997). This definition lays emphasis on states of multiple deprivation as the defining feature of social exclusion, creating groups of socially excluded people; 'life on the margins'

The socio-economic and political context (including the labour market; the educational system; religion and other cultural systems; and political institutions) give rise to patterns of social stratification based on differential access to economic status, power and prestige. Income levels, education, occupation status, gender, race/ethnicity and other factors are used as proxy indicators of these differential social positions. Based on socio-economic position, individuals and groups experience differences in exposure and vulnerability to marginalization.

The longitudinal data allow us to analyze the pathways through which adverse living conditions may influence the future life-course outcomes of children. We focus primarily on childhood poverty and social problems in the family of origin, but life events and risks during adolescence and adulthood, such as delinquency, educational achievement, and health are also taken into account. Cumulative disadvantage theory posits that different life-course trajectories arise from early inequalities. In line with this perspective, we ask in what way early risk factors shape outcome trajectories in both the short and long term, and how the effects of risk factors accumulate over the life course.

Although the grounds for social exclusion of adults and youngsters are largely the same, it is worthwhile to go deeper into the specific case of the latter. Youngsters find themselves in a crucial stage of their life where one mistake can often be paid for repeatedly, well into adulthood. A number of different theories and frameworks look at the importance of the social inclusion of youngsters from different perspectives. We briefly introduce them here for your reference. If you feel like delving deeper into the matter, then have a go at the references below.

The ‘human capital theory’ looks at exclusion from a macro perspective and emphasizes the role of individuals as potential workers and results in a subsequent focus on building those skills that increase chances of employment. Personal characteristics such as parental socio-economical status, gender, disability, health, ethnicity, religion, place of residence and geographical mobility are among the factors that may have an impact on unemployment or low wages. A good education, training, good health and similar productivity enhancing investments during one's life will pay off later.

The ‘life course framework’ on the other hand, takes a micro perspective and starts from the notion that, over time, an individual may move through a sequence of socially patterned, culturally defined age-graded roles and social transitions. Central

to this framework are the concepts of trajectories, transitions and turning points. Life is seen as comprising a number of trajectories of considerable duration, marked by sequences of transitions or turning points. Transitions are changes in state or entries and exits to a role. Turning points are relatively abrupt life events, often accidental or not for seen. Social exclusion is seen as a trajectory and not just a simple transition.

Life-course theory (Elder et al., 2003) also posits that individuals construct their own life course through their choices and actions, but within the constraints of historical and social circumstances. This view is in line with a resource perspective: People are regarded as active agents whose access to resources and capacity to make use of them determines their levels of opportunity and chances in life. For instance, poverty during childhood affects educational achievement, health outcomes, and delinquency in adolescence, which in turn affects the risk for low paid jobs, unemployment, and ultimately social exclusion in adulthood. Available resources determine the level of opportunity at different stages during the life course.

Dynamic understanding of youth is a phase in the life-course between childhood and adulthood. Coles (2000) sees youth transitions as having three main dimensions: the move from full-time education into the labour market (the school-to-work career); the attainment of (relative) independence from family of origin (the family career); and the move away from the parental home (the housing career).

Ones have to see how poverty is during childhood and other social problems in the family of origin interrelated, and in what way do they increase the risk for social exclusion in mid-life? Are different risk trajectories triggered by poverty and social problems respectively? Do risk factors in adulthood have a greater negative impact for individuals who entered a negative pathway in childhood and early adolescence as compared to those who did not?

Interesting aspects of life course perspectives in relation to youths might include:

- **Interplay of human lives and historical time:** Individual and family development must be understood in historical context.
- **Timing of lives:** Particular roles and behaviors are associated with particular age groups, based on biological age, psychological age, social age, and spiritual age.
- **Linked or interdependent lives:** Human lives are interdependent, and the family is the primary arena for experiencing and interpreting wider historical, cultural, and social phenomena.

