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The concept of social exclusion and the new Durkheimian hegemony

Abstract

This article argues that the concept of social exclusion, which was originally developed to describe the manifold consequences of poverty and inequality, has become embedded as a crucial element within a new hegemonic discourse. Within this discourse, terms such as social cohesion and solidarity abound, and social exclusion is contrasted not with inclusion but with integration, construed as integration into the labour market. The paper analyses the operation of this discourse in recent policy documents from the European Union and the Borrie Report, as well as in the work of Will Hutton. The discourse is described as fundamentally Durkheimian because it treats social divisions which are endemic to capitalism as resulting from an abnormal breakdown in the social cohesion which should be maintained by the division of labour. The article argues that, within this discourse, the concept of social exclusion operates both to devalue unpaid work and to obscure the inequalities between paid workers, as well as to obscure the fundamental social division between the property-owning class and the rest of society.

In the late 1980s, the term 'underclass' became current in both lay and sociological discourses about the state of the nation. In 1987, Michael Ignatieff chaired a televised discussion between Ray Pahl, Ralph Dahrendorf, Stuart Hall and the free marketeer Lord Harris on the question of whether there really was an underclass in Britain (*Thinking Aloud*, 12 November 87). The sociologists appeared to agree that while one could not strictly speaking talk about a class, since the 'group' in question lacked permanence, intergenerational continuity and hom-

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ogeneity, there was a problem that economic 'restructuring' (i.e. de-industrialization) had resulted in a substantial number of people more or less permanently excluded from 'mainstream society'. In the course of this debate, Stuart Hall (who dissented remarkably little from the definition of class being used), observed that one of the problems of talking about an underclass is that it encourages us to see a two-part society—the underclass versus everyone else. In reality, the majority class is not homogeneous either, but contains large numbers of people scarcely better off than those seen as 'excluded'. The implication of Hall's point was that a discourse about a majority class increasingly better off—the 80 percent of society, at least on the crude measure of real income, who 'benefited' during the Thatcher years—and an underclass 'left behind' and 'excluded from' this increasing prosperity, operates to disguise the degree of inequality among that 80 percent.

In 1992, John Westergaard took the concept of the underclass as the subject of his presidential address to the British Sociological Association. Westergaard observed that there were three different meanings attaching to the term underclass: the moral turpitude of the poor, as in Charles Murray's (1990) usage of the term; outcast poverty; and a less specific rhetorical usage. He said:

What the three have in common is, to start with, a postulate of the recent emergence of a significant minority of the population who are trapped, outside and below 'society at large', either by cultural depravity or by economic deprivation; and an inference, whether expressed or implied, that the divide between this underclass and the great majority is increasingly *the* most salient and challenging line of social division for the future, by contrast with the older divisions of class now said to be in eclipse. (Westergaard, 1992: 576)

Westergaard went on to argue that not only did this have the effect (which Hall had observed) of obscuring inequalities among the majority, the overclass, but that this was precisely why the concept has such appeal: it allows the recognition of the continuing existence of poverty—which can hardly be disguised—to coexist with arguments or assumptions about the attrition of class and class divisions in the main body of society.

I want to argue in this paper that the same problems attach to the concept of social exclusion, a term which is central to a new hegemonic discourse. This discourse dominates documents from the European Commission; is central to the recent report of the Labour Party's

Commission on Social Justice, the Borrie Report; is reflected in the Rowntree Report on Inequalities in Income and Wealth; and underpins Will Hutton's (1995a) best-selling *The State We're In*. The discourse is fundamentally Durkheimian, treating social divisions which are endemic to capitalism as resulting from an abnormal breakdown in the social cohesion which should be maintained by the division of labour.

