



Social inclusion and social citizenship—towards a truly inclusive society

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Executive summary

- Since taking office in December 2007, the Rudd Government has made social inclusion a key theme in its approach to social policy.
- This paper examines the concept of social inclusion in order to determine its usefulness as a framework for social policy.
- The paper suggests that the concept of social inclusion lacks a clear definition and coherent theoretical core.
- The term social inclusion is conceptually problematic in that it limits its scope to threshold issues and presents those *being* included as passive objects of policy, rather than as active participants in society.
- The concept of social inclusion is thus unlikely to provide a useful framework for driving social policy, without some modification or clarification
- With its emphasis on participation, social inclusion bears some resemblance to the concept of social citizenship, though without the crucial focus on such participation as being a right—as is the case with citizenship.
- Locating social inclusion within a revised and more contemporary citizenship framework would most likely strengthen it as a concept. It would do so by reframing the concept in terms of the various rights and duties necessary for full citizenship, and creating a more active and participatory approach to social arrangements than can currently be found in the concept of social inclusion.

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Introduction

Since it took office in December 2007, the Rudd Government has made social inclusion a key theme in its approach to social policy.

There appear to have been two distinct responses in social policy circles to the Rudd Government's social inclusion agenda. On the one hand it has been warmly embraced by those who see it as an opportunity to address the situation of those 'left behind' or 'excluded' during the years of strong economic expansion over the last decade or so and who, furthermore, are most likely to be disadvantaged by the current global recession. More broadly, the enthusiasm with which the idea of social inclusion has been embraced throughout the social and community services sector appears to reflect a sense of excitement about the opportunity it represents for bringing social policy to the centre stage of politics. Thus, for some, the key concern is to make sure that they themselves are included amongst those being targeted by the government's social inclusion efforts.

The other main response to the emergence of social inclusion as a policy framework both in Australia and overseas has been to see it in largely negative terms. For some, the idea of social inclusion is merely a 'Trojan horse'. While apparently promising a renewal of (or at least a renewed focus on) social policy, critics argue that, in reality, it offers a continuation of the same kinds of social policies that have dominated the past couple of decades.

This research paper attempts to steer a middle path between the two main responses to social inclusion. It seeks to provide a critical analysis of social inclusion as a concept while, at the same time, extracting from it those elements that are likely to provide most value in developing a framework for making social policy.

An emphasis on full participation in economic, social and political life is the core conceptual feature of the social inclusion 'agenda' both in Australia and overseas. In this respect, social inclusion bears some resemblance to the concept of social citizenship (as outlined by prominent post-World War II sociologist, T. H. Marshall)—though without the crucial emphasis on participation as a *right*, as is the case for citizenship. The idea that a rights-based framework could play a role in promoting citizen wellbeing has gained increasing prominence in recent years.¹ Further, the Commonwealth Government has declared itself 'back in business on human rights', following the establishment of a national human rights consultation process in December 2008.² As such, this paper examines the extent to which

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1. For example, there has long been a campaign for a Bill of Rights in Australia, with one of the most prominent advocates being George Williams. See G Williams, *A Bill of Rights for Australia*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2000.
 2. R McClelland, Attorney-General, quoted in P Maley and M Franklin, 'Kevin Rudd's bill of rights sceptic Frank Brennan to avoid villains' charter', *The Australian*, 10 December 2008. The National Human Rights Consultation Committee is due to report to the Commonwealth government on 30 September 2009 on issues related to 'protecting and promoting human rights and corresponding responsibilities in Australia', *National Human Rights Consultation website*,

social citizenship—with its rights-based framework—can contribute to the theory and practice of social inclusion.

The paper concludes that locating social inclusion within a revised, more contemporary citizenship framework would most likely strengthen it as a concept. It would do so by reframing the concept in terms of the various rights and duties necessary for full citizenship, thereby creating a more active and participatory approach to social arrangements than can currently be found in the concept of social inclusion.

Social inclusion

The concepts of social inclusion and exclusion are closely related, with inclusion supposedly the antonym of exclusion. As some commentators note, this close relationship makes it difficult to discuss social inclusion without also discussing social exclusion.³ This is especially so given that some jurisdictions have chosen to label their social policy agenda ‘social inclusion’ in preference to ‘social exclusion’. As a result, in the remainder of this paper, discussion switches between social inclusion and social exclusion.

Origins of the concept

France

The concept of social exclusion as it is now generally understood first emerged in France in the 1970s. Initially, it was used primarily to describe those social groups—the disabled, single parents and uninsured unemployed people—that were unprotected under social insurance, and who were thus literally excluded from social support, as well as from the labour market. With the development of prolonged and wide-spread unemployment following the 1973 oil crisis and subsequent era of stagflation, the concept came to be used to describe the condition of a range of people excluded from mainstream society due to factors like disability, mental illness and poverty.

In the 1980s, unemployment increased in France and the number of excluded groups in that country multiplied. This helped to galvanise a national movement of representative associations, ALERTE, which promoted a comprehensive approach to tackling social exclusion. In response to the efforts of these social activists, and with support from both the

viewed 31 August 2009,
<http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/nhrcc.nsf/Page/Home>

3. A Hayes, M Gray and B Edwards, *Social inclusion: origins, concepts and key themes*, Paper prepared by the Australian Institute of Family Studies for the Social Inclusion Unit, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, 2008, p. 4, viewed 21 October 2009, <http://parlinfo/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=:group=:holdingType=:id=:orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Social%20inclusion%20origins%20concepts%20and%20key%20themes%20Dataset%3Acatalog,jmart,jmart88;querytype=:rec=0;resCount=Default>

right and the left, France introduced a minimum income for social integration (the Revenue Minimum d'insertion, or RMI) for excluded citizens in 1988. Under the RMI, excluded citizens were required to sign an 'insertion' contract, which specified the means through which an assisted individual was to become a productive, included member of society. These could include employment, volunteering activities, study, family reunification, or other activities deemed relevant by the state. Socially excluded citizens were assisted in meeting their contract conditions and re-entering social life through support provided by not-for-profit organisations and social workers. The program emphasised that the support provided should be coordinated, comprehensive and personally tailored to the individual and their circumstances.⁴ A decade later, a law was introduced in France to prevent and combat social exclusion through guaranteed universal access to fundamental rights. This law mandated coordinated interventions in at least ten spheres: employment, training, social enterprise, social minima, housing, health, education, social services, culture and citizenship (for example, helping the homeless to vote). Thus, unlike the RMI, the law provided for assistance to be given to disadvantaged citizens without the demand that they fulfil certain requirements in return.

Given France's dominant, republican political culture, it is perhaps unsurprising that the concept of social exclusion should have emerged there first. In the French Republican tradition, a great deal of weight is placed on citizenship and on the importance of social solidarity. In this tradition, social exclusion is conceived 'not simply as an economic or political phenomenon, but as a deficiency of 'solidarity', a break in the social fabric'.⁵ Where such a break in the social fabric occurs, the state is seen to have a central role in tackling social isolation and marginality, 'restoring' social cohesion and renewing 'the social bond'. Society has an obligation to provide social assistance and the means to a livelihood to its citizens who, in turn, have obligations to society as a whole.⁶

European Union

From France, the concept of social exclusion and broad approach to tackling it spread quickly throughout the remainder of Europe. The main architect for its spread was Jacques Delors,

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4. Daniel Beland makes the point that this form of social assistance is defined as a right of citizenship and as an active, contractual form of assistance, in contrast to the punitive concept of workfare that became dominant in the US (and, later, in Britain). The RMI is said by Beland to create 'a sense of reciprocal obligations between the state and the beneficiary'. As such, it is the role of the state to assist unemployed people to return to the labour market, rather than simply to provide minimal financial support. It could also be said to be the responsibility of unemployed people to return to the labour market as soon as possible. D Beland, 'The social exclusion discourse: ideas and policy change', *Policy and Politics*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2007, pp. 123–139.
 5. H Silver, 'Social exclusion and social solidarity: three paradigms', *International Labour Review*, vol. 133, 1994/5–6, p. 537.
 6. See D Beland, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

President of the European Commission in the 1980s, who sought to promote a social dimension to European integration. In 1989, the Council of Ministers of Social Affairs of the then European Community passed a resolution to fight social exclusion and to ‘foster integration and a “Europe of Solidarity”’.⁷ In 1997, following a gradual process of development, the European ‘Social Protocol’ was incorporated in the Amsterdam Treaty. This treaty made substantive changes to the earlier (1992) Maastricht Treaty (the Treaty on European Union) with regard to citizenship and individual rights.

With the gradual diffusion of social exclusion as a concept within social policy through the European Union (EU) during the 1990s, the EU poverty program was transformed into a fight against social exclusion. This process culminated in the Council of Europe’s adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in March 2000.⁸ The Lisbon Strategy is a ten-year plan to modernise the EU’s economic and social model, with a view to making Europe ‘by 2010, the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion’.⁹ The strategy was seen to be underpinned by three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars: economic competitiveness, social and employment policy and sustainable development.

One of the key measures for achieving the Lisbon Strategy’s overall goal is the European Social Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy aims to ‘make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010’, while also fighting social exclusion and enhancing social cohesion. It involves: four common objectives agreed by the Nice European Council in 2000;¹⁰ two- to three-year National Action Plans Against Poverty and Social Exclusion; a system of peer review to foster scrutiny of the plans and exchange of examples of good practice; development of a number of common social exclusion indicators; and a funding scheme for measures to support the Strategy.

