

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND CHILDREN IN OECD COUNTRIES: SOME CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

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1. Defining Social Exclusion

1. Ever since the term first gained first gained usage in France in the 1970s (Evans, Paugham, and Prellis, 1995), social exclusion has, alongside poverty and inequality, become one of the most important concept in social policy debates in Europe. At the same time, there is considerable lack of clarity about the meaning of this concept, so that a first important task in setting out conceptual issues surrounding social exclusion and children is to define the term. While many writers have used the term interchangeably with poverty and/or unemployment (Regional Studies Conference, 1997), such usage adds little new to the focus of the commonly discussed issues of poverty and unemployment. To add conceptual meaning to social exclusion, it is important to make the distinction between social exclusion and poverty or unemployment.

2. K Duffy defined social exclusion as : ‘low material means and inability to participate effectively in economic, social, and cultural life, and, in some characteristics, alienation and distance from the mainstream society.’ (Duffy 1995). While this definition adds important new dimensions to the term and distinguishes it from income poverty, it is a bit ambiguous as it assumes that ‘low material means’ (i.e. income poverty) is an integral part of it. As argued below, this does not necessarily have to be the case, although it is likely that poverty is a contributing factor to the inability to participate and the alienation from mainstream society.

3. Room (1995) adds a new dimension to the discussion by couching the issue of social exclusion in a rights-based language when he talks about social exclusion as the ‘denial or non-realisation of civil, political, and social rights of citizenship.’ Such a rights-based approach to the problem of social exclusion has much to recommend it. It has great affinity with the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen which calls for efforts to ensure that people have equal access to basic capabilities such as the ability to be healthy, well-fed, housed, integrated into the community, participate in community and public life, and

enjoy social bases of self-respect (Sen, 1992).¹ The term social exclusion would then be seen as the denial of the last three important capabilities. The advantages of the capability and rights-based approach to this issue are the following:

4. First, it emphasises that the inability to participate in, and be respected by, mainstream society is a violation of a basic right that should be open to all citizens (or residents).² It thereby places a burden on *society* to ensure that it enables participation and integration of all its members (Walker, 1997). As a result, there is less temptation to blame the excluded for their fate as is often the temptation in discussion about poverty and welfare.³ Instead, it highlights the role of political, economic and social arrangements in generating exclusion and the role of solidarity among members in overcoming it (Townsend, 1997).

5. Second, it does not demand uniformity of outcomes, but instead calls for equal freedoms for all to enjoy all aspects of citizenship. Thus an important distinction may be made between, for example, economic and social discrimination of ethnic minorities as denial of some fundamental rights of participation, and diversity of cultural and social arrangements, where portions of some ethnic or cultural minorities may choose to not participate in mainstream society despite the option to do so. The former could be an incidence of social exclusion, while the latter would not.

6. Third, it recognises the diversity of people in their ability to make use of opportunities. For example, participation in mainstream society may be seriously constrained for people with physical and mental disabilities, as it could for people who are otherwise disadvantaged by birth or background. Thus calling for equal capabilities (or the ability to exercise civil and social citizenship rights) may necessitate extra efforts by society to provide equal capabilities to such people. An equal starting point (or 'equal opportunities') may not be enough to ensure equal capabilities.⁴

7. It is important to clarify that rights in such a rights-based approach to social exclusion should not necessarily be seen as legally enforceable claims. Instead, these rights should be seen as part of our endowment as human beings and that efforts should be made to enable us to realise these rights. Whether societies will actually be able to extend these rights fully to all of their citizens (and possibly make some of them legally enforceable claims) depends on public consideration of the priority these rights should enjoy over other rights (such as the right of limits to undue interference by others, including the state), as well as the policies and means available and the incentives that such policies may create (e.g. in a poor country, it may not be possible to extend all the support that is necessary to ensure a disadvantaged person does not suffer from social exclusion)

¹ Adam Smith referred to this last issue as the ability to 'walk in public without shame', the failure of which he considered to be an important criteria of poverty.