The idea of social exclusion as a consequence of poverty does not originate from within this discourse. It became popular after the publication in 1979 of Peter Townsend's book *Poverty in the United Kingdom*, in which he argued that there was a level of income below which people were unable to participate in the normal life of the society of which they were supposedly a part; that a substantial minority of people in fact had incomes that were this low; and that this question of exclusion underlined the fact that relative poverty, as well as absolute poverty, actually does matter. During the 1980s, the term gained currency; and, as the discourse of citizenship became central to the opposition to that of the free market, it was increasingly argued that the poor were excluded from citizenship rights (especially as outlined by Marshall), or simply from citizenship itself. The original popularity of this term does therefore derive, like the 'outcast poverty' version of the 'underclass', from a concern with inequality, even if it always contained a tendency to present an overly homogeneous view of the situation of those included in society. But the way it is currently being used actually obscures the questions of material inequality it was originally intended to illuminate: it has been co-opted into a different discourse, with different purposes and different effects. It is a discourse unable to address the question of unpaid work in society (work done principally by women), or of low-paid work, and completely erases from view the inequality between those owning the bulk of productive property and the working population, as well as obscuring the inequalities among workers. It presents 'society' as experiencing a rising standard of living by defining those who have not done so, who have become poorer, as 'excluded from' society, as 'outside' it.

The nature of this discourse is demonstrated here through detailed analysis of two European Commission (EC) White Papers on social and economic policy issued in 1994: *European Social Policy: A Way Forward for the Union* (1994b) and *Growth, Competitiveness, Employment: The Challenges and Ways Forward into the 21st Century* (1994a), and through an examination of *Social Justice: Strategies for National Renewal*

(Commission on Social Justice/Institute of Public Policy Research [CSJ/IPPR], 1994). Terms such as social cohesion, solidarity and integration abound in these reports, together with exclusion and social exclusion.

European Social Policy refers to 'unacceptably high levels of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion (EC, 1994b: 11) and unemployment and exclusion (p. 13). The link made here is centrally that between exclusion and unemployment, not primarily exclusion and poverty; for the opposite of social exclusion, or simply exclusion, is not inclusion, but integration. And what is the means by which people are integrated into society?—through paid work. The document talks of the unemployed 'excluded from regular work' (p. 17) and of the need for policies 'reconciling professional and family life' to facilitate the 'full integration of women into the labour market' (p. 31). The latter requires 'greater solidarity between men and women' (p. 43), so that men take more responsibility for caring roles.

The most important discussion of exclusion occurs in Chapter VI—entitled 'Social Policy and Social Protection—An Active Society for All'—under the heading 'Promoting the Social Integration of All'. Here we find the core of the issue: 'At present, with more than 52 million people in the Union living below the poverty line, social exclusion is an endemic phenomenon', which 'threatens the social cohesion of each Member State and of the Union as a whole' (p. 49). 'The marginalization of major social groups is a challenge to the social cohesion of the Union'. (p. 49)

The cause of exclusion is not the fundamental nature of capitalism (which never gets discussed) but 'contemporary economic and social conditions', which 'tend to exclude some groups from the cycle of opportunities' (p. 49). These marginalized, insecure and vulnerable groups are 'people excluded from social and economic life, young people unable to find a foothold in the economy, long-term unemployed, disabled and older people' who should not be excluded from the benefits of—or from making an active contribution to—'the economic strength of a more integrated Europe' (p. 49). The document also refers to 'exclusion processes', which are described as 'dynamic and multi-dimensional in nature' (p. 49), much as it has been argued since the 1960s that poverty is multidimensional. These processes are 'linked not only to unemployment and/or low incomes, but also to housing conditions, levels of education and opportunities, health, discrimination, citizenship and integration in the local community'

(p. 49). However, the overwhelming emphasis is on paid work as the mechanism of integration, and the terms social exclusion and exclusion from the labour market are used virtually interchangeably—just as the section headed ‘the free movement of persons’ goes on to discuss ‘the free movement of workers’ (pp. 35–6).

But if social integration comes only through paid work, what of those not currently (or ever) so engaged? Paul Abberley (1996) has recently argued that the emphasis on work in both Durkheimian and Marxist models of society, both as it is and as it might be, means that people with disabilities who are unable to work are regarded as less than full members of society. This is equally true of the *European Social Policy White Paper*, for the section ‘Promoting the Social Integration of Disabled People’ talks about equal opportunities, but discusses only training and assistance to enter the labour market. On the issue of physical access to public space it says that the Commission will ‘examine how Union action could contribute to the key issue of improved access to means of transport and public buildings, and press for the adoption of the proposed directive on the travel conditions of *workers* with motor disabilities’ (p. 52, emphasis added). The following section raises the ‘challenge’ of maintaining ‘a high level of integration of the older population as Europe ages’, and notes that the majority of older people are women, and that ‘women of this age usually have much lower incomes’. The concern is not with how these incomes might be made more adequate, but with ‘the role and contribution of the active retired population’ (p. 52).