- **Human agency in making choices:** The individual life course is constructed by the choices and actions individuals take within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstances.
- **Diversity in life course trajectories:** There is much diversity in life course pathways, due to cohort variations, social class, culture, gender, and individual agency.
- **Developmental risk and protection:** Experiences with one life transition have an impact on subsequent transitions and events, and may either protect the life course trajectory or put it at risk.

PORTRAYING ASPECTS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION AMONG YOUTHS IN GLOBALIZING WORLD:

Social exclusion is multifaceted and involves varied degree of exclusion. One can be seen as an active or passive exclusion of the youths which can be manifested in these and many such aspects as mentioned below:

a) Discrimination: Chronic and repetitive experiences of discrimination (based on various individual characteristics such as ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, language) increase the probability of experiencing social exclusion. The literature and available data indicate that not only objective discrimination leads to worsening living and health conditions, but also the subjective feeling of being discriminated against, negatively affect young people's quality of life, health, and motivation to participate in political and cultural life (Gee and Walsemann, 2009).

Actual or perceived unequal treatment based on sexual, religious, cultural, and physical characteristics often translates into barriers to accessing services that should be available to everybody and to enjoying universal human rights. Furthermore, a number of reasons why an individual feels discriminated against can overlap making it even more likely that health and wellbeing are jeopardized, and the feeling of belonging to the social and political community is weakened. In India one finds discrimination of youths based on region, religion, gender, caste etc.

b) Lack of residency, legal status, or permanent address: A permanent address, a residency permit, and a legal status in the host-country, are often preconditions for enjoying basic economic and social rights in most developed and developing nations. For example, health care coverage, enrolment in formal or non-formal education programmes, and registration with social

and employment-seeking services, are generally inaccessible to individuals who lack a legal and official status in the country where they live.

In India, especially in the metropolis like Delhi, Bangalore, Calcutta, Mumbai the youths in search for categories of employment or even employed youth struggles for decent housing at affordable price. In search for stable and satisfactory employment i.e. transitional youth they are excluded from various aspects of civic lives.

c) Low levels of education and exclusion: Experiences in education (starting with early childhood education) lay critical foundations for a person's entire life course. In particular, early school leaving and barriers to accessing affordable, quality education and training are common occurrences in the life trajectories of socially excluded young people, which affect their ability to secure comfortable living conditions, enjoy cultural and political participation, protect their own health, avoid risky behaviours, and obtain help and assistance when in need.

d) Poverty and unemployment: As one of the main determinants of social exclusion, poverty strongly affects the quality of life of excluded young people. In particular, poverty and insecure work contracts with no job security and a low income means that young people may have insufficient resources to afford quality housing and material security, quality education and training, good health care, cultural, and recreational activities, as well as access to professional counselling in case of emotional difficulties.

Kronauer (1998) outlines that social exclusion is always linked with unemployment – and that it is only given if at least both a marginal economic position and social isolation are experienced at the same time. However, it must be stressed that this concept can only be understood by considering its multidimensionality. This means that although unemployment seems to be a central indicator for increasing social exclusion, all possible interactions and sequences between the following six dimensions for social exclusion must be taken into account equally. Exclusion from the Labour Market (1) describes the situation of facing external barriers to (re-) enter the labour market combined with a retreat of the affected person leading to resignation regarding the own (re-)employment. The second dimension, economic exclusion (2) is usually referred to as poverty and includes the financial dependency upon the welfare state or a socially unacceptable income, and the loss of ability to financially support oneself or the own family. Institutional exclusion (3) can occur from the side of the educational system (in both schools and further qualification and training institutions), institutions dealing with unemployment and poverty, and public and private service institutions (such as banks and