² Citizenship itself can be a contested term and can become an exclusionary tool within a society. The refusal and or hurdles associated with granting citizenship to long-term residents of foreign origins (such as first, second and third generation foreign residents in Germany) can lead to forms of social exclusion of long-term residents who only enjoy partial citizenship rights (Mitchell and Russell, 1994). See discussion below.

³ This does not, of course, mean that efforts to reduce social exclusion will not importantly depend on the efforts of excluded individuals to be 're-inserted'.

⁴ This distinction was at the heart of a recent debate between Sen and Rawls about the focus on 'equal capabilities' or the focus on equal access to 'primary goods'. Sen argued that equal access to primary goods may not be enough for those who are disadvantaged by birth or background and may therefore need more to achieve the same capabilities (Sen, 1990).

8. Applying 'social exclusion' to children necessitates further considerations. Since children are citizens who are entitled to rights and capabilities, 'social exclusion' is an issue violating their rights and capabilities directly. At the same time, since children are growing to be adults and decisions, choices, and opportunities in childhood will crucially affect their position as adults, the impact of issues such as education and socialisation on their likely social exclusion as adults will have to be examined as well.

9. Before concluding the discussion of the terminology, it may be important to make clear distinctions between the capability-based definition of social exclusion used above and two related issues, namely poverty and disability.

10. Discussions of poverty in OECD countries tends to be very income focused (mainly due to the extensive use of poverty lines as the primary measure of poverty).⁵

11. Social exclusion is, on the other hand, not primarily concerned with income at all, but with the capabilities people enjoy or fail to enjoy. Income, of course, may be extremely important in generating some of the capabilities that would ensure social inclusion (see below). Particularly in a market economy, the ability to participate in community and public life as well as the social bases for self-respect are in important ways related to one's incomes. At the same time, income is only an imperfect proxy for inclusion or exclusion as even many non-poor may suffer from social exclusion as the same income may generate very different capabilities for people due to their inherent diversity of people and a result of inherent disadvantages by birth, background, or environment. Moreover, many elements of social 'inclusion' cannot be purchased with incomes as they are public goods that are underprovided by markets and therefore depend on public provision (or public support for private provision) or are directly dependent on public policy.⁶

12. In fact, there are cases where a well-intentioned and successful anti-poverty strategy, such as a means-tested cash transfer system which succeeds in lifting incomes above a defined poverty line, could further social exclusion if there is considerable social stigma attached to receiving these benefits and if it traps people in welfare dependency. For example, some have argued that the increasing reliance on means-tested transfers in the UK over the past 15 years has generated such stigmatisation and exclusion, while a greater reliance on contributory and insurance-based mechanisms of social support has less stigma attached and keeps recipients more firmly integrated in the mainstream society (Evans et al. 1995; Piachaud, 1997).

13. There is also an important distinction between issues of social exclusion and issues of physical and mental disability. While disability can lead to social exclusion if the disabled do not have access to the additional support and resources they need to have the ability to participate fully in community and public life, physical and mental disability is just one of many factors that can lead to such social exclusion. More importantly, it appears that problems of special needs and support for the disadvantaged groups is commonly recognised and fully accepted in the case of physical or mental disability so that in practise it appears that considerable efforts have been made in most OECD countries to include the

⁵ One could, of course, develop much broader measures of deprivation measuring many more capabilities directly. See for example the various multivariate indices proposed by the London Research Group in their attempts to map poverty and social exclusion in London (LRG, 1996).