The other White Paper, *Growth, Competitiveness, Employment* (European Commission, 1994a), is predominantly about economic rather than social policy. Here, there are two different discourses at work, which appear to be contradictory. The economic discussion is couched in familiar terms of efficiency and deregulation, and the need for economic growth. But alongside this can be found the ‘social’ discourse, which again is about solidarity, integration and cohesion opposed to social exclusion—with exclusion again referring to exclusion from paid work. This double message is set out in the preamble to the document:

... we are faced with the immense responsibility, while remaining faithful to the ideals which have come to characterize and represent Europe, of finding a new synthesis of the aims pursued by society (work as a factor of social integration, equality of opportunity) and the requirements of the economy (competitiveness and job creation). (EC, 1994a: 3)

The paper opens with the claim that the 'one and only reason' for its existence is unemployment (p. 9). It immediately rules out the possibility of 'a generalized reduction in working hours and job-sharing', since this would be economically inefficient (p. 9); we need to 'think up new individual or collective needs which would provide new job opportunities' (p. 11). The goal is 'an economy that is healthy, open, decentralized, competitive and based on solidarity' (p. 11). Like Durkheim, who argued that regulation was necessary for the division of labour to result in social cohesion, the document states that 'only a properly managed interdependence can guarantee a positive outcome for everybody' (p. 12). For although the economic arguments reflect an enormous confidence in market processes, 'the market is not without its failings' (p. 15). The market produces inequalities because 'it tends to underestimate what is at stake in the long term, the speed of the changes it creates affects the different social categories unequally, and it spontaneously promotes concentration, thereby creating inequality between the regions and the towns' (p. 15). The solution to this is 'collective solidarity mechanisms' (p. 15). If you take this to refer to the need for a welfare state, be warned that there is a need to reduce the cost of this through 'greater responsibility', and thus a 'less passive and more active solidarity' (p. 15); for 'current levels of public expenditure, particularly in the social field, have become unsustainable and have used up resources which could have been channelled into productive investment' (p. 54). But there must be solidarity 'between those who have jobs and those who do not' (p. 15); 'solidarity between men and women making it easier to reconcile family life and working life and ensuring that greater account is taken of the role of women in the development of human resources' (p. 15); solidarity between generations; solidarity between 'the more prosperous regions and the poor or struggling regions' (p. 15). All this is necessary to 'economic and social cohesion' (p. 15). Lastly and most importantly there must be 'solidarity ... in the fight against social exclusion' (p. 15), to 'combat the poverty ... which splits society in two' (p. 16). While this is a matter for the member states, 'it is also the business of each citizen to practice "neighbourly solidarity"', (p. 16); and there is a call for solidarity 'between those who earn their income from work and those who earn their income from investments' (p. 139).

There is some recognition of a theoretical danger that those in work may nevertheless experience poverty: an expansion of part-time work together with a downward widening of wage inequalities 'at the

limit could create “working poor” unable to survive decently on their wages and thus lead to a form of exclusion just as damaging as unemployment’ (p. 60). Notwithstanding the Social Chapter, in these documents questions of low pay and poor working conditions are themselves treated as marginal. Exclusion and marginalization are mainly constructed as exclusion from and marginality to paid employment. Integration into society is elided with integration into work: ‘The basic skills which are essential for integration into *society and working life* include a mastery of basic knowledge (linguistic, scientific and other knowledge), and skills of a technological and social nature, that is to say the ability to develop and act in a complex and highly technological environment, characterized, in particular, by the importance of information technologies’ (EC, 1994a: 136, emphasis added). Are these really the skills needed for integration into *society*? Indeed, the absence of appropriate skills is held responsible for social exclusion: ‘the failure of education . . . is a particularly important and increasingly widespread factor of marginalisation and economic and *social exclusion*. In the Community, 25 to 30% of young people . . . leave the education system without the preparation they need to become properly *integrated into working life*’ (p. 134, emphasis added).