insurance agencies). Besides the lack of support both before and during phases of unemployment, two other factors come into play: the experience of feelings of institutional dependency leading to shame and passivity, and the possible counterproductive effect of state support in the sense of exclusion of unemployed persons through their inclusion into a stable system. The fourth and fifth dimensions are closely linked with each other. *Exclusion through social isolation* (4) describes either a retreat of the social network or one's own retreat which can lead to a reduction of contacts to only one specific group of people or even a general isolation of the affected person. On a societal level, *cultural exclusion* (5) refers to the inability to live according to the socially accepted norms and values with the possible consequence of identification with deviant norms and behaviours. Stigmatization and sanctions from the social surroundings are also subsumed within this dimension. The last dimension describes *spatial exclusion* (6) which manifests itself in the objective spatial concentration of persons with limited financial possibilities often coming from a similar social and/or cultural background and in feelings of isolation due to a missing infrastructure within the own residential area (e.g., lack of transportation, shops, but also cultural events, etc.).

The main aspects preceding the exclusion of youth from the labour market are described to an increasing degree also of spatial processes of exclusion. A missing or low qualification level is often found among those young persons who have already grown up in a situation of relative poverty in deprived areas leading to multiple socialization deficiencies. In this regard, economic exclusion is often also linked with low qualification possibilities through spatial segregation.

In general, a number of factors regarding the social exclusion of marginalized youngsters that occur in all countries as highlighted for “Tackling child poverty and promoting the social inclusion of children in the EU” report are as follows:

- The high number of poor and socially excluded children living in jobless households or households with a low work intensity;
- The high risk of poverty and social exclusion faced by children growing up in lone-parent families and in larger families with three or more children;
- The significant number of children living in households where one or both parents is in work but the income is insufficient to lift the family out of income poverty (in-work poverty);

- The continuing impact of gender inequalities in terms of access to employment, levels of remuneration and the sharing of caring responsibilities;
- The low level of income support for families with children in some countries;
- The high risk of poverty and social exclusion faced by many immigrant children and by children belonging to some ethnic minorities;
- The particularly high risk of extreme poverty and social exclusion faced by some groups of children such as children growing up in institutions, children with a disability, children who are victims of violence, abuse and trafficking, children who are unaccompanied migrants;
- The high levels of early school leaving and school failure among children growing up in poor and socially excluded families;
- The multi-dimensional nature of child poverty and social exclusion, which shows that income poverty and lack of resources are also frequently associated with having poor health, living in inadequate housing and a dangerous environment and/or having poor access to key services such as health services, social services and childcare services;
- The significant intergenerational inheritance of disadvantage, in particular educational disadvantage;
- The lack of opportunities for many children growing up in poverty and social exclusion to participate fully in society and in particular in normal social, cultural and sporting activities.

TOWARDS INCLUSION OF YOUTHS IN DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED NATIONS:

Keeping in view the aspects of exclusion of youths there is an urgent need towards their inclusion and integration with the changing society. The 1990s signified the rise of a participation and inclusion discourse in social policies at the European level and in the European member states. The rethinking of the welfare state in terms of pushing back unemployment brought along the presupposition of active and responsible citizens (Harris 1999).

Many young people have adopted a world view in which the whole globe represents the key arena for social action. Trans-world contacts have helped to create lasting bonds of global youth solidarity, a prime example being global protests (especially by anti-capitalist groups).

Young people are actively using the global media to express themselves, and probably constitute the group that has contributed most to making globalization the political issue it is today. However, being active is not necessarily the same as being powerful, and this is particularly true in the context of globalization. The rhetoric that might be associated with young people's citizenship in a global community generally does not match the reality. As noted in the context of examining the cultural manifestations of globalization in young people's lives, and as suggested in the work of David Harvey, global forces permeate young people's lives—or at least those living in the developed world. Young people are in one sense citizens of a global culture but at the same time struggle for a sense of acceptance in the societies in which they live. For youth, this is the ultimate paradox of globalization.