⁶ For example, community social structures have elements of public goods and would therefore be underprovided by the market. Similarly, inclusionary or exclusionary policies relating to ethnic minorities and/or foreign residents are unrelated to the incomes of those individuals.

disabled to the extent possible in community and public life.⁷ In contrast, recognition of the need to additional efforts and greater resources for non-disabled disadvantaged groups is much more controversial and, as a result, such support is much less forthcoming. Thus in many OECD countries, social exclusion appears to be a growing and more serious problem among non-disabled disadvantaged groups than among the disabled.⁸

2. Social Exclusion: Instrumental and Intrinsic Considerations

14. The rights or capabilities based approach used above in defining social exclusion carries with it a focus on the *intrinsic* problems associated with social exclusion. If social exclusion is a violation of rights or capabilities, it immediately implies that a society that tolerates social exclusion is intrinsically deficient as it fails to grant basic rights or capabilities to its citizens. Thus this approach ensures that social exclusion is not seen primarily as a problem for those who suffer from it, but a larger societal short-coming.

15. At the same time, there are many *instrumental* reasons why social exclusion may be a serious societal problem that merits the attention of policy-makers. First, socially excluded groups may, as a result of their exclusion, suffer from deficiencies in other important capabilities, such as the ability to be healthy, well-educated, well-housed, or well-nourished. In fact, many studies have pointed to the close empirical linkages between socially excluded groups and such short-comings (e.g. Walker, 1985; LRG, 1996; Klasen 1997; Room, 1995). This clearly reduces well-being of those suffering from it, but may also have larger societal implications (e.g. due to the positive externalities of health and education).

16. In addition, social exclusion may have close empirical relations to other social problems that threaten the stability and prosperity of society at large, such as crime, violence, social pathologies, societal divisions, racism, xenophobia, etc.

17. In the case of social exclusion of children, there is the additional worry that socially excluded children will pose a threat to the future well-being of society as they may grow up with little stake in the existing order. In addition, to the extent that social exclusion is transmitted intergenerationally, social exclusion of children may create ever deeper divisions within society that amplify across generations.

18. It is important to point out that the intrinsic and instrumental reasons to be concerned about social exclusion of children have very different moral standings. While the intrinsic arguments against social exclusion rise and fall with the acceptance of their philosophical basis (such as a capability-based or other rights-based approach), the instrumental considerations rise and fall with the veracity of the linkages postulated, which largely is an empirical question. This has important implications for a research agenda on social exclusion. A research agenda focused on testing the linkages between exclusion and other

⁷ There is, of course, great variation among OECD countries in these efforts and their success in preventing social exclusion of the disabled.

⁸ There are many reasons why this may be the case. In the case of disability, the physical nature of the defect and its certifiability and measurement by the medical profession has given a strong scientific base for the disadvantage suffered. The randomness associated with disability (by birth or accident) has given it much wider sympathy than that suffered by socially excluded individuals who tend to be predominantly drawn from narrow socio-economic groups. Finally, the predominant absence of a link between disability and social pathologies (crime, violence, alcoholism, etc.) ensures that disabled do constitute the threat that socially excluded people often pose.

desirable welfare criteria implicitly accepts the instrumental approach; one that accepts the intrinsic arguments can immediately move to policy questions related to social exclusion.⁹

3. Sources of Social Exclusion

19. One way to examine sources of social exclusion is to place them in a two-way classification system (see Figure 1). The first type of classification relates to the original source of disadvantage of households or individuals which may in itself lead to social exclusion as a consequence. Four kinds of sources come to mind: economic, birth or background, social, and societal/political. At the same time, within each of these categories, it is possible to distinguish two distinct mechanisms of social exclusion. In the first the exclusion associated with the disadvantage stems directly from the disadvantage, while in the second, the exclusion stems primarily from public policy that turns an existing disadvantage into a form of social exclusion. Such public policy that fosters social exclusion may be doing so with that intent in mind (such as restrictive citizenship policies) or it may actually end up creating social exclusion despite attempting to achieve the opposite (such as stigmatising and entrapping anti-poverty policies). Let me deal with the issues in turn.