In 2004, an independent review of the first phase of the Lisbon Strategy found that overall progress towards the Strategy’s objectives and targets had been slow.¹¹ While individual

7. H Silver, *op. cit.*, p. 535.

8. Also known as the Lisbon Agenda or Lisbon Process.

9. ‘Presidency Conclusions’, Lisbon European Council 23–24 March 2000, viewed 21 October 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm

10. These were: facilitating participation in employment and access to resources and rights, goods and services for all citizens (for example, social protection, housing, health care, education, justice and culture); preventing the risks of exclusion by preserving family solidarity, preventing over-indebtedness and homelessness and promoting inclusion; helping the most vulnerable (for example, the persistently poor, children and residents of areas marked by exclusion); and mobilising all relevant bodies by promoting participation and self-expression of the excluded and partnerships, and mainstreaming their concerns.

11. European Commission, *Facing the challenge: the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment*, Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok, Office for Official Publications of the

member states were found to have made advances in one or more priority areas, none had succeeded consistently across all of the elements of the Strategy. And, as noted above, under a ‘three-pillars approach’, this was viewed by some as a precondition for the Strategy’s success. As a result of a slowdown in the European economy, and with member states either experiencing difficulty in implementing the Lisbon Strategy or failing to take the agreed measures seriously, the focus of the Strategy was changed. For the second phase of the Strategy (2005 to 2010), the plan was to focus on growth and employment. As Mary Daly and Hilary Silver see it, with this reconfiguration:

the meaning and priority attributed to social exclusion by EU policy makers has changed considerably. The original objectives have been ‘watered down’ to focus on promoting involvement in the labour market, access to a basic level of rights and services, and improving policy efficiency through better coordination of economic and social policies ... with the increasing emphasis on ‘activation’, the EU Commission and Council have gradually shifted social inclusion from a matter of social and economic functioning to one of employment and the sustainability of benefit systems.¹²

The UK

With the election of the ‘New Labour’ Government in 1997, and its acceptance of the European Social Protocol, social exclusion was made a key policy focus in the UK. In keeping with this prioritisation, a Social Exclusion Unit (since June 2006, the Social Exclusion Task Force) was created in the Cabinet Office and charged with coordinating the government’s efforts at tackling social exclusion. In addition to providing strategic and policy advice to government, the unit was to ensure that government departments work together so as to better develop and deliver services to the most disadvantaged people in UK society; or, in the Blair Labour Government’s parlance, to deliver ‘joined-up solutions to joined-up problems’.¹³

In the UK a distinction is made between ‘wide’ and ‘deep’ forms of exclusion.¹⁴ Wide forms of exclusion are those that are experienced at a general level by a relatively large proportion

European Communities, Luxembourg, 2004, viewed 21 October 2009, http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/kok_report_en.pdf

12. M Daly and H Silver, ‘Social exclusion and social capital: a comparison and critique’, *Theory and Society*, vol. 37, 2008, p. 550.
13. See the UK’s Social Exclusion Task Force website at http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion.aspx
14. D Finn, ‘Social inclusion policies and practices: reflections from the UK’, *Impact*, Autumn 2008, pp. 16–17, viewed 21 October 2009, <http://parlinfo/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=:group=:holdingType=:id=:orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Social%20inclusion%20policies%20and%20practices%20reflections%20from%20the%20UK%20Dataset%3A%20jrnart,jrnart88;querytype=:rec=0;resCount=Default>

of the population. Policy responses to wide exclusion thus include broader strategies that aim to improve educational attainment and health, increase employment, reduce poverty, and enhance access to transport, housing, financial, information and other services. Deep forms of exclusion, by contrast, are those entrenched forms of exclusion experienced by a minority of disadvantaged people that require more targeted and intensive policy responses. Generally speaking, in the years since the UK adopted a social exclusion agenda, the focus has shifted from tackling wide forms of exclusion to concentrating on deep forms of exclusion, honing in on the most severely excluded and ‘at-risk’ groups.¹⁵

A number of commentators have alluded to the complementarity between the Blair Labour Government’s ‘third way’ politics and a policy agenda with social exclusion as its focus.¹⁶ Broadly speaking, the third way may be described as a centrist political philosophy that attempts to transcend left (democratic socialism) and right (market liberalism) wing politics through a synthesis of the two. As such, third way politics ‘is in favour of growth, entrepreneurship, enterprise and wealth creation but it is also in favour of greater social justice and it sees the state playing a major role in bringing this about’.¹⁷ The role of government is to ensure that citizens are able to participate in the economy and, thereby, in social life.

Australia

In 2002, South Australia’s Premier, Mike Rann established a Social Inclusion Initiative based closely on the UK Government’s approach. One key difference between the two was a change in nomenclature. Premier Rann chose to use the term ‘inclusion’ rather than ‘exclusion’ to reflect the fact that “‘inclusion’ is what we are about.”¹⁸ The Initiative is

15. D Finn, op. cit.

16. See, for example, D Beland, ‘The social exclusion discourse: ideas and policy change’, *Policy and Politics*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2007, p. 132.

17. N Dickson, ‘UK Politics, what is the Third Way?’ BBC News, 27 September 1999, viewed 21 October 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/458626.stm

18. Government of South Australia, *People and community at the heart of systems and bureaucracy: South Australia’s Social Inclusion Initiative*, 2009, viewed 21 October 2009, http://www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au/files/SA_SII_book_2009.pdf The EU Commission and Council have gradually moved away from references to social exclusion in favour, initially, of the term ‘social inclusion’, and then, more recently, ‘social cohesion’. Daly and Silver argue that this shift suggests ‘first, an attempt to sound ‘positive’ instead of ‘negative’, pronouncing a goal rather than describing a problem. Second, inclusion is the implied antonym of exclusion, but in fact may connote something quite different. Inclusion calls attention to the supposed ‘opportunity’ and openness of society, beckoning outsiders in, whereas exclusion points at exclusionary mechanisms of society, its potential breakdown, disorder or incoherence’. M Daly and H Silver, op. cit., pp. 550–1. Peter Saunders has similarly noted that it is possible to give social exclusion ‘a more positive connotation, by referring to social inclusion rather than social exclusion.’ P Saunders, ‘Social exclusion: challenges for research and implications for policy’, *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, p. 76, viewed 21 October 2009,

supported by a Social Inclusion Unit and a Social Inclusion Board. The Unit, which is located in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and made up of staff seconded from a range of departments, supports the work of the Board. The Board is a group of up to ten community leaders that advises the SA Government, through the Board's Social Inclusion Commissioner, on how best to achieve improved outcomes for the most disadvantaged members of the community. The Social Inclusion Commissioner attends Cabinet meetings and reports directly to the Premier.

As the SA Government sees it, the main idea behind the Social Inclusion Initiative is to develop new and innovative solutions to the problem of social exclusion and to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive government and community response to the needs of disadvantaged people. This, it is argued, will allow the initiative to 'confront the complex causes of social exclusion rather than just the symptoms'.¹⁹

On gaining office in 2007, the Rudd Labor Government began implementing its own social inclusion agenda. This involved the establishment of structural arrangements similar to those introduced in South Australia—that is, a Social Inclusion Board and a Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet—as well as a Minister and a Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion. The Government also identified a number of early priorities for social inclusion in the areas of employment participation, mental health, homelessness, child poverty, support for local communities and overcoming Indigenous disadvantage.

More recently, the Government has released a compendium of social inclusion indicators that is designed to assist the Social Inclusion Board to develop measures of social inclusion, and to discuss social inclusion related issues.²⁰ The Government has also indicated that, by the end of 2009, it will develop a national statement on social inclusion that will 'chart a long-term strategy towards making Australia a stronger, fairer society'.²¹

<http://parlinfo/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=;group=;holdingType=;id=;orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Social%20exclusion%20challenges%20for%20research%20and%20implications%20for%20policy%20Dataset%3Ajrnart,jrnart88;querytype=:rec=0;resCount=Default>

19. South Australia. Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPaC), South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative, DPaC website, viewed 21 October 2009, <http://www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au/>
20. Australian Government, *Social inclusion a compendium of social inclusion indicators: how's Australia faring?*, Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2009, viewed 21 October 2009, <http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/AusGov/Board/Documents/Compendium.pdf>
21. J Gillard (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion) and J Macklin (Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs), *Australian Government to develop national statement on social inclusion*, media release, 8 July 2009, viewed 21 October 2009, <http://parlinfo/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=;group=;holdingType=;id=;orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Social%20exclusion%20challenges%20for%20research%20and%20implications%20for%20policy%20Dataset%3Ajrnart,jrnart88;querytype=:rec=0;resCount=Default>

Definitional and conceptual issues

The concept of social exclusion can take different meanings, depending on the national and ideological context in which it is used. For example, Silver draws attention to differences in the way that social exclusion is understood and used in French republican and Anglo-American liberal traditions.²²