Development activities are often imposed upon young people, who are virtually powerless to influence the process in any meaningful way. Intervention is needed to strengthen their participation and input in the processes determining their future. As stated in a report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the global situation of youth, "Empowerment ... involves young people as active agents for change and development, instead of ... passive targets of externally initiated programmes. Globalization is ultimately as complex as young people's lives are multidimensional. The combination of the two inevitably creates an explosive and heady mix. Young people's transitions are to varying degrees becoming increasingly open-ended, but that open-endedness is introducing an enormous assortment of complications that are making young people's lives more difficult than ever. As World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn states, "We are convinced that globalization can and does contribute to development, but we cannot ignore those who are left out. Nor can we fail to recognize how much better development progress could be.

Ways in which they approach promoting social inclusion of marginalized youngsters.

Facilitate Digital Inclusion entails making sure the youngster at risk of social exclusion is able to bridge the first, second and third digital divides, gaining proper and regular access to the internet, gaining the skills to make use of the internet and lastly being guided and stimulated to use the internet in such a way that it can benefit the youngster.

Improve Educational Attainment comprises assisting youngsters in such a way that it benefits their school work.

Increase Employability Skills entails actions that are focused on preparing the youngsters for an efficient transition into professional life.

Improve Communication Skills are those actions aimed at increasing the youngsters' communication skills necessary to interact on an equal basis with peers, agencies and service providers and the wider community.

Foster Social Relations are those actions aimed at creating new and strengthening existing social ties between the youngsters and their peers, family and support staff working with them.

Community Participation focuses on encouraging participation in community groups, clubs and cultural events, but also bringing together people from different social backgrounds. All of this focused on allowing the youngsters to transcend their current situation and gain the benefits from interacting with people that can offer different points of view, new information, insights and opportunities.

Promote Active Citizenship lastly, are those actions at encouraging a better understanding of the self and society and encouraging participation in local governance.

SUMMING UP:

Unemployment is a central risk factor for young people, which in the long term threatens the overall integration of young people into society. The most important vulnerability factors that contribute to an increase of the risk of social exclusion for young unemployed people in the long-term are in all countries low qualification, passivity at the labour market, a precarious financial situation, low or missing social support and insufficient or nonexistent institutional support. The most important protective factor for unemployed youth is social support. Integration into social networks is of great importance for youth in India. Though individualization processes in might weaken this buffer effect of family support, institutional support should be improved to counterbalance the effects of modernization. The normalization of youth unemployment and the prolongation of the youth period - although not meeting central developmental demands of maturing young people - as well as a widely accepted submerged economy strongly influence the individual experience. Similarly, social origin can be a protective factor for the youth as well as a decisive vulnerability factor: Poverty and other social problems in the family can increase the

risk of social exclusion for the youth. This can be interpreted in the sense that the effects of social origin are reinforced by the experience of long-term unemployment of young people.

The determinants of and possible solutions to youth social exclusion allows for three main concluding remarks - Young people are at risk of social exclusion. Across the different dimensions investigated, a significant proportion of the youth population is living in marginalized and deprived conditions, which hinder them from exercising their fundamental rights and threaten their long-term future; the main determinants of social exclusion are rooted in social inequalities, such as obstacles to accessing quality education and training, securing adequate employment, suffering from discriminatory practices and attitudes, as well as being subject to exclusionary processes based on residence and/or citizenship; finally the discrimination, and in particular gender based discrimination, appears to affect significantly the health and emotional wellbeing of young people. Feeling discriminated against one's own religion, colour, and sexual identity also poses serious obstacles to youth participation.

In order to effectively prevent and remedy the risk of exclusion for many young people, the determinants that generate social inequalities need to be redressed. Lessons learned from the tradition of youth work indicate that this is possible. Targeted and comprehensive political action is highly needed to make positive change in the life of young people living urban centers. Fostering education and training, offering concrete opportunities for integration in the labour market, fighting discriminatory practices by creating opportunities for real inclusion, and designing actions not tied to formal citizenship/residence requirements that can reach out to marginalized groups, are all powerful mechanisms of social inclusion.

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