

Gabriele Koehler, Alberto D. Cimadamore, Fadia Kiwan,  
Pedro Manuel Monreal Gonzalez (Eds.)

**The Politics of Social Inclusion:  
Bridging Knowledge and Policies  
Towards Social Change**

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CROP, the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty, was initiated in 1992, and the CROP Secretariat was officially opened in June 1993 by the Director General of UNESCO, Dr Frederico Mayor. The CROP network comprises scholars engaged in poverty-related research across a variety of academic disciplines and has been coordinated by the CROP Secretariat at the University of Bergen, Norway.

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# Figures, tables and boxes

## Figures

2.1	Baseline: net primary school attendance, by wealth and gender.....	64
2.2	Excluding poor girls yet attaining the goal.....	65
2.3	Equitable approach to targeting.....	66
6.1	Social transformation and social growth.....	144
6.2	Growth rates, Jamaica, Haiti, and Latin America and the Caribbean, 2005–15.....	148
9.1	Kathputli Colony as a vibrant community, 2014.....	242
9.2	Kathputli Redevelopment Plan.....	243
9.3	Redevelopment of the Kathputli Colony, 2018.....	244

## Tables

2.1	Policy intervention.....	60
6.1	Basic socio-economic data for selected countries and the region....	146
6.2	Profile of poor and non-poor children in Jamaica.....	147
6.3	Gender participation indicators in Jamaica and Haiti.....	149
6.4	Economic and human impacts of selected storm events on Jamaica.....	150
6.5	Effects of natural disasters on Haiti.....	151
9.1	Urban sector policies in India.....	239
12.1	South Asia – selected national indicators.....	314
12.2	Multidimensional poverty index (MPI) across social groups, India.....	323
12.3	Poverty ratio by social groups, India, 2011–12.....	323
12.4	Intersectional inequalities: hunger and nutrition outcomes for women in India.....	324
12.5	Inequalities in education in India.....	325
12.6	Gender inequalities in India: drop-out rates by school grade.....	326
12.7	Unequal access to water and sanitation for all.....	326
12.8	Crimes against Dalit women.....	328
12.9	Crimes against SCs registered under the Prevention of Atrocities Act.....	329
12.10	Overview: selected public policy programmes in South Asia.....	331
12.11	The 5-Rs framework for social inclusion.....	340

## Boxes

6.1	Facts about poverty in Haiti.....	145
6.2	Some issues identified by residents in three urban poor communities.....	154
6.3	Features of social exclusion in Haiti.....	155
6.4	A teacher’s account of school violence in Haiti.....	156
6.5	Education as a liberating force from social exclusion in Jamaica.....	157
11.1	Dulare.....	296
11.2	Sureshi.....	298
11.3	Ramnaresh.....	299
11.4	Nahid.....	300
11.5	Somvati.....	304

## Acronyms and abbreviations

ACHR	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APVVU	Andhra Pradesh Vyvasaya Vruthidarula Union
BJP	Bhartiya Janata Party
BNA	Basic Needs Approach
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
CBO	community-based organizations
CEDAW	International Convention on the Eradication of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CEE	Centre for the Economics of Education
CERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
CRPD	International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CROP	Comparative Research Programme on Poverty
CSEI	Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion
DDA	Delhi Development Authority
DFID	(UK) Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GPI	gender parity index
HDA	human development approach
HDI	Human Development Index
IAY	Indira Awas Yojna
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IIEP	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
IILS	International Institute for Labour Studies
ILGI	informal local governance institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISC	could be a mistake
ISSC	International Social Science Council
JNNURM	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
KCC	Kampala City Council
KCCA	Kampala Capital City Authority
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MHUPA	Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (India)
MOST	Management of Social Transformations
NBER	(US) National Bureau of Economic Research
NCDHR	National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPEP	National Poverty Eradication Programme
NSDFU	National Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda

## Acronyms and abbreviations

OBC	other backward castes
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPP	Orangi Pilot Project
PATH	Programme of Advancement through Health and Education
PCI	Planning Commission of India
RAY	Rajiv Awas Yojana
SC	Scheduled Castes
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDI	Slum/Shack Dwellers International
SES	socio-economic status
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SP	Samajwadi Party
SRS	Slum Redevelopment Scheme
ST	Scheduled Tribes
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UiB	University of Bergen
UNDESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNDRIP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNRISD	UN Research Institute for Social Development
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
WHO	World Health Organization