As indicated above, in French republican thought, broadly speaking, social exclusion is seen to be the result of a break-down of the social bond between the individual and society. And, because national solidarity is tied to political rights and duties, the state is thought to have some responsibility for bringing those who are excluded ‘back into the fold’. By contrast, according to Anglo-American liberalism, the social order is seen to consist of networks of voluntary exchanges between autonomous individuals with their own interests and motivations. Where there is social exclusion, this is typically thought to be the result of individuals inappropriately exercising their choices and preferences. Alternatively, social exclusion may be seen by Anglo-American liberalism as a consequence of discrimination that limits some people’s ability to exercise their choices and preferences. In keeping with the individualist nature of the social contract in the Anglo-American liberal tradition, the state has a relatively limited role in dealing with social exclusion. The state may grant rights to assistance, but it also allows for deprivation. As Silver puts it, ‘the liberal state is under no obligation to bring the excluded in.’²³ In fact, from the view of the Anglo-American liberal tradition, such activities on the part of the state are illegitimate precisely because they undermine natural sources of solidarity.²⁴

[rBy=customrank;page=0;query=Australian%20Government%20to%20develop%20national%20statement%20on%20social%20inclusion%20Dataset%3Apressrel;querytype=;rec=0;resCount=Default](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/special/australian%20government%20to%20develop%20national%20statement%20on%20social%20inclusion%20dataset%3Apressrel;querytype=;rec=0;resCount=Default)

22. H Silver, ‘Social exclusion and social solidarity: three paradigms’, *International Labour Review*, vol. 133, 1994/5–6. Peter Saunders makes a similar observation with regard to different understandings of social exclusion, according to national and ideological context. Saunders argues that ‘it is no accident that the notion of social exclusion has exerted its greatest influence in Europe [with its conservative and social democratic traditions] but has had less impact in countries like Australia and the United States. The focus on poverty in these latter countries reflects their commitment to an Anglo-Saxon tradition that emphasises individual autonomy within a market economy and sees social policy in largely residual terms’. P Saunders, ‘Social exclusion: challenges for research and implications for policy’, *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2008, p. 78.
23. H Silver, op. cit., p. 556.
24. The liberal critique of the welfare state has traditionally argued that government activity in the area of welfare effectively crowds out activities that should rightly be the preserve of voluntary associations. This is held to undermine natural forms of social cohesion. See, for example, P Saunders, *Australia’s welfare habit and how to kick it*, Duffy and Snellgrove, Sydney, 2004, pp. 64–65.

As such, it is important to bear in mind that the concept of exclusion is a relative and contested one. It means different things to different people at different times, even *within* a particular national and ideological context. For example, a number of commentators distinguish between ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ versions of social exclusion, based on the degree to which the condition is viewed as being structurally- or self-imposed.²⁵ From the perspective of a strong version of social exclusion, tackling disadvantage is not simply a matter of ameliorating the characteristics that form obstacles for disadvantaged people and integrating these people within society (as is the case for a weak version of social inclusion). Rather, strong versions of social exclusion emphasise the role of those who are responsible for social exclusion and aim for solutions that reduce the powers of exclusion. Thus, ultimately, strong versions of social exclusion demand the creation of a social order that excludes social exclusion.²⁶

Despite the above-mentioned variability in understandings of social exclusion, it is possible to identify certain features that are generally agreed upon.

Most definitions of social exclusion refer to lack of opportunity to participate in social, economic and/or political life.²⁷ This lack of opportunity is typically attributed to the absence of necessary resources, rights, goods and services. Most definitions also make reference to the multi-dimensional character of exclusion and deprivation. Social exclusion is thought to be the result of a combination of linked and mutually reinforcing problems, such as unemployment, limited education, low income, poor housing, poor health and family breakdown. In this respect, the concept of social exclusion may be distinguished from poverty, which is more narrowly focused on financial well-being, consumption and income adequacy.²⁸ Hence, while a one-dimensional approach to poverty may lead to ‘the self-evident proposition that poverty can be “solved” through income transfers’²⁹, any solution to social exclusion demands that the interconnected elements of deprivation be tackled through cross-departmental or multi-agency joined-up approaches.

Arguably, it is social exclusion’s broad emphasis on a range of different bases of disadvantage that has led to the concept being embraced by many in social policy circles, and especially by poverty researchers.

25. See J Veit-Wilson, *Setting adequacy standards: how governments define minimum incomes*, Polity Press, Bristol, 1998, p. 45. David Byrne suggests that the term ‘social inclusion’ depoliticises inequality even more than does the ‘weak’ version of social exclusion. This is because, ‘linguistically, it focuses on the supposed solution, rather than drawing attention to the problem’. D Byrne, *Social exclusion*, Open University Press, Maidenhead, 1999, p. 8.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

27. This is to be distinguished from mere absence of participation, which may be a matter of choice. See P Saunders, *op. cit.*

28. M Daly and H Silver, *op. cit.*, p. 539.

29. P Saunders, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

For some time, poverty researchers have been dissatisfied with the traditional approach to defining and measuring poverty on the basis of low income.³⁰ Such an approach, it is argued, is too one-dimensional and static, and does not enable a focus on the factors that contribute to disadvantaged people's economic marginality and general inability to participate in the key activities of society. It is also the case that income-based measures of poverty are plagued with conceptual and methodological problems. Not least of these problems is the basic question of what level of income should form the line below which people can be said to be in poverty.

In response to the limitations of the poverty concept, British sociologist and renowned poverty researcher, Peter Townsend, developed the concept of deprivation as a means to identify those people in poverty. Generally speaking, deprivation can be defined as 'an enforced lack of socially perceived necessities (or essentials).'³¹ Thus, deprivation is related to (but broader than) the concept of poverty as a result of its emphasis on lack of resources as the underlying cause of poverty. All that remains for researchers using the concept is to establish those resources that are regarded as essential by the majority of the community, and to identify those people who cannot afford these resources, and who can thus be said to be in poverty.

According to Peter Saunders, the deprivation approach never gained much traction in Australia, and it would now appear to have been overtaken and subsumed by the concept of social exclusion. As noted above, social exclusion has been adopted by many social researchers for its potential to shift the focus away from poverty defined in terms of low-income and onto 'the factors that contributed to the precariousness that often accompanies

30. While there are a number of different and frequently competing conceptions of poverty, it has generally been argued that these concepts share one element in common. Each understanding of poverty has it that people who live in poverty live in a state of deprivation, a condition in which their standard of living falls below some minimum acceptable standard. It is further agreed that poverty can be broadly defined in absolute or relative terms.

In the case of absolute poverty, this refers to people who lack life's most basic requirements. Absolute poverty is measured by estimating the numbers of individuals or families who are unable to provide for the basic necessities of life, including food, housing and/or clothing. With the exception of a very small number of Australians—and especially Indigenous Australians—such a definition does not apply in Australia. Instead, poverty in Australia is generally understood to be relative poverty. According to this definition, people are considered to be in poverty if their living standards fall below an overall community standard, and they are unable to participate fully in the ordinary activities of society.

31. P Saunders, Y Naidoo and M Griffiths, 'Towards new indicators of disadvantage: deprivation and social exclusion in Australia', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 43, no. 2, Winter 2008, p. 177, viewed 21 October 2009, <http://parlinfo/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=:group=:holdingType=:id=:orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Towards%20new%20indicators%20of%20disadvantage%20deprivation%20and%20social%20exclusion%20in%20Australia%20Dataset%3Ajmart,jmart88;querytype=:rec=0;resCount=Default>

unemployment or disengagement from the labour market.³² The promise of social exclusion, this view has it, lies in its emphasis on the multi-dimensional, dynamic and relational character of disadvantage, and in its potential to better capture the broad-ranging needs of disadvantaged people and shift attention to the social contexts in which they live.

Main criticisms

Definitional problems

The concept of social exclusion has been subjected to criticism on a number of different grounds. Perhaps the most frequently mentioned criticism of the concept is that it is (as discussed above) ill-defined and can, as a result, mean all things to all people:

exclusion appears to be a vague term, loaded with numerous economic, social, political, and cultural connotations and dimensions ... clearly, the expression is so evocative, ambiguous, multidimensional and elastic that it can be defined in many different ways.³³

Many commentators are wary of social exclusion's lack of definitional clarity, largely on the grounds that this can result in the concept being put to a range of different (and not necessarily favourable) political purposes.³⁴ Others are more pragmatic, viewing the concept's ambiguity and definitional flexibility as a potential strength. For example, Silver notes that 'the difficulty of defining exclusion and the fact that it is interpreted differently according to context and time also can be seen as an opportunity.'³⁵ Such arguments have it that social exclusion's vagueness allows it to be used in a variety of different policy settings, and to be 're-defined to encompass new issues as they emerge onto the policy agenda.'³⁶ The concept's vagueness also carries with it the possibility for forging political consensus among a range of different interests:

given the multiple connotations of [social exclusion], it might provide a political opportunity to cement a broadly based alliance in favour of new social policies ... if we define exclusion as a thoroughly new, multidimensional phenomenon touching people at all levels of the social hierarchy in some respects or at some point in their lives, large, cross-class coalitions to combat it may become easier to build.³⁷

32. Ibid., p. 178.

33. H Silver, op. cit., p. 536.

34. For example, the focus by some governments on work force participation, to the exclusion of other possible forms of participation.