20. Before describing the four bases of social exclusion as they may relate to children, it is important to point out that they should not be seen as mutually exclusive. In fact, social exclusion has been shown to become most intractable when several of these factors appear in combination or one factor promotes the development of others (e.g. there appear to be causal empirical linkages in both directions between unemployment and income poverty on one hand, and family breakdown on the other, Paugam, 1995; Walker, 1995)

a) Economic Bases of Social Exclusion

21. Two economic disadvantages seem to be particularly important in generating social exclusion. One relates to unemployment which denies those who suffer from it access from one of the most important income, value, status, and meaning-creating activities secular liberal capitalist societies have to offer. The exclusion felt by those denied access to work, esp. for the long-term unemployed, has been documented many times; it includes the social exclusion associated with the economic vulnerability that is associated with unemployment or insecure employment, as well as the impact it has on such diverse items such as family formation and dissolution and social contacts (e.g. Paugam, 1995; Walker 1995, Bruegel and Hegewish, 1994).

22. The other relates to the low incomes, which, in market economies of the types prevailing in OECD countries, can lead to a variety of social exclusions.¹⁰ Some forms of exclusion are very directly related to economic means such as the exclusion associated with homelessness, the inability to properly feed and clothe one's children, and the inability to afford to live in neighbourhoods that are safe, clean, and have the amenities that form the social bases of self-respect. Slightly less obvious is exclusion associated with the inability to afford transport (personal or public) which, in many rural and urban

⁹ At the same time, establishing the empirical linkages may be very important to generate societal consensus around policies combating social exclusion, particularly if it can be shown that social exclusion hurts everyone and not just those suffering from it. The complete reliance on this approach is quite tricky as it may get bogged down in empirical issues rather than focus on important policy-questions.

¹⁰ The source of this lack of economic means can, of course, be unemployment, but it may also be low earnings, or inability to work, the lack of a formal or informal income support system, etc.

environments in OECD countries, precludes participation in many community and public activities. As found in studies about the changes in retailing in the past 30 years in most OECD countries, lack of affordable transport also precludes people from getting access to higher quality, greater variety, and lower cost commodities which reinforces the economic bases of social exclusion (Lang, 1997).

23. Similarly, lack of economic means precludes participation in many social and public activities that cost money, including visits to sports events, cinema, theatres, and, with the growth of cable television and pay-per-view, even watching television.

24. For children, considerable stigmatisation and social exclusion can be associated with the inability of their parents to afford many of the increasingly costly items that are in fashion among children, including brand-name clothes, expensive hobbies, the latest toys, annual vacation abroad, and the like.¹¹ In addition, to the extent that a costly private education system affords much higher quality education as is available in the public sector (particularly in some areas), as it does in many OECD countries, ability to pay can generate considerable inequality of opportunity for children.

25. Apart from these forms of social exclusion generated directly by economic disadvantage, social exclusion can be a result of economic policy. A classic case of such exclusion can be the policy of local funding of education which, if carried to the extreme (i.e. without cross-subsidisation across school districts) would ensure that economic disadvantage translates into educational disadvantage as the tax base in poor areas is too small to afford high-quality education. To a varying degree, this is the case in a number of OECD countries and thereby helps to create close linkages between economic and educational disadvantage and exclusion across generations. Moreover, policies to combat poverty such as means-tested cash transfers can help foster social exclusion in two ways. One is related to the stigma attached to receiving a means-tested grant which is unrelated to prior contributions and is often seen as a form of charity to the 'undeserving'. The other is that the rules governing such grants often discourages a return to work through the high loss of benefits associated with a return to work (and additional costs associated with work, including child-care, transport, and the like). As a result, they may entrap people in a cycle of poverty and unemployment which reinforces social exclusion (Walker, 1997).