Again, as with the document on social policy, the underlying assumption is that the only route to social integration is through paid employment. The unemployed are not merely excluded from the labour market (true), and excluded from the benefits of economic growth (generally true), but excluded from ‘society’. Unpaid work is largely invisible, though it does make a brief appearance with a view to its disappearance! ‘Women’s full integration in the labour market is expected to **create jobs in the provision of services and goods not yet integrated** in the market and currently being provided by either women’s unpaid labour or paid informal women’s labour’ (EC, 1994a: 148, original emphasis). In the interests of such job-creation, there is a call to ‘encourage growth in the employment intensive area of the **care sector and of the provision of household services**’ and thus to ‘enhance the perceived value, and therefore encourage increased skills in such sectors’ (p. 149, original emphasis); in any case, improving existing career opportunities for women will generate additional demand for child-care (p. 150). The question of low pay is not addressed in this context.

Both of these White Papers are primarily concerned with social cohesion and economic efficiency. These are cemented together by the

assumption that social integration comes about through paid work. The possibility of a decent income other than through paid work is undermined by the attack on the cost of welfare benefits in *Growth, Competitiveness, Employment* (EC, 1994a); unpaid work is to be brought into the market. Under cover of a concern with 'social exclusion', and a rhetoric of solidarity, society dissolves into market relations. The importance of unpaid work to the maintenance of social life and human relationships is ignored. The possibility of integration into society through any institution other than the labour market has disappeared. There is no such thing as society—only individual men and women and their jobs. The failure of EC White Papers to recognize women's unpaid work, gender segregation and low pay, and the consequences of these for women's potential integration into the labour market has been commented on elsewhere (Maier, 1994; Rees, 1994). However, neither of these commentaries questions the fundamental presuppositions embedded in the overall discourse of the documents, or challenges the view that paid work is the 'proper' form of social integration.

The discourse of the White Papers echoes two others. The first is the language of the free market, neo-liberal New Right, especially that of Hayek, for whom society is nothing but the market; so that integration into society is nothing but integration into the market. The second is that of Durkheim: how can social cohesion and social integration be achieved? The answer provided is similar, too, for paid work is the main means of integration—although the utopia implicit in Durkheim's *The Division of Labour in Society* is one in which occupations are not merely a route to material resources through the wage relation, but provide cultural integration as well. *European Social Policy* is less sophisticated on this point. It does affirm the need for 'solidarity . . . in fighting exclusion', and for 'a public solemn declaration against exclusion' (EC, 1994b: 50), and the need to build a 'long-term social consensus' (p. 19). But Durkheim saw solidarity as an emergent property of the structure of society. It might be a moral fact, but it was not brought about by moral exhortation. Moreover, even Durkheim, who was not the most perceptive analyst of capitalism, said 'Let us not forget . . . that work is still for most men a punishment and a scourge' (1893/1964: 242).

The popularity of the Durkheimian themes of integration and solidarity may be seen as having two roots. First, the wish to create a unified Europe. Second, a reaction against the dominant ideology of the 1980s, that there is no such thing as society, and a consequent

rediscovery of 'the social'. Yet the very forms of expression of this rediscovery, with their emphasis upon the wage relation as integrative, ironically take on the assumptions of exactly that neo-liberal view of the 'society as market' which they seek to negate. This is particularly an issue in *Growth, Competitiveness, Employment*, since it juxtaposes the language of efficiency and deregulation with the discourse of solidarity and integration. The use of Durkheimian language does not involve a consistent and sophisticated deployment of Durkheimian theory; rather, a punk Durkheimianism of the 1990s replaces (or joins) the punk monetarism of the 1980s. The relationship between these strands of thought may ultimately be no more contradictory than the relationship between neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism in New Right discourse and policy, with the twin themes of the free market and the strong state (Levitas, 1986; Gamble, 1988).