35. H Silver, op. cit., p. 536.

36. P Saunders, op. cit., p. 77.

37. H Silver, op. cit., p. 571. For example, Daly and Silver argue that the persuasive yet vague character of social exclusion was crucial in enabling political actors to mobilise around it in the context of the EU. M Daly and H Silver, op. cit., p. 551. It needs to be recognised, however,

Paid employment focus

Another criticism of social exclusion is that the concept is all too often focused on participation in paid employment. From this perspective, unemployed people are not only excluded from the labour market and typically from the benefits of economic growth, but also, as a corollary, excluded from society. Labour market exclusion is thus conflated with social exclusion. As a consequence, the principal means through which people are to be integrated into society, and social exclusion combated, is through paid work.

This focus on paid work is seen by some to carry with it two main problems.³⁸ First, if social integration is only really possible through paid employment, then this means that those people who are not currently engaged in work, or who are unable to do so, are regarded as less than full members of society. And, while many of these people may be making valuable contributions to society through their unpaid work, these contributions are ignored and/or devalued.³⁹ Second, if exclusion and marginality are viewed primarily as exclusion and marginality from paid work, then questions of low pay and poor working conditions are treated as marginal; all that really matters is workforce participation. Thus, inequalities between paid workers are obscured and a form of exclusion as damaging as unemployment, is allowed to continue. As Ruth Levitas puts it, ‘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.’⁴⁰ And, where social exclusion is defined as employment participation, this view sees social *inclusion* as not necessarily beneficial.⁴¹

that the building of broadly based coalitions on the strength of an ill-defined concept could prove to be a double-edged sword. Social exclusion has both subjective and objective elements and, as a result, there is the potential for *all* people to feel vulnerable to exclusion, or to feel excluded from *something*.

38. R Levitas, ‘The concept of social exclusion and the new Durkheimian hegemony’, *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 16, no. 5, 1996.
39. Robert Goodin similarly argues that we need to recognise the productive contribution to society made by many people who do not participate in paid labour. These people ‘are not idle: they participate actively and productively; and doing so, they ought to be included among those who are valued, and rewarded, by society as a whole.’ R Goodin, ‘Inclusion and exclusion’, *European Journal of Sociology*, vol. 37, 1996, p. 353. Goodin maintains that one means for achieving this would be to pay a basic income, in lieu of current social benefits, unconditionally to all members of society (in something akin to that introduced in France, see above). It may be argued that the payment of a basic income would be truly inclusive, in that this would demonstrate the value of all citizens and their contributions to community life.
40. R Levitas, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
41. Robert Goodin makes a similar point with regard to First World and Third World relations. He argues that where the Third World is referred to as being excluded from the full fruits of economic development when, strictly speaking, it should instead be viewed as being

Limited scope

Some have argued that the concept of social exclusion is limited in its scope and ambition because it is largely concerned with thresholds—with getting people over the line of social inclusion. These arguments have it that where the goal is restricted to including the excluded, then this leaves those people who are included on the margins of society:

far from moving us beyond marginality—far from helping to take ‘the excluded’ to the centre of social life—political appeals couched in terms of ‘inclusion of the excluded’ only succeed in pushing them ‘just over the line’.⁴²

While Robert Goodin does not discount the importance of being on ‘the right side of the line’, he makes the point that so long as people *are* on the right side of the line, there is no imperative or logic in the social exclusion concept for doing any more. There is nothing in the social exclusion concept, Goodin argues, that would ‘help us to address our larger concerns about social marginality.’⁴³ If we are to truly tackle exclusion at its roots by means of the social exclusion concept, then this would appear to demand the use of a strong version of the concept; one that views social exclusion as a structural (or institutional) problem, and a problem that must be dealt with as such.

Top-down and passive

A related concern with the social exclusion concept is that it tends to be couched in ‘top-down’ terms. As such, inclusion is something that is done to passive, socially excluded people by the state. These people are viewed and treated as having little or no agency of their own. Thus, on the one hand, inclusion may be viewed as active or coercive on the part of the state and, on the other hand, as passive where it comes to those people who are *being* included.⁴⁴ It is precisely because inclusion tends to treat the included as passive (and is limited to ‘getting people over the line’) that Goodin prefers ‘participation’ rather than inclusion as a solution to exclusion. As Goodin sees it, whereas claims to inclusion are ‘merely a matter of “bare” inclusion’, participation arguments point to the case for *full* inclusion, in which ‘the aim is to bring the disadvantaged (‘the excluded’) into the mainstream—into the very centre of the social life of the community.’⁴⁵

incorporated into the capitalist world system ‘on singularly disadvantageous terms’. R Goodin, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

42. R Goodin, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

43. *Ibid.*

44. See M Daly and H Silver, *op. cit.*, p. 557.

45. R Goodin, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

Yet another charge levelled at the social exclusion concept is that it can itself be exclusionary and homogenising. On this view, premised as it is on an insider/outsider binary logic, social exclusion may ‘promulgate a dichotomous view of society.’⁴⁶ The danger of this is that:

by ghettoizing risk categories under a new label and publicising the more spectacular forms of poverty requiring emergency aid, policies to combat exclusion may make it easier to re-target money on smaller social categories, like the homeless or the long-term unemployed. It may even undermine the universal social insurance schemes that traditionally protected the working- and middle-classes.⁴⁷

Thus, labelling socially excluded people and focusing on ‘wicked problems’ can distract attention from a general rise in inequality and unemployment, and social problems that affect all social classes.⁴⁸ At the same time, because the concept is based on an assumed mainstream society, to which the excluded are held to aspire, the criteria for integration and membership are the acceptance of the dominant values and way of life. Where excluded people do not accept the dominant values, and inclusion efforts are resisted, this may easily be attributed to these people’s deviant behaviours. In this guise, social exclusion can take on a moralistic and punitive tone; insisting, more or less forcefully, that excluded people should ‘exercise personal responsibility’ and conform to dominant norms and values.⁴⁹ Daly and Silver refer to this implicit coercion to join and assimilate to a group’s practices and values as ‘social inclusion’s “dark side”’.⁵⁰

Inclusion into what?

Following on from the above criticisms is what might be considered to be a fundamental concern with the social exclusion concept. As noted above, due to its binary nature, the concept tends to focus attention on the excluded, at the expense of consideration of the included. Partly as a result of this, the question, ‘inclusion into what?’ (that is, ‘inclusion into what sort of society?’) tends to be neglected. Rather than challenging the status quo and raising questions as to how it might be improved—for one thing, how society might be made

46. M Daly and H Silver, op. cit., p. 557.

47. Ibid. On this point, see also D Beland, op. cit., pp. 123–139.

48. Broadly, ‘wicked problems’ are policy issues that are regarded to be so complex as to be highly resistant to resolution. For a relatively detailed formulation and analysis of ‘wicked problems’, see H Rittel and M Webber, ‘Dilemmas in a general theory of planning’, *Policy Sciences*, vol. 4, 1973, pp. 155–169.

49. On this point, it is important to distinguish between externally-imposed and self-imposed instances of exclusion. Exclusion may either be a result of structural causes or a reflection of people’s choices. Amartya Sen refers to these as, respectively, ‘passive’ and ‘active’ forms of exclusion. A Sen, ‘Social exclusion: concept, application and scrutiny’, *Social Development Paper*, no. 1, Asian Development Bank, Manila, 2000.

50. M Daly and H Silver, op. cit., p. 556.

more inclusive—the concept can, in its weak form, serve to normalise and unquestioningly strengthen existing arrangements.

Social exclusion—where to from here?

It is evident that for many commentators, social exclusion is so ill-defined and elastic a concept as to possess little value as a policy framework. While the concept may appear attractive to policy makers and others for its flexibility and inclusiveness, it is argued that without a clear definition and coherent theoretical core, the concept is of limited use. It simply amounts to a redefinition of existing social policies that have as their goal reducing disadvantage. The failings of the concept are, for some, illustrated by the fact that it is all too frequently narrowly focused by governments on the need to ensure maximum participation in paid employment. This confined focus, it is argued, reduces society to market relations, in which ‘there is no such thing as society—only individual men and women and their jobs’.⁵¹ Certainly, where the concept is focused primarily on participation in paid employment, it is incapable of addressing the more fundamental issues that lie at the heart of disadvantage.

While criticism of social exclusion has been scathing from many quarters, it is important to note that most commentators do not argue that the concept has *no* merit. Rather, they indicate that if social exclusion is to serve a meaningful role as a policy framework, then it needs to have more substance; what is required is a strong version of the concept. One means of ‘beefing up’ social inclusion that has been hinted at by some authors is to link the concept to a rights agenda. One possible way of doing this is through the concept of social citizenship, based as it is on the concept of social rights. The remainder of this paper will explore the possibility of using social citizenship in combination with the concept of social inclusion, as a framework for social policy.

The concept of social citizenship

Origins and description of main features

Citizenship can be defined as participation in or membership of a community, as expressed through various rights, obligations and institutions. Citizenship can take various forms depending on the type of community. Citizenship in Ancient Greece was very different to that of the modern democratic nation-state. While in Ancient Greece citizenship was reserved for those in the ruling group of the city-state, modern citizenship extends across society through such institutions as universal voting and the rule of law.