b) Social Bases of Exclusion

26. The most important social disadvantages that may foster social exclusion for children relate to family and neighbourhood. Relating to family, separation, divorce and death of parents, and the difficult economic, social, and psychological adjustments that follow such events, tend to be among the important factors that can promote social exclusion among children, who may find it difficult to adjust to the new circumstances at home. Similarly, the economic and social circumstances under which many lone parents are dealing with can be another force of social exclusion, particularly if it is accompanied with poverty (of money or parental time) and/or the possible stigmatisation of children coming from non-traditional households. The prevalence of family break-up as an important trigger of poverty and exclusion as well as the over-representation of lone parents among the poor and socially excluded in many OECD countries is testimony to the impact of these social bases of exclusion (Walker, 1995; Walker, 1997)

¹¹ The growth in parental interest in school uniforms in the United States is one indication how parents are trying to lessen the costly competition and exclusion associated with children's clothing. One should point out that not all of the sometimes intense positional competition for status among children should be considered as part of the discussion on social exclusion, as such positional competition is a wider phenomenon than social exclusion and exists at all levels of society to some degree (Schor, 1997; Hirsch, 1976); failure to outdo the Joneses does not necessarily mean social exclusion.

27. The importance of the neighbourhood is an important, and often neglected, factor in influencing social exclusion. As it defies typical measurement instruments such as household surveys, the powerful influence of the neighbourhood in fostering social exclusion is often not picked up; instead, different types of information is needed to monitor the influence of this factor such as Local Deprivation Indices (Kristensen, 1995; Robson, et al. 1995; LRG, 1996). The neighbourhood can have a direct impact on social exclusion through the services provided in the neighbourhood (commercial and leisure facilities), the amenities and safety provided (physical attractiveness, crime, state of housing stock, etc.) or the access from the neighbourhood to other localities are lacking in important aspects (state of public transport). Slightly less direct, but equally powerful influences can operate via the quality of the educational facilities in a neighbourhood which, apart from the level of support they receive from the state (discussed above), depend importantly on the quality of other students and teachers willing to work in the area. The recent experience with school league tables in the UK has shown that there is an extremely strong correlation between socio-economics of a catchment area and the quality of the school, which appears to operate despite the absence of specific financial discrimination against poorer school districts.¹²

28. As with the case of economic bases of social exclusion, public policy may actually be contributing to the problem. In the case of support for non-traditional household structures, there is a long literature on the various incentive and disincentive effects provided by finely targeted welfare provisions to lone parents or other specific household types. State support for such households with large implicit taxes for those who begin working (and inadequate support for childcare) may actually trap families and children in poverty and offer little incentive and opportunity to escape (Walker, 1997).

29. Relating to public policy that affect neighbourhood effects on social exclusion, several, generally well-intentioned and in some aspects commendable policies, appear to have promoted the social exclusion of those unable to benefit from the opportunities offered. For example, Kristensen (1995) argues that generous incentive policies that successfully promoted homeownership in Denmark have contributed to the deterioration of many rental-accommodation neighbourhoods where an increasingly poorer and socially weaker community was left behind. Similar processes have been held to be responsible for the significant deterioration of inner-city African-American neighbourhoods in the United States where, in the wake of anti-discrimination policies of the 1960s, affluent and upwardly mobile blacks left the inner cities leaving a poorer and less diverse community behind.

30. Educational policies can also promote such polarisation and social exclusion. This is most directly the case if schools draw from socially homogeneous catchment areas and therefore carry the disadvantages of living in poor and socially unstable neighbourhoods into the educational system. But even where policies promote school choice beyond the catchment area, there may be problems. For example, the focus on expanding school choice for parents and fostering competition among schools through league tables and other performance indicators in the UK is held by Smith et al. (1997) appears to work best in more affluent areas where such choice and competition has really become a reality, while in many poorer areas, choice and competition has remained very restricted. Moreover, they argue that it benefits those best placed to work the system and make use of these opportunities thereby contributing to greater polarisation of education performance. Similarly, the focus on measurable indicators of quality without consideration for the environments some schools operate under is alleged to have increased the already rising numbers of permanently excluded students. In the UK, this number has reached an all-time record of 13500 in 1996 (Smith, et al. 1997).