## **Acknowledgements**

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# Contents

*List of figures, tables and boxes*

*List of acronyms and abbreviations*

*Acknowledgements*

## **Part I: Conceptual understandings of social inclusion..... 11**

CHAPTER 1. The politics of social inclusion: introduction  
(*Gabriele Koehler, Alberto D. Cimadamore, Fadia Kiwan  
and Pedro Monreal Gonzalez*)..... 13

CHAPTER 2. Overcoming social exclusion in education:  
reflections on policy challenges (*Enrique Delamonica*) ..... 41

CHAPTER 3. Social exclusion and the relational elements  
of poverty (*Paul Spicker*)..... 81

CHAPTER 4. Policies without politics: the exclusion of power  
dynamics in the construction of 'sustainable development'  
(*Juan Telleria*) ..... 99

## **Part II: The politics of social exclusion and policies for inclusion ..... 115**

CHAPTER 5. An alternative reading of the concept of 'inclusion':  
the Bolivian concept of 'community with quality of life'  
(*Nelson Antequera Durán*) ..... 117

CHAPTER 6. Social growth and social transformation:  
experiences from the Caribbean (*Aldrie Henry-Lee*) ..... 137

CHAPTER 7. Critical and propositional urban planning:  
the co-production approach in Kampala (*Gilbert Siame*)..... 167

CHAPTER 8. Between control and compassion: the politics  
of neighbourhood community services in urban China  
(*Judith Audin*)..... 195

## Contents

CHAPTER 9. The right to centrality and discursive articulations: a case of city planning policies in Delhi ( <i>Ashok Kumar</i> ) .....	223
CHAPTER 10. Undermining the SDGs: informality, patronage and the politics of inclusion in Mumbai ( <i>Joop de Wit</i> ).....	255
CHAPTER 11. Politics of caste-based exclusion: poverty alleviation schemes in rural India ( <i>Rachel Kurian and Deepak Singh</i> ) .....	283
CHAPTER 12. Transformations necessary to 'leave no one behind': social exclusion in South Asia ( <i>Gabriele Koehler and Annie Namala</i> ).....	313
<i>Notes on the contributors</i> .....	353

**Part I**  
**Conceptual understandings of social inclusion**



# CHAPTER 1

## THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION: INTRODUCTION

*Gabriele Koehler, Alberto D. Cimadamore, Fadia Kiwan and  
Pedro Monreal Gonzalez*

### A. The rationale for a volume on the politics of inclusion

Academics, policy-makers, civil society and concerned citizens across the planet are alarmed by the persistence of global poverty, the intensity of social exclusion and increasing inequalities. Multidimensional poverty continues to affect half of humanity. Inequality has reached unprecedented levels: according to Oxfam's analysis, for example, in 2018, 26 people owned the same wealth as the 3.8 billion people who make up the poorest half of humanity (Oxfam, 2019; also see Piketty, 2014; UNRISD, 2018). Climate change impact and armed conflicts are wiping out many human development achievements of the past decades, frequently exacerbating existing patterns of social exclusion.

To redress the dystopian situation, the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – Transforming our World (United Nations, 2015), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2015), and designed a new urban agenda (UN Habitat, 2016). All of these have in common a commitment to norms and principles of social inclusion – promising to ‘end poverty and hunger in all their forms and dimensions’ and to ‘leave no one behind’. Leaving no one behind has been understood in a universalist and rights-based interpretation as including all people on the planet in sustainable and just societies. That would indeed be transformative of the dominant socio-economic orders, which have been reproducing and cementing poverty, inequality and social exclusion throughout history.

The status quo to be transformed is maintained by power relations which need to be addressed in order to produce sustainable economic, social, ecological and political inclusion for all. However, the structural transformations that would be required to unseat the dynamics of poverty, inequalities and exclusion are far less addressed, and do not feature expressly in the normative texts. Besides, the concept of inclusion is not defined, and therefore it is not possible to measure or evaluate progress toward the achievement of this goal,

which is central to the general ambition to 'leave no one behind'. In short, power relations tend to be ignored or overlooked in domestic and multilateral policy debates (UNRISD, 2016), and the absence of a clear understanding of what social inclusion means articulates the problematic on which this book intends to focus.

This volume was therefore conceived to address the power relations that both sustain and transform social orders marked by social exclusion, and to advance the understanding of the *politics* of social inclusion.