51. R Levitas, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

The idea of *social* citizenship derives principally from the work of the British sociologist, T.H. Marshall and, in particular, his 1949 essay, *Citizenship and Social Class*.⁵² Writing at a time in which the main pillars of the post-war British welfare state were being established, Marshall sought to explain this development in the context of the historical development of modern citizenship rights and institutions. In doing so, Marshall presented both an empirical description of the development of modern citizenship and an ideal against which to measure future developments.

Marshall divided citizenship into three strands: civil, political and social. These strands corresponded to three relatively distinct historical periods. *Civil citizenship* was said to have been developed primarily in the eighteenth century and established the rights necessary for individual freedom such as freedom of speech, property rights and the right to justice. The main institutions associated with civil citizenship are the courts of justice. According to Marshall, *political citizenship* was constructed in the nineteenth century and established the right to participate in the exercise of political power through holding office, voting and related activities. The main institutions in this case are parliaments and other related institutions of participatory government.

The final strand, *social citizenship*, was established in the twentieth century. According to Marshall, this encompassed a range of rights ‘from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society’.⁵³ The institutions most associated with social citizenship are the education system and the social services (for example, public health and housing services).

Broadly, modern citizenship can be understood in terms of the principle of equality of status. According to Marshall, ‘citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community’ and ‘all who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed’.⁵⁴ As such, social citizenship refers to the social rights, obligations and institutions that play a role in developing and supporting equality of status in the community.

The main way in which social citizenship contributes to equality of status is through helping to develop a common culture in which the differences between social classes and other groupings are less sharp. This occurs as a result of the redistribution of economic resources (through benefits and services) in such a way as to reduce the extent of social inequality.⁵⁵

52. T Marshall, ‘Citizenship and social class’, in T Marshall and T Bottomore, *Citizenship and social class*, London, Pluto Press, 1992. See also M Bulmer and A Rees (eds), *Citizenship today: the contemporary relevance of T. H. Marshall*, UCL Press, London, 1996.

53. T Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

55. Marshall refers to this as the ‘universal right to real income which is not proportionate to the market value of the claimant’. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

For Marshall, the point of this is not so much to eradicate income inequality as it is to bring about equality of status across the social structure:

What matters is that there is a general enrichment of the concrete substance of civilised life, a general reduction of risk and insecurity, an equalisation between the more and less unfortunate at all levels—between the healthy and the sick, the employed and the unemployed, the old and the active, the bachelor and the father of a large family. Equalisation is not so much between classes as between individuals within a population which is now treated for this purpose as though it were one class. *Equality of status is more important than equality of income.*⁵⁶ (Emphasis added)

According to this view, universal welfare had an important role to play in the creation of status equality and community:

Even when benefits are paid in cash ... class fusion is outwardly expressed in the form of a new common experience. All learn what it means to have an insurance card ... or collect children's allowances or pensions from the post office. But where the benefit takes the form of a service, the qualitative element [of common experience] enters into the benefit itself, and not only into the process by which it is obtained. The extension of such services can therefore have a profound effect on the qualitative aspects of social differentiation ... [For example,] the common experience offered by a general health service embraces all but a small minority at the top and spreads across the important class barriers in the middle ranks of the hierarchy.⁵⁷

In other words, the concept of social citizenship highlights the need to look beyond formal legal and political rights and obligations in order to gain a fuller appreciation of what is needed for participation in or membership of a community. Citizenship is also about non-political capacities which themselves are directly connected to access to social resources.⁵⁸ As Jack Barbalet, has argued 'a political system of equal citizenship is in reality less than equal if it is part of a society divided by unequal conditions.'⁵⁹

Limitations of Marshall and social citizenship

Marshall's work has been highly influential in the field of citizenship and social policy. His essay, *Citizenship and Social Class*, is regularly described as 'brilliant', a 'classic' and a 'touchstone'. As political scientist Michael Lister has observed, 'there are very few articles, chapters or books on citizenship, and citizenship and the welfare state, in particular, which do not mention, discuss or cite Marshall.'⁶⁰ Gosta Esping-Andersen has argued that 'few can

56. Ibid., p. 33.

57. Ibid.

58. J Barbalet, *Citizenship*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988, p. 1.

59. Ibid.

60. M Lister, 'Marshall-ing' social and political citizenship: towards a unified conception of citizenship', *Government and Opposition*, 2005, p. 471.

disagree with T.H. Marshall's proposition that social citizenship constitutes the core idea of a welfare state.⁶¹

However, Marshall has also fallen in and out of favour over the past sixty years as critics have debated various theoretical and empirical issues in relation to his work. These have included questions about the relationship between the different kinds of citizenship rights and the validity of Marshall's periodisation of the development of citizenship rights (evolving in a unidirectional way from civil to political to social rights). Further, over time, a number of important limitations of Marshall's work have been identified. Perhaps the most crucial of these have been: conceptual vagueness; his failure to account for the possibility of significant changes in such areas as employment and the economy, the family, the national community; and, the rise of environmental issues as a central concern.

Vagueness

A common criticism of the concept of social citizenship is that it is too vague. As discussed above, this criticism is also frequently made of social inclusion. According to this view, the vagueness of social citizenship derives from the imprecision of the original definition provided by Marshall. Furthermore, there have been very few attempts to outline social citizenship in more concrete terms in the fifty years since Marshall's essay was published. As such, according to Martin Powell, 'it is difficult to see exactly which concepts best characterize social citizenship, let alone which indices measure the extent of their change over time.'⁶²

A related criticism is that the imprecise nature of the term has allowed it to become too elastic. For example, Anthony Rees has warned of the possibility that the concept 'will disintegrate into a cacophony of unrelated tunes, cross-cutting and obscuring each other.'⁶³ Powell suggests that criticism of Marshall along these lines is a 'little unfair', given the pioneering nature of his work.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, it is reasonable to ask whether the vagueness of the concept of social citizenship erodes its value as an explanation of, and aspiration for, social action.

61. G Esping-Andersen, *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990, p. 21.

62. M Powell, 'The hidden history of social citizenship', *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2002, p. 230.

63. A Rees, 'T.H. Marshall and the progress of citizenship', in M Bulmer and A Rees (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 13.

64. M Powell, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

One answer to this is that conceptual vagueness (or openness) is not inherently a problem but rather can be productive or destructive depending on the circumstances.⁶⁵ Ultimately, it is more a matter of striking the correct balance between being too vague and too prescriptive, rather than choosing one or the other. The important question is whether the concept of citizenship is precise enough to actually mean something whilst remaining open enough to allow it to be to a variety of specific circumstances.

In this respect, it is important to note that for Marshall the various components of citizenship are not fixed but rather develop over time through political processes:

There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed.⁶⁶

The further point for Marshall is that social rights are of a different character to civil and political rights because ‘they cannot be precisely defined.’⁶⁷ According to Marshall, ‘a modicum of legally enforceable rights may be granted, but what matters to the citizen is the superstructure of legitimate expectations.’⁶⁸ In other words, as Kemran Mestan argues, Marshall’s conception of social citizenship means that ‘social policy development is based less in courts of law than in the continuous evolution of public expectations about how the well-being of citizens can be promoted and what should be citizen entitlements.’⁶⁹ As is to be expected, public expectations regarding citizen entitlements vary according to social context and political circumstances. Public expectations can also be influenced by the ways in which issues are framed by various interests.⁷⁰

65. O Klapp, *Opening and Closing: Strategies of Information Adaptation in Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, NY, 1978; L Buckmaster, *Openness, closure and collective action—the case of Indymedia*, PhD thesis, Australian National University, 2005.

66. T Marshall, op. cit., p. 18.

67. Ibid., p. 34.

68. Ibid.

69. K Mestan, ‘Human rights and social inclusion’, *Brotherhood Comment*, November 2007, p. 13, viewed 21 October 2009, <http://parlinfo/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=:group=:holdingType=:id=:orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Human%20rights%20and%20social%20inclusion%20Dataset%3Ajrnart,jrnart88;querytype=:rec=0;resCount=Default>

70. See, for example, A Elliot, ‘The best friend Medicare ever had? Policy narratives and changes in Coalition health policy’, *Health Sociology Review*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2006, viewed 21 October 2009, <http://parlinfo/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=:group=:holdingType=:id=:orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=The%20best%20friend%20Medicare%20ever%20had%3F%2>

Employment and the economy

Marshall developed the idea of social citizenship at a time when unemployment was low and full employment was an objective of most Western governments. Full employment was not only regarded as an end in itself but was also crucial in securing the financial base for the institutions of the welfare state. These institutions were never intended as a form of long-term support. The assumption was that unemployment would be short-term and that those unable to work as a result of disability or old age would be supported by the expanding workforce. Further, at this time, much elderly and child care was provided within the family.⁷¹

However, the assumption of full employment and, more broadly, the financial underpinnings for welfare state institutions have been challenged over the past few decades as a result of a number of substantial social, political and economic changes. Taylor-Gooby has summarised some of these changes as follows:

Globalisation weakened the authority of national governments to control exchange rates and regulate imports and exports. It reinforced pressures to manage national affairs (including social spending) with the object of enhancing competitiveness in a freer world market ... The demands of emerging political groups, and especially of women, challenged the male worker welfare state and required an expansion of collective care services; additional pressures from expanding elderly populations, rising health care costs and fluctuations in employment intensified the problem of cost; the introduction of new technology threatened to render obsolete or export many of the jobs on which the core working class had relied for security and good living standards.⁷²

Thus, in Barbalet's words

the nature, role and security of social rights can no longer be taken for granted because the institutions they rely on can no longer be funded at the rate required to sustain them [and] this trend is most marked in the under-funding relative to demand for public education, health and housing.⁷³

Indeed, in recent years in countries such as Australia there has been a marked shift towards private funding and provision of social services. Against this background, some might wish to question the continued relevance of the concept of citizenship to social policy.