The dominance of this New Right agenda in EC documents is not surprising. And if its penetration into 'left' discourse is not surprising either, it is rather more alarming; for the same themes recur in *Social Justice: Strategies for National Renewal* (CSJ/IPPR, 1994), although there are important differences. Apart from passing references to the reconciliation of professional and family life, and greater solidarity between men and women, unpaid work remains invisible in both the White Papers. This is not true of *Social Justice*. In many ways this echoes the language and conceptual framework of the EC documents; but because it does recognize the importance of unpaid work, contradictions are exposed. Moreover, inequality is not wholly absent from this discussion, which makes reference to 'a society corrupted by the inequities of class' (p. 83).

Here, too, a key issue is social cohesion; and 'just as social cohesion has economic value, so social division has economic cost' (p. 103). The promotion of social cohesion is listed as one of the six objectives (though the last, following the encouraging of personal independence!) of a system of financial security based upon tax and benefit systems and private provision (p. 225). Here again, exclusion is the problem: 'social and economic *exclusion*—from work, transport, politics, education, housing, leisure facilities—is an increasingly obvious and depressing feature of life in many parts of the UK' (p. 81). 'Social viability depends upon building a society based on inclusion' (p. 90). The 'virtuous circle of social inclusion' is contrasted with the 'vicious circle of exclusion and division' (p. 170).

Again, paid work is the main means of integration—although the

economy is in such a bad state that 'new strategies' are necessary 'if employment is to maintain its function as a mechanism of social integration' (p. 169). The emphasis on paid work is quite explicit: 'paid work is—or *should be*—a route to an adequate income, social networks and personal fulfilment' (p. 197, emphasis added). Therefore '[a]ttachment to the labour market . . . is the key to breaking the vicious cycle of long-term unemployment and social exclusion' (p. 178).

Unlike the White Paper, *Social Justice* acknowledges the persistence of occupational segregation (p. 185), although it argues that men have been the 'real victims' of economic restructuring (p. 79), and suggests that a 'vigorous . . . effort' is needed to 'pull down the barriers which keep men out of "women's jobs"' (p. 187). *Social Justice* notes the inequality of earnings, greater now than at any time since 1886 (p. 201), and acknowledges that the most effective way out of poverty for two-parent families is to have two earners (p. 236). It also acknowledges that full-time workers in Britain work longer hours than in other western European countries, and that Britain is alone in having no restrictions on hours of work; and that many workers in the UK 'are forced by inadequate basic wages into long hours of overtime in order to maintain a decent income' (p. 193). Yet it describes households with 1.5 or 2 jobs as 'work-rich', not as overworked—even though the 1.5 jobs may be held by one worker!

But if social exclusion results from poverty, it is hardly overcome by attachment to the labour market under these conditions. Moreover, the long hours and flexible working patterns described in the report suggest that workers attached to the labour market in this way may find it difficult to sustain personal relationships and social contacts outside of the work-place. As *Social Justice* says, '[s]ome employers demand hours of work which are not only damaging to health and safety, but disastrous for family life' (p. 189): *social* integration may not result from labour market participation. And the report does argue that 'if employment is divided between very highly paid jobs for some, and very low-paid jobs for others, the problems of social division and exclusion will only be intensified' (p. 166). Arguments for a minimum wage stem from this. In part this is a question of economic efficiency, for 'equity is efficient' (p. 223), but economic efficiency takes second place to social integration.

The central place of social integration and the key role of paid work in achieving this can be illustrated through a discussion of Japan, and of the operation of a version of Citizen's Income in Belgium. It is ar-

gued that Japan does not emphasize maximizing productivity in all areas of the economy, but permits and encourages ‘apparent over-staffing’; ‘the Japanese use employment as a highly effective means of social integration, because they know nothing is more expensive than social disintegration’ (p. 166). (It is striking that I never heard this argument used in defence of the ‘overstaffing’ in the communist economies of eastern Europe, universally condemned as ‘inefficient’.) Conversely, we can demonstrate that paid work is not a route to social inclusion merely because it provides money, for it is also argued that Citizen’s Income can cause social exclusion. This is supported by the claim that when an unconditional benefit for young people was introduced in Belgium, ‘levels of participation in education and training may actually have fallen’ (p. 262). That is, Citizen’s Income may reduce participation in the workforce, and this is seen as identical with social exclusion!