The collective construction of this understanding began with an international workshop held at UNESCO Headquarters, followed up in collaborative work between the editors and authors. This introductory chapter intends to synthesize and reflect on this process of collaborative knowledge production while advancing useful knowledge on the politics of inclusion. In order to do that, we first track social inclusion deliberations from two critical vantage points – first, that of academic discussions which generally analyze the phenomenon of social exclusion, and second, from the discussion of social inclusion as it has informed debates and agenda-setting at the United Nations and related multilateral bodies, and at the European Commission. We then provide an overview of the two sections of the volume and their chapters. In closing, we sketch out a possible way forward regarding the research and policy nexus, trying to avoid jargon and unnecessary complexities to reach beyond the academic community.

### **B. Defining and understanding exclusion, inclusion and their political dimensions**

Social inclusion presupposes in our view the realization of human rights, as laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and the UN Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and Political and Civil Rights. This general understanding needs of course to be contextualized within national and subnational legal orders that articulate states and societies around notions of justice which are not normally realized. The high levels of poverty and inequality are indicative of the structural violation of human, social, economic and cultural rights observed in many societies. In this view, social exclusion implies the denial to members of society of their basic human, political, social and economic rights guaranteed in international, national and subnational constitutions and legal

orders. Rights are not realized for many reasons, principally because the excluded and the poor have limited or no access to the institutions of justice, and therefore are usually powerless in systems structurally biased against them. In this general context, the politics of inclusion refers to the power relations evolving within historical forms of states and international relations where asymmetrical economic, social and political orders tend to exclude large segments of the population (Cimadamore, 2008; UNRISD, 2018).

As we can see below and throughout the volume, this view is not necessarily shared by those who tend to focus narrowly on notions of inclusion as merely concerning inclusion in labour markets or social protection measures. The transformational challenge is complex in itself. It is even more so when we depart from a situation where there is no clear consensus on what inclusion is, how it is measured, what the targets are, and the means and policies to reach them. This volume can only deal with some aspects of the enormous analytical and policy puzzle that needs to be solved – at the latest – by 2030 if we wish to remain true to the commitments of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015) and other multilateral normative frameworks. Nevertheless, the book might at least selectively contribute with a number of insights to stimulate debates and research agendas aimed at addressing the problematic of social inclusion in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to situate these insights in a broader discourse, there is a need to scan some relevant understandings of exclusion and inclusion (Delamonica, Chapter 2), and their interface and overlappings with poverty (see Spicker, Chapter 3). We therefore begin by sketching the evolution of these and other related concepts. This may serve to assess the pool of policies for social inclusion derived from different schools of thought and political ideologies, so as to contribute to an analysis of the *politics* of social inclusion.

### **Social exclusion/inclusion in the academic literature**

The concept of social exclusion has analytical and political implications. Analytically, it can be traced to various strands in social and political literature focusing mainly on the causes and consequences of the systematic marginalization of individuals and communities from decent work, socio-economic security and equitable access to public services.

As suggested before, socially, economically and politically, processes of exclusion undermine social justice in societies where

constitutional rights and obligations set the parameters of the relationships among all components of the state. In this sense, policies of social inclusion aim to redress and overcome those unbalances and asymmetries produced by the lack of realization of those basic human, social, economic and cultural rights that constitute the pillars of state and societal orders.

However, in mainstream discussions the concept of exclusion is often attributed to and refers to the work of the French social worker René Lenoir. His treatise on the excluded from the 1970s does not define the term social exclusion, but instead is an empirical enquiry into the situation of people challenged by difficult economic, social or health circumstances in the 1960s and early 1970s in France (Lenoir, 1974). Such focus on discussions in 1970s Europe somehow ignores or minimizes the fact that the social sciences have at least since the nineteenth century had a customary concern with issues of social exclusion, originally identified as 'marginalization', and that processes of social exclusion have been a major analytical theme in the global South for many decades.

For instance, Karl Marx's 'reserve army' provides the centrepiece of an explanation that situates marginalization as a structural phenomenon endemic to capitalism and the related processes of exclusion and poverty. Conversely, neoclassical economics used the term 'residuum' (Marshall, 1925) in a different political vein, ascribing exclusion to personal character flaws or cultural resistance, such as 'poor physique and feeble will, with no enterprise, no courage, no hope and scarcely any self-respect, whom misery drives to work for lower wages than the same work gets in the country' (Marshall, 1925, pp. 142–51).

Social sciences in Latin America and the Caribbean during the 1960s and 1970s focused on marginality (*marginalidad*) in the context of the modernization process. This referred to those segments of the population that were sidelined from the dynamics of modernization that took place in the region in the first half of the twentieth century. The main analytical (and political) proposition was that this part of the population needed to be integrated into the process of modernization, since marginality indicated a transitory phenomenon located between traditional societies and modern societies (Pérez Sáinz, 2012; Nun, 1969).