[0Policy%20narratives%20and%20changes%20in%20Coalition%20health%20policy%20Data%20et%3Ajrnart,jrnart88;querytype=;rec=0;resCount=Default](#)

71. P Taylor-Gooby, *Political Legitimacy and Social Citizenship: a dilemma of austerity*, paper prepared for the Social Policy Association Annual Conference, 2009, p. 6.
72. P Taylor-Gooby, op. cit., p. 7. These structural changes were accompanied by an ideological shift in the West towards ideas of small government and free markets.
73. J Barbalet, 'Developments in citizenship theory and issues in Australian citizenship', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1996, p. 60.

The family

Another assumption made about society when the concept of social citizenship was developed was that the family—made up of a male breadwinner, dependent female spouse and children—formed the basic social unit. As a result, feminist authors in particular have criticised Marshall's analysis on the grounds that it ignores the gendered nature of social citizenship.⁷⁴ That is, Marshall's version of social citizenship is based on assumptions of a particular form of social/family structure dominated by men. This has been criticised as failing to properly acknowledge the value of unpaid domestic labour while at the same time assuming that women would continue to play a dependent role within the family.

This assumption has long since been overtaken by changes in the family and, more broadly, in relationships between men and women. Since the 1970s there has been a rapid increase in the participation of married women in the paid workforce in Western countries. As such, the basic social unit can be said to have shifted from the traditional family to the individual. There has also been a range of other social changes since the 1970s—such as increasing rates of divorce, changing gender roles and greater acceptance of sexual difference that have challenged traditional notions of family structure (for example, blended families and families headed by same sex couples).

As with the challenge to the assumption of full employment, these changes have made for a far more complex social environment than that which underpinned Marshall's conception of social rights. Further, the feminist critique of social citizenship has highlighted a range of important questions for social policy. These include the question of how to address the central issue of citizenship—equality of status—in a way that properly accounts for differences in status between (and the different expectations of) men and women.

Nation and community

In England in the 1940s, when Marshall developed the idea of social citizenship, it was possible to assume a relatively stable national community of citizens. There was little necessity to question precisely who qualified as a citizen because England at that time was characterised by a relatively unified population.⁷⁵ In other words, the question of access to citizenship was underpinned by the assumption that 'Britishness' could be more or less taken for granted.

However, soon after the end of World War II, population mobility meant that settled ideas of national community became increasingly difficult to sustain. In Britain, immigration from

74. See, for example, A Orloff, 'Gender and the social rights of citizenship: the comparative analysis of gender relations and welfare states', *American sociological review*, vol. 58, no.3, 1993; C Pateman, 'The patriarchal welfare state', in A Gutmann (ed), *Democracy and the welfare state*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1988.

75. J Barbalet, op. cit., p. 61.

former colonies began to change the composition of the population, while in Europe, war-time refugees and migrant workers began to have a similar effect. Over subsequent decades, assumptions about who could access the rights of citizenship were increasingly contested.

Questions about nationality and citizenship have become even more relevant in recent decades as a result of economic globalisation and increasing mobility of populations across national boundaries. This means that, in addition to the question of what rights are entailed by citizenship, the question of precisely who can access these rights has become a central question. Arguably, these tensions were always implied by the idea of citizenship. As Barbalet suggests, ‘citizenship, as a question of membership in a national community, was always about exclusion as well as belonging.’⁷⁶ In other words, citizenship inherently assumes that some will be included and some excluded. The point to be made here, however, is that the question of who is in and who is out has become an increasingly complex matter in recent decades.

A related controversial question in recent years has been how citizenship can take adequate account of ethnic, religious and other forms of socio-cultural diversity.⁷⁷ For some, the strategy of seeking to include disadvantaged and/or minority groups within a universal framework of citizenship fails to properly account for difference and is ultimately discriminatory. Such critics have argued instead for differential rights of citizenship or cultural rights for particular groups. Others have suggested that differential rights are incompatible with the notion of equality of status and that, if they are to be employed at all, they should only ever be a temporary measure aimed at addressing inequality.⁷⁸

These matters have been made even more complex by the rise of a range of international institutions in the period since World War II (for example, the United Nations, the European Union, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund). On the one hand, some of these institutions (for example, the WTO) have been criticised for diminishing the rights of citizens because citizens have only very indirect control over them

76. J Barbalet, ‘Developments in citizenship theory and issues in Australian citizenship’, *Australian journal of social issues*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1996, p. 62.

77. For example, see R Lister, ‘Inclusive citizenship: realizing the potential’, *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2007; W Kymlicka and W Norman (eds), *Citizenship in diverse societies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000; E Isin and P Wood, *Citizenship and identity*, London and Thousand Oaks, California, 1999; S Castles and A Davidson, *Citizenship and migration: globalization and the politics of belonging*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, Eng., 2000.

78. As Barry argues, ‘there may be cases in which a system of group based rights for those suffering from systematic disadvantage will be a way of helping to meet the liberal egalitarian demand that people should not have fewer resources and opportunities than others when this inequality has arisen out of circumstances that they had no responsibilities for bringing about.’ B Barry, *Culture and equality: an egalitarian critique of multiculturalism*, Polity Press, Oxford, 2001, p. 13.

through their governments.⁷⁹ On the other, some institutions have been a source of support to some communities denied rights by the nation states in which they reside (for example, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees). Again, the point is that notions of belonging and community in contemporary society are far more complex than the settled national community in Marshall's citizenship framework.

The state

In addition to its connection to a national community, the idea of citizenship is based on membership of a nation *state*. In Marshall's formulation, 'it was implicitly the state which provides the principal element in the maintenance and development of social rights, being the political instrument through which various political movements seek some redress of their circumstances through the legitimisation of their claims against society.'⁸⁰ As such, the rights of social citizenship are inevitably constrained by the ability (and willingness) of a given nation state to meet these rights.

This point was clearly recognised by Marshall for whom, as noted above, the rights of social citizenship were for the most part contingent and developmental (and also potentially reversible). However, what Marshall did not and arguably could not have foreseen and accounted for were the developments associated with globalisation, and the degree to which these have compromised the autonomy of nation states and their scope for manoeuvre.

As noted above, in recent decades the ability of nation states to guarantee and deliver upon the social rights claims of their citizens has been seriously challenged, and delimited, by the forces of globalisation. With the restructuring of global capitalism, nation states have had their economic autonomy constrained by international agreements and institutions 'such that "local" political decisions by the state may have very adverse consequences for the value of [their] currency within the international money markets.'⁸¹ Under such circumstances, various nation states are more or less able to deliver the resources necessary for citizens' welfare and well-being, and on various social rights claims. This is not to suggest that the social rights claims of citizens are any less legitimate as a result of a given nation state's reduced capacity to deliver on them. Rather, it is to acknowledge that citizenship rights are only meaningful inasmuch as states are able to fulfil claims made against them.

The environment

Marshall's account of social citizenship was developed at a time in which it was generally assumed that resources and economic growth were unlimited. Such assumptions have been under sustained challenge for at least four decades following the emergence of significant problems such as climate change, air pollution, water pollution and deforestation. That such

79. R Bellamy, *Citizenship. a very short introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 50–51.

80. B Turner, 'Outline of a theory of citizenship', *Sociology*, vol. 24, no. 2, May 1990, p. 193.

81. B Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

problems directly impact on the general wellbeing of citizens, raises a number of problems for conventional ideas of citizenship.⁸²

One problem relates to the view that those who have not yet been born have a right to inherit a healthy environment with sufficient resources to meet their needs. According to such a view, membership of the community should have an intergenerational component. Citizenship means limiting the satisfaction of current needs in order to ensure that future needs can be met. There is a further view that aspects of the natural environment such as land, trees and animals are entitled to be considered within the framework of citizenship rights. Finally, there is the point that environmental problems are not confined to national boundaries—that is, national wellbeing can be determined by developments occurring beyond the nation state in which their impact is felt.

Thus, green citizenship expands notions of citizenship across time, space and species.⁸³ Green citizenship also gives primacy to the obligations and duties of citizens (in this case, to nature) in a way that the conventional Marshallian approach to citizenship (where the state carries most of the obligations) does not.⁸⁴

Continued relevance of social citizenship

Given the limitations identified above, it is reasonable to ask whether social citizenship remains a relevant concept for social policy. To what extent can a social citizenship framework accommodate the various social, cultural, political and economic changes that have occurred over the past sixty years? To what extent can social citizenship address central problems of the age related to, for example, relations between people and the environment, men and women and people from different cultural backgrounds?