¹² Similar neighbourhood effects have been found to operate in many other OECD countries as well.

31. Other educational policies that can promote further social exclusion relate to the effective end of bussing in most parts of the United States and the migration of more affluent parents to well-to-do to better endowed and higher quality school districts.

c) Social Exclusion based on Birth or Background

32. In many ways, the bases of social exclusion relating to physical or mental disability have been well understood and recognised for the longest time in most OECD countries. The last 30 years has seen increasing efforts in most countries to provide special support and, importantly, support for the integration of disabled people in mainstream society and its institutions (including mainstream education and social and public facilities). In fact, this increasing preference for providing special support for the disabled to gain access and participate, on increasingly equal terms, in mainstream society (rather than creating separate structures and institutions solely focused on dealing with them) can be seen as a model for combating social exclusion that arises from reasons other than physical or mental disability.

33. At the same time, there are other disadvantages of birth and background where there has been less and much more uneven progress in extending similar integrative support. For example, the recognition of various forms of learning disabilities that have little physical bases but may be related to birth or social background is more uneven in many OECD countries. Similarly, various forms of socially dysfunctional behaviour that are often related to family background (and sometimes to birth) including alcoholism, proneness to violent behaviour, disruptive children, etc., can be an important source of social exclusion. Finally, increasing numbers of residents in OECD countries are recent immigrants and suffer from linguistic and cultural barriers that may create additional difficulties and social exclusion for them and their children.

34. It is in these less recognised cases of disadvantage of birth and background where policy may have actually fostered social exclusion, esp. relating to children. For example, to the extent that 'disruptive' or 'difficult' children are excluded from mainstream education and placed in special education streams, the social exclusion associated with these disadvantages may actually be strengthened.¹³ Similarly, to the extent that special efforts are made to integrate residents of different ethnic or cultural origins (or to promote separation from mainstream society through the formation of specific institutions catering for them), social exclusion relating to this disadvantage may be lessened or intensified.

d) Societal, Political

35. Finally, there may be societal and political bases of social exclusion. By societal bases, I refer mainly to prejudice and discrimination certain groups of the population may suffer at the hands of mainstream society. The groups suffering from such societal prejudice vary greatly among OECD countries, as does the intensity of such prejudice. Issues can range from racial or ethnic bias in some countries relating to housing, labour markets, and civil society institutions (clubs, leisure activities, etc.) to outright hostility and violence against certain groups.

¹³ In order to generate special support for such disadvantages, there have been attempts in many countries to variously extend the definition of disability to include some of these disadvantaged groups. While this strategy holds out the promise of the greater support that is available to disabled people, another strategy may be to have greater recognition that disadvantage may be a distinct problem that requires similar, but not necessarily the same, attention and interventions as policies vis-à-vis the disabled have.

36. Also here, public policy and public institutions can play an important positive and negative role. To the extent that public institutions (churches, political system, media) try to counter such bias through either moral suasion or enforceable anti-discrimination provisions, they can reduce the social exclusion associated with existing prejudice.

37. At the same time, public policy may also foster social exclusion which I refer to as the political bases of social exclusion. Measures that may be seen in this regard include, among others, restrictive citizenship policies for long-term foreign residents of a country (as in the case of Germany, Mark and Russell, 1995), restrictions on movements or economic activities of foreign residents (or asylum-seekers), or one-language policies that are becoming increasingly common in parts of the United States.