Authors like Janice Perlman conducted a thorough analysis of the different approaches to marginality in the context of the theory of modernization, and developed a critical assessment. Her main



argument was that the approach of marginality was based in a model of equilibrium of social integration in which relations among all social actors were seen as mutually beneficial. Her critique can be summarized as the idea that:

it is perfectly possible to have a stable system biased towards the benefit of some actors precisely because there is exploitation, explicit or implicit, of other actors. The exploited groups are not marginalized. On the contrary, they are integrated into the system, operating as a vital component of the system. That is, integration does not necessarily imply reciprocity.

(Perlman, 1976; and also see Pérez Sáinz, 2012)

Nor does integration necessarily imply progress towards a more just social inclusion. In a similar vein, it is argued that the operation of basic markets (labour, capital, credit, land, knowledge) necessitates the disempowerment of certain social groups, and when the access to social citizenship is not guaranteed, primary exclusion turns into social exclusion (Mora Salas, 2004; Pérez Sáinz and Mora Salas, 2006).

This assessment tallies with approaches from/about Asia that build on the notion of participatory exclusion (Agarwal, 2001) or adverse incorporation (Hickey and Du Toit 2007) – forms of inclusion that are detrimental to the community concerned.

Concerning Asia, the literature looks at social exclusion generically and analytically. Amartya Sen, for example, was one of the first to raise the issue for the region: his work on gender-based exclusion – resulting in millions of ‘missing women’ in South Asia – was seminal (Sen, 1990). Sen noted a ‘specific type of social exclusion that – particularly from basic education and elementary social opportunities – plagues the economies of West and South Asia’ (Sen, 2000, p. 31). His work on identity-based exclusions and the need to strengthen capabilities informed an entire literature, both academic research and empirical studies, including surveys commissioned and conducted for or by civil society, human rights bodies and development agencies.<sup>1</sup> Power is constituent in social exclusion, and many of the Asian theoreticians have formulated this in various ways. Amartya Sen understands social exclusion as a relational issue, in terms of how individuals relate to each other; this is constituent for his conceptualization of the issue (Sen, 2000). For Arundhati Roy (2014), social exclusion is embedded in political structures and contestations. At the empirical level, the relationality – in the sense of political oppression – becomes manifest

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1 The Asian Development Bank (ADB), for example, picked up the social exclusion concept after the Asian financial crisis of 1997/98.

in the field work presented in this volume, and in the global survey done elsewhere by Deborah Rogers and Balint Balázs (2016).

### **Horizontal exclusion and the exclusion–poverty nexus**

A related strand of social exclusion discourse is that of the different vectors or processes of social exclusion, and their interface, sometimes described as intersecting inequalities (Kabeer, 2010) or intersecting forms of discrimination and clustered deprivations (Bennett, 2006; Razavi and Hassim, 2007; Razavi, 2016; UN Women, 2018). Clustered deprivations, for example, refer to the process whereby ‘deprivations ... co-produce and “cluster” together, so that deprivation in one area is accompanied by deprivation in another’ (UN Women, 2018, p. 139). Poverty, understood as a lack of access to resources, tends to be ‘strongly correlated with many other forms of deprivation, including ... education, health and well-being’ (UN Women, 2018 p. 139). Similarly, inequality is experienced not only among individuals but among groups defined by class, gender, ethnic condition and territory, among other factors (Pérez Sáinz and Mora Salas, 2009). The operation of ‘basic markets’ is determined not only by power dynamics of class but also by those other factors, resulting in diverse possibilities of unequal distribution of the surplus, which could be different by country and period.

Most analysts agree that gender-based exclusion is overarching. It takes the form of political and social oppression, discrimination and economic marginalization of women and sexual minorities. It is frequently expressed in outright violence against women. It affects all income and sociocultural groups: women in all societies, classes, and ethnic and faith communities are at a structural and deeply embedded disadvantage. It exacerbates the other vectors of exclusion and marginalization, and is cross-cutting and hence definitive. However, women are not a minority, so the processes and dynamics of exclusion are different from those affecting other identity groups.

Gender-based exclusion is often exacerbated by ethnicity-based and racist forms of exclusion, including caste systems. All are based on entrenched hierarchies and asymmetrical power relations (Kabeer, 2010; Rogers and Balázs, 2016; World Bank, 2013). Vectors and outcomes of exclusion can also be categorized by other forms of identity. These comprise economic factors such as socio-economic and employment status, and coverage by social protection/social security systems; sociocultural factors, such as gender and sexual orientation, age, health status, including physical and mental