For some, these issues pose substantial problems for Marshall's approach. The assumptions underpinning the world described by Marshall at best describe a particular time and place but cannot provide an adequate way of understanding the much more complex contemporary world. Thus, Barbalet has noted the tendency of 'most commentators [to] deride his account of citizenship.'⁸⁵

82. J Barbalet, op. cit., p. 62.

83. Ibid., p. 63. For a discussion of the concept of green citizenship, see F Steward, 'Citizens of planet Earth', in G Andrews (ed), *Citizenship*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1991; H Newby, 'Citizenship in a green world: global commons and human stewardship', in M Bulmer and A Rees (eds), *Citizenship today: the contemporary relevance of T.H. Marshall*, UCL Press, London, 1996; H Dean, 'Green citizenship', *Social Policy and Administration*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2001; T Gabrielson, 'Green citizenship: a review and critique', *Citizenship studies*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2008.

84. J Barbalet, op. cit., p. 66.

85. J Barbalet, op. cit., p. 57.

However, while it is undoubtedly true that Marshall failed to either address or anticipate a range of fundamentally important issues, it would be a mistake to take this as a reason to dismiss his work out of hand. As Bellamy argues, the kinds of limitations described above:

... do not necessarily contradict the main thrust of [Marshall's] argument. They merely indicate how each attempt to realize a form of equal citizenship generates its own unanticipated shortcomings and problems—producing new struggles over the way the political community, rights and participation are defined.⁸⁶

As noted above, Marshall did not see the various components of citizenship as fixed but rather as subject to development over time through political processes. In Michael Lister's words, 'the specific nature of citizenship is the product of negotiation and compromise, creating tensions and accommodations.'⁸⁷

Arguably, then, while Marshall's social citizenship approach has some important theoretical and empirical shortcomings it remains a valuable way of conceptualising the various negotiations, compromises, tensions and accommodations associated with the making of social policy and creation of social policy institutions. There will always be debate within a society over what should constitute the 'superstructure of legitimate expectations'. The point is that debates occurring within the framework of citizenship and social rights are of a different character to those that occur outside such a framework. Above all, access to those things regarded as legitimate expectations is conferred as a right of citizenship, as part of the process of conferring equality of status, rather than, for example, as a result of random acts of benevolence from above. In other words, the concept of social rights implies both the various social and economic resources necessary for full and equal participation in the community *and* an ideal towards which citizens can direct their aspirations and measure their achievements. It therefore implies that participation by citizens in their society is essential. As Ralf Dahrendorf argues, 'there is no more dynamic social figure in modern history than the citizen.'⁸⁸

Further, for some observers, the concept of social citizenship also implies that such participation occurs on the basis of social and moral equality. Thus, Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon argue that:

'Citizen' and 'citizenship' are powerful words. They speak of respect, of rights, of dignity. Consider the meaning and emotion packed into the French citizen of 1789, a word that condemned tyranny and social hierarchy, while affirming self-government and status

86. R Bellamy, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

87. M Lister, *op. cit.*, *Government and Opposition*, 2005, p. 487.

88. R Dahrendorf, 'Citizenship and beyond: the social dynamics of an idea', *Social Research*, vol. 41, no. 4, 1974, p. 673.

equality ... The word has so much dignity it rarely appears in slang ... We find no pejorative uses. It is a weighty, monumental, humanist word.⁸⁹

A citizenship-based social inclusion agenda?

The first section of this paper highlighted a number of criticisms of the social inclusion approach. The most important of these are:

- the absence of a clear definition and coherent theoretical core
- frequently focused narrowly on participation in paid employment at the expense of other possible mechanisms of inclusion
- limited scope and ambition—by definition, social inclusion primarily concerns itself with 'getting people across the line' and hence does not imply the necessity to address the fundamental, structural sources of social marginality, and
- top-down approach that conceives of the excluded as passive objects of policy (in other words, it has an exclusionary logic).

These criticisms raise important questions about the value of social inclusion as a framework for social policy. It is not clear what the concept adds to existing approaches to social policy and, most importantly, there is the possibility that, by its very logic, it could have a limiting effect on the ambitions of social policy makers and citizens. Further, it offers nothing specific or concrete to those regarded as excluded as a mechanism for overcoming their exclusion. In other words, social inclusion could potentially fall well short of promoting the level of participation necessary to address exclusion in a fundamental way.

Nevertheless, as noted above, this is not to say that the concept of social inclusion cannot be developed along more fruitful lines. As also noted above, the definitional vagueness associated with the term suggests the possibility of such development in the same way that social citizenship was described above as being developed over time through public dialogue. One feature of social inclusion that might provide the basis for such a dialogue is the fact that it appears to resonate strongly with many people. Goodin suggests that this may be because most people can identify on an instinctive level with the idea of being excluded:

Talk of social 'exclusion' ... serves to invoke deeply-rooted intuitions traceable all the way back to the schoolyard. We all keenly recall, from whatever temporal distance, the pain that can come from being cold-shouldered and maliciously cut out of the games of our schoolmates.⁹⁰

89. N Fraser and L Gordon, 'Civil citizenship versus social citizenship? The ideology of contract versus charity', in B Van Steenburgen (ed), *The condition of citizenship*, Sage, London, 1994.

90. R Goodin, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

‘Social exclusion’, argues Goodin:

... catches much of what is substantially of concern to us. Indeed, the great value of the concept lies in its promise to link together so many of our other social concerns, tracing them to common (or anyway cognate) causes and prescribing identical (or anyway integrated cures).⁹¹

The most important question to be answered in relation to social inclusion, however, is how to draw on the instinctive attractiveness of the idea whilst at the same time finding a way of grounding this idea in a framework capable of giving rise to something substantial, tangible and in which people can be active participants. That is, there must be clear opportunities and mechanisms through which people can give expression to their desire for inclusion.

From inclusion to participation

The idea of participation is central to many attempts to define social inclusion. However, a number of authors have gone further than this and argued that participation, rather than inclusion, should be the main focus of efforts to address social exclusion.⁹² Such authors suggest that it is the more active logic of participation, rather than the relatively passive logic of inclusion, that is most likely to address the problem of exclusion.

This point has probably been made most directly by Heinz Steinert. He argues that the concept of inclusion implies the necessity to conform with dominant social norms and demands.⁹³ In contrast, Steinert argues, an approach based around participation ‘assumes the need, necessity and democratic right to participate—to a degree and in ways that are constantly negotiated and contested.’⁹⁴ This is especially so because, as Jane Millar notes, contemporary societies encompass a ‘variety of values, attitudes and beliefs’ and ‘there is not necessarily a consensus about what people should have, about how people should live, or about what people should do’ (this is discussed above in the context of criticisms of the assumptions behind Marshall’s concept of social citizenship).⁹⁵

91. Ibid., p. 343.

92. Ibid., p. 353; H Steinert, ‘Introduction: the cultures of welfare and exclusion’, in H Steinert and A Pilgram (eds), *Welfare policy from below: struggles against social exclusion in Europe*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, Hampshire, Eng., 2003, p. 5; and J Millar, ‘Social exclusion and social policy research: defining exclusion’, in D Abrams, J Christian and D Gordon (eds), *Multidisciplinary handbook of social exclusion research*, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester, West Sussex, Eng., 2007, p. 3.

93. H Steinert, op. cit., p. 6.

94. Ibid.

95. J Millar, op. cit., p. 3.

Steinert's definition of social exclusion therefore focuses directly on participation in a way that both affirms its centrality in human welfare and as the basis for people's involvement in the full range of activities associated with their welfare:

Social exclusion can thus be understood as the continuous and gradual exclusion from full participation in the social, including material and symbolic, resources produced, supplied and exploited in a society for making a living, organizing a life and taking part in the development of a (hopefully better) future.⁹⁶

Drawing on this approach, there is a need to understand the various ways in which people can participate in society. According to Millar, this implies an approach that is:

- relational—looking at people in the context of family, household, community and nation, rather than simply as individuals
- inclusive of the full range of resources available to people—not just income but also access to goods and services, community facilities, political engagement, leisure and social activity
- dynamic—that is, focused on future opportunities and capabilities to take advantage of these, not just current circumstances, and
- informed by a recognition of the role of agency—meaning that not only is exclusion caused by the actions of other individuals and institutions but that people employ different ways of coping with the risk or actuality of social exclusion (which in turn can be enhanced or diminished by government policy).⁹⁷

An important feature of this approach is that welfare is understood to be about the provision of resources for participation. Steinert relates this to the concept of social citizenship when he argues that social policy is not simply about material welfare but has an important civil and political dimension:

... [it has] effects on the degrees of freedom in the labour market, on equality of civic status and on power to influence the future of society. The provisions of the welfare state are more than means for material survival. They are a decisive part of the infrastructure of social and political participation.⁹⁸

This conception of social policy as a means for the provision of resources necessary for social and political participation can also be connected to the 'capabilities approach' of Amartya

96. H Steinert, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

97. J Millar, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–4.

98. H Steinert, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

Sen.⁹⁹ Broadly, this approach emphasises the importance of resources in the development of those capabilities regarded as necessary for participation in society.

Participation and citizenship rights

An approach that emphasises participation may only take things part of the way. The question then becomes: participation on whose terms and on what basis? What assurance does it provide that effort will be sustained, enduring and meaningful?