This sits oddly with a claim to take unpaid work, particularly within the family, seriously, and to recognize its economic as well as its social value: ‘the unpaid work of parents and other carers needs to be recognised in family-friendly policies at the workplace and in the organisation of the welfare state’ (p. 104). On the one hand, the report says: ‘but in a society where people’s worth seems increasingly to be measured by how much money they can earn, the unpaid work of parents—especially mothers—is seen as little more than an impediment to their earning power’ (p. 311); on the other, it talks about parents ‘locked out of employment’ (p. 313), and about the need to ‘transform attitudes ... to fathers remaining at home to care for their children’ (pp. 187–8). This, surely, is unlikely to be encouraged by a notion of social integration based on paid employment, in which those outside the labour market are viewed as not fully part of society.

Social Justice is not arguing that work which is currently unpaid should be removed from the private, unpaid sphere to the public, paid sphere—far from it. It does suggest that a ‘carers’ insurance’ should be provided within the framework of the benefit system, and that the eligibility for carers’ benefit should be made independent of the benefit status of the recipient of care; in the interim, the Invalid Care Allowance should be raised to the same level as unemployment benefit—hardly a recognition of the unpaid work involved! Moreover, the report goes on to say:

Particularly as the need for long-term care increases, it will make good

economic, as well as social, sense to acknowledge the value of carers' work within the social security system rather than trying to meet the full costs of professional care. (CSJ/IPPR, 1994: 243)

And this is not the only point at which an increased reliance on unpaid work is envisaged. There are even proposals to extend the amount of unpaid work by volunteers in schools:

Classroom assistants, often recruited from among parents, already provide substantial help to teachers. . . . As we expand services for children, we should also mobilise the group in the community whose energy and skills remain all too often untapped: the 'Third Age' of fit and active people in their 50s, 60s and even 70s. Some training should, of course, be offered, and some payment should be made. But these volunteer 'social grandparents' would complement, not replace, trained teachers and play-leaders, and would not require the same level of either training or salary. (p. 126)

Terrifyingly, the use of more volunteers—'not only parents, but Community Service Volunteers and volunteers from local banks and other businesses'—is suggested as a way of offering the one-to-one help needed by children who have difficulty acquiring the basic skills reading and writing (p. 130).

The discussion of the value of unpaid work, unsatisfactory as it is, serves to deconstruct the dominant argument of the report, which is cast, like the EC White Papers, in terms of social cohesion and integration, where paid work and economic participation are seen as synonymous, and those outside the paid workforce are described as socially excluded. Civil society has been collapsed into the market. All three documents operate with a consensual, functionalist model of society, which obscures what we know about how capitalism works. Even *Social Justice*, which notices the problem of inequality, treats it, as Durkheim does, as something which is a problem only because it is disruptive if it becomes too extreme—not as something which is an integral feature of a capitalist economy.

Very similar themes inform the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's *Inquiry into Income and Wealth*, which says that 'everyone shares an interest in the cohesiveness of society. As the gaps between rich and poor grow, the problems of the marginalised groups which are being left behind rebound on the more comfortable majority' (Vol. 1: 34). Although this invaluable report presents a mass of data on inequalities

throughout society, it too says that 'our central concern is with the failure of the poorest 20–30% of the population to benefit from recent economic growth' (Vol. 1: 38). It reiterates the concepts of 'work-rich' and 'work-poor' households (Vol. 1: 47), at the same time as acknowledging with great clarity the problem of low pay and the working poor (Vol. 1: 44). The summary report in volume one devotes a mere two paragraphs (29, 31) to the distribution of wealth, and the detailed evidence on this topic in Volume 2 occupies only 11 of 120 pages. Although you can find buried in here reference to the composition of wealth, and the fact that the very wealthy hold most of their wealth in the form of land and shares, there is no distribution given of the concentration of productive property. The fissure between the bottom 30 percent and everyone else is the key fact, not the fissure between the top 1 percent or 10 percent and the rest—a view of society supported by the emphasis on inequalities in income rather than in wealth.