Table 1: Examples of Sources of Social Exclusion

Sources of Exclusion	Direct	Policy-Related
a) Economic	Unemployment, poverty	Education funding, stigmatising or and entrapping of Welfare Systems
b) Social	Family, neighbourhood	Housing, welfare, discrimination, education policies
c) Birth or Background	Disability, other forms of disadvantage (ethnicity, social background, etc.)	Excluding educational policies
d) Societal/Political	Prejudice and Discrimination	Citizenship and residency policies

4. Measuring and Monitoring Social Exclusion

38. It is difficult to establish definitive measures of social exclusion. As social exclusion, in the sense of denial of important civil and social rights or capabilities, contains diverse elements and components, there is no single measure that can capture its extent or intensity. Moreover, since social exclusion carries objective as well as subjective connotations, it will be hard to examine its extent based on objective data; instead, some reliance must be placed on subjective assessments of the matter. Similarly, since not all incidences of ‘separateness’ necessarily indicate exclusion (they may be voluntary by both the included and the excluded; for example, even if all children could afford to spend money on pop music CDs, not all would want to), measuring separateness by itself may not always be the right indicator.

39. Social exclusion can be approached from two levels. One attempts to measure its extent directly, and the other focuses on measuring the extent of the bases of social exclusion. Focus on the latter has the advantage that there may more data readily available and that the links to policy issues may be more direct. Focus on the former has the advantage of measuring outcomes directly without having to rely on presumed (and often untested) linkages between certain bases of social exclusion and the actual resulting exclusion.

40. It seems that it is important to try to measure both. Attempts to measure social exclusion directly could take as a starting point expert assessments (combined with attitude survey data) on critical components of social inclusion. In the case of children, it may include, for example, the ability to participate in mainstream education, the ability to participate equally in social, leisure, and cultural activities, and the ability to enjoy the respect of one’s peers.

41. Based on such assessments, one can then develop indicators that show to what extent some children appear to be socially excluded in any one of these ways. Possible indicators may then include objective and subjective items such as

- number/share of children excluded from normal educational system
- number/share of children in special education systems
- indicators of racial/ethnic/socio-economic mix in educational and social institutions (schools; sports clubs; youth clubs; boy and girl scouts, etc.)
- number/share of children not participating in leisure activities (sports, youth club, annual vacation with family) and indicators of segregation in such activities.
- number/share of children unable to afford costly youth culture activities (music, clothes, toys, etc.)
- factors influencing school choice and educational streaming within schools (esp. importance of family background and economic means).
- number/share of children involved in criminal activities or social pathologies (drugs, alcohol abuse, etc.)
- number/share of children who feel excluded from certain aspects of youth culture (by causes, e.g. no money, no activity offered in neighbourhood, not allowed to join, etc.)

42. At the same, it is important to keep monitoring the various bases of exclusion such as poverty, unemployment, family break-up and neighbourhood effects, disability rates and rates of other disadvantages, and discrimination and bias.

43. In both cases, monitoring individual indicators is helpful. At the same time, there is a good case for creating component indicators of social exclusion or the various bases of social exclusion due to the close relation of many of the components and their compound effect on individuals and families. Thus combined indices such as the local deprivation index for neighbourhood effects (LRG, 1996; Robson et al. 1996), or deprivation measures for the economic bases of social exclusion (Paugham 1995; Klasen 1997, etc.) may be useful.

5. A Research Agenda

44. Following from the above, several important research issues emerge. First, more must be known about the nature of social exclusion and its extent in OECD countries. Establishing the most important components of such exclusion and gathering data on these components is therefore an first important task. A second, and related task is to carefully assess the bases of social exclusion and determine the linkages between them and the 'outcome measures' of social exclusion. In this context, the importance of policies in turning disadvantage into exclusion is of particular importance. Third, and in line with an instrumental concern about social exclusion, it may be important to assess linkages of social exclusion to other societal problems (economic development and prosperity, criminal activity, social pathology, etc.). And finally, it is critical to assess policy options that can address the problems of social exclusion in a feasible and

sustainable manner. In all four areas, the diversity of experiences in OECD countries should help generate a lot of positive and negative experiences that can guide the policy formulation process.

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