Will Hutton (1995a) also identifies a major fissure in society between the bottom 30 percent and the rest, although he also identifies another rift, between the 'next' 30 percent and the top 40 percent. Hutton's 30:30:40 society is not based simply on deciles of the income distribution. Although the bottom 30 percent are the socially excluded, the difference between the next two groups depends as much on stability and security of employment and future pension rights as it does on income. While this is more sophisticated than most discussions of social exclusion, both in presenting a less homogenous picture of the 'included', and in focusing on the nature of relationships to the labour market, it still presents a misleading picture. Like the Rowntree report, Hutton's book gives far too little attention to the rift between the very small group who control the bulk of productive property, and the rest of the population; and like the Borrie report and the EC White Papers, it presents an essentially Durkheimian view of the world. Hutton explicitly pursues 'an efficient and socially cohesive capitalism' (1995b). Moreover, his basic argument is that the ills of contemporary British Society stem not from the nature of capitalism, but from the particular pathologies of British financial and governmental institutions. Despite the undoubted merits of Hutton's analysis of the workings of the British economy, this assertion that it is a pathological and abnormal form—and hence that the social divisions engendered are also essentially pathological and abnormal—is as implausible as Durkheim's original argument that the forced division of labour as

expressed in actually existing capitalist society constituted a pathological and abnormal form of the division of labour.

To object to the concept of social exclusion as it is deployed within this new hegemonic discourse is not to deny the reality or the seriousness of contemporary poverty. Nor, indeed, is it to deny the connection between poverty and unemployment, or the reality of the effects of exclusion from the labour market, or the exclusion of particular groups from particular parts of the labour market, for example, on the basis of gender or ethnicity. Paid work may be a source of 'social integration' both because the work itself is a form of social labour, and because money is a necessary passport to almost all forms of social interaction. The original use of the term social exclusion signalled the extent to which those without money are unable to use leisure facilities, join evening classes, participate in political activity. The increasing privatization of leisure facilities, and the requirement that even those provided by local government be self-financing, exacerbates this situation; the destruction of civil society and its reduction to the market is a real, as well as a discursive, phenomenon. But to see integration as solely effected by paid work is to ignore the fact that social labour takes place outside the market, most notably as unpaid work by women, and to ignore the fact that society is—and certainly should be—more than a market. And, of course, it focuses attention on exclusions from labour market positions, while ignoring other processes of, for example, racial exclusion, which operate in a broader arena.

The core of my objection to this discourse is that it obscures the fact that the positions into which people are 'integrated' through paid work are fundamentally unequal. As with the term underclass, where the implication is that everyone else is doing fine, the term 'social exclusion' presumes that 'inclusion' is beneficial. It is salutary to remember that even if women, ethnic minorities and disabled people achieve equal opportunities within the labour market, it will still be the case that what 'integration' means is participation in a capitalist economy driven by profit and based upon exploitation. The dichotomous model of exclusion and integration obscures this fact. And, as Westergaard said of the concept of the 'underclass', therein lies its appeal.

Moreover, the discourse obscures the fact that exclusion may be a form of integration. Marxists using the terminology of reserve armies of labour and free marketers objecting to decent levels of benefits as interference in the market share the view that unemployment *functions* to reduce wages. The exclusion of women from paid work is their inte-

gration as unpaid workers. The exclusion of migrant workers from benefit rights is their integration as a flexible pool of low-paid workers. The exclusion of 'economic migrants' (and with them refugees) altogether is their integration into a global economy in which the 'North' exploits the 'South'. The 'real' society is not that constituted by the (unequal) 70 percent, to which the poor are marginal or from which they are excluded. The real society is that made up by the whole 100 percent, in which poverty is endemic.

The concept of social exclusion as it is currently deployed places people either inside or outside mainstream society, synonymous with outside the labour market. The concept works both to devalue unpaid work and to obscure the inequalities between paid workers—not to mention the inequalities between paid workers and a property-owning class who can afford not to work at all, but who are apparently not among the ranks of the socially excluded. But then they do have a relationship with the labour market: it just happens to be one of exploitation.

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