This is where the idea of social citizenship may play a useful role.¹⁰⁰ Social citizenship is concerned with the resources necessary for membership and participation in society. Importantly, though, under a social citizenship framework social resources are not granted by the state out of benevolence or other motives but rather are conferred as a right of citizenship. That is, social rights, like civil and political rights, inhere equally to all citizens precisely as a result of their membership of the community. Further, social rights, like civil and political rights are regarded as essential to the full exercise of citizenship. In this respect, they can be considered as holding equal status to civil and political rights. Civil, political and social rights can therefore be seen as different aspects of the same unified concept of citizenship.¹⁰¹

Further, social citizenship presents a rights-based framework against which citizens can develop aspirations, evaluate and compare policies and measure progress. The key question is whether the aspiration or policy constitutes a positive or negative contribution to overall participation and, hence, the practice of citizenship. Placing this in the context of citizenship, in terms of what is necessary for, and meaningful about, being a citizen, is a qualitatively different matter to the context of social inclusion. The latter essentially limits its focus to the bundle of resources necessary for individuals and groups to be considered included. While this is no small matter, the concept of citizenship shifts focus to something greater than matters of equal entitlement to resources (to something bigger than individuals and groups). That is, it focuses attention on such matters as: the quality of relationships between citizens, the distribution and mix of resources necessary for ensuring that such relationships are positive in nature, and, the extent to which the various ways in which particular resources are used impacts upon other citizens (that is, social citizenship encompasses rights *and* duties). Importantly, under the citizenship approach, such questions apply not only to those deemed to be marginalised, disadvantaged or excluded, but to all citizens.

This alternative framework suggests that there would be some value in pursuing a social inclusion agenda grounded in the idea of social citizenship. This could take the form of

99. A Sen, *Development as freedom*, Anchor, New York, 1999.

100. Marshall's concept of citizenship has not to date provided a focal point for the development of social policy in Australia. See P Saunders, *op. cit.*, p. 78. This is not to say, however, that it could not serve such a role, especially given that the ideal of the citizen is implicit in much of Australia's social policy, and that the ideal of the citizen is such a powerful one (see above).

101. M Lister, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

specific entitlements (for example, via legislation or non-legislative means such as a charter of rights)¹⁰² through to particular resources (as social rights) deemed to be essential to the exercise of citizenship, though there are strong and contrasting views about the value and legitimacy of such an approach. Alternatively, social rights could be less formal in nature, simply providing the framework for public discussion about the rights necessary for the exercise of citizenship.

The following section will outline some possible principles and policies that could be included in a citizenship-based social inclusion agenda.

Towards an ‘inclusive social citizenship’ approach

What would a truly inclusive social policy, understood as an expression of social citizenship, look like in practice? Ideally, it would seek to combine the concepts of social inclusion and social citizenship, using the relative strengths of each to address weaknesses or gaps in the other, to produce what might be called ‘inclusive social citizenship’. This would be an approach to social policy based on the concepts of social rights and participation and which seeks to remain as inclusive as possible (thereby avoiding any exclusionary tendencies associated with the concepts of social inclusion, in particular, and social citizenship).

As suggested above, the precise elements of inclusionary social citizenship would be a matter for continuing negotiation through public discourse. While certain principles and core rights and responsibilities may provide an essential basis and framework for the agenda, many of the concerns of such an approach would be rightly ‘up for grabs’. This is as it should be and would help to ensure that the agenda remained open to new issues, ideas and challenges and, thus, vital and relevant. Nevertheless, based on this paper’s considerations, it is possible to identify a number of areas in which inclusive social citizenship could contribute to social policy.

Social policy framework

As discussed above, the absence of a coherent theoretical core limits the capacity of social inclusion to contribute to the development of a framework to underpin social policy. In contrast, the concept of social citizenship provides a coherent and widely understood (if at times only implicitly) framework based on the idea of rights. The central idea of social citizenship, social rights, is itself integrated within the broader framework of civil and political rights. As discussed above, the social citizenship approach argues that civil, political and social rights have developed since the 18th century, with each integral to the enjoyment of the other.

102. For example, as discussed above, France has introduced legislation designed to prevent and combat social exclusion through guaranteed universal access to fundamental rights, across ten specific areas.

Nevertheless, as noted above, the concept of social rights has never played much more than a peripheral role in the development of Australian social policy. Arguably, many Australians conceive of access to social policy institutions such as the health, education and social security systems as something akin to rightful. However, it is not clear that people are comfortable or familiar with the notion that such institutions can be formally conceived of as social rights carrying the same status as civil and political rights. This presents some problems with social citizenship in terms of the concept's ability to contribute to a framework for Australian social policy.

However, it could be that the emergence of the concept of social inclusion may add some momentum to the development of a culture of social rights in Australia. It is clear that social inclusion has helped to focus increased attention on issues such as disadvantage, marginality, inequality and poverty and the kinds of policies needed to address them. It has also directed attention towards the issue of participation (though, this has largely been in terms of economic participation). Further, the concept of social inclusion has created the grounds for fundamental discussions about how such policies can be meaningful, effective and enduring.

One possible mechanism for achieving meaningful, effective and enduring social policy approaches is through the concept of social citizenship and the development of a culture of social rights.

Linking the micro and the macro

As noted above, policies aimed at bringing about social inclusion have tended to focus on bringing about change at the micro-level through enhanced (joined-up) models of service delivery and a more sophisticated understanding of the (multiple) sources of disadvantage. This is a valuable development, and one that draws on a range of sources, including critiques of welfare state bureaucracies and developments in poverty studies that identify and focus on multiple sources of disadvantage. The particular value of policy focused at this level is that it is potentially inclusive of a broader and more specific range of issues related to the problem of poverty and marginality. In this respect, it may be seen as complementary to the concept of social citizenship, which does not concern itself with such matters. Instead, social citizenship focuses mainly on the institutions capable of overcoming class-based and other structural forms of disadvantage.

The discussion above has highlighted the absence within most discussions of social inclusion of acknowledgement of the deeper, structural causes of social exclusion—that is, the macro-level. The concept of social citizenship, on the other hand, focuses attention squarely on the macro-social sources of disadvantage and the types of social institutions necessary for addressing them. Among other things, social citizenship raises the question of what should be the role of the state in tackling the bases, and not simply the symptoms, of disadvantage. Political and economic debates for several decades have been premised on the virtues of small government and the 'withering away of the state' as part of globalisation. The question is: Does the interventionist response by international governments to the global financial

crisis mean looking differently at these issues? The micro-social approach of social inclusion provides very little assistance in addressing such questions.

Arguably, an effective and robust approach to social policy should seek to link, as far as possible, the micro- and macro-arenas of policy. That is, it would seek to focus on both the need to understand and respond to specific/local problems and the need to address the structural dimension of disadvantage. An inclusive social citizenship approach could provide one way of connecting these two arenas.

Clarifying the role of work

As noted above, policies framed in terms of social inclusion have focused strongly on paid employment in ensuring that citizens are able to participate in society. However, a citizenship based approach to social inclusion would recognise that there are more ways to participate in society than simply through the labour market. That is, social inclusion is about more than just enabling people to enter into paid employment but also encompasses a diversity of ways of contributing, participating and belonging to society. In this respect, a focus on the broader concept of ‘work’, rather than simply paid employment, may prove useful. As one study of social exclusion in Europe found:

People do not accept charity easily. They do not want to be dependent. They would rather have a chance to ‘earn’ a decent living—not necessarily by wage labour or forced work for the community, but by work (like reproduction work in the family or in networks of association), they see as needed and meaningful.¹⁰³

One way of acknowledging forms of participation beyond paid employment would be to introduce a guaranteed minimum income—or ‘citizen income’—for all, paid in recognition of all approved forms of participation.¹⁰⁴ As noted earlier, such a system was instituted in France as a part of its social exclusion agenda. Critics of such an approach have generally pointed to the likely high cost and lack of public support for schemes of this kind. Nevertheless, a public debate about the merits of such a scheme would at least focus attention on the need to find some way of adequately recognising the range of forms of participation as part of efforts to address social exclusion.

103 C Pelikan, A Pilgram, H Steinert and G Vobruba, ‘Welfare policies as resource management’, in H Steinert and A Pilgram (eds), *Welfare policy from below: struggles against social exclusion in Europe*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, Hampshire, Eng., 2003, p. 268.

104. See, for example, K Rankin, ‘A new fiscal contract? Constructing a universal basic income and a social wage’, *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, vol. 9, November 1997; S Shaver and P Saunders, ‘Two papers on citizenship and basic income’, SPRC Discussion Paper, no. 55, 1995; P. Saunders, ‘Guaranteed minimum income revisited: paradise lost or guiding light?’, *Economic Papers*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1988.

Further, it should be noted that employment is not by itself a guarantee of inclusion. As numerous authors have argued, the relationship of many people to the labour market is a tenuous and exploitative one; indeed, they are socially excluded *by virtue* of their labour market participation.¹⁰⁵ According to such a view, efforts to tackle social exclusion should include a focus on ensuring that work is relevant, meaningful and equitable. What then is the proper role of governments in mediating between people and employment? Is there a middle path between the view that governments should not allow people to become excluded through dependency on the welfare state and the view that governments should not be in the business of excluding people from welfare in order to cause them to enter into (sometimes marginal) paid employment?¹⁰⁶

One possible way forward would be to seek, as much as possible, to avoid this dilemma in the first place by ensuring that there has been sufficient investment in resources such as education, training, employment services and possibly even employment creation. As suggested above, this would also include investment in and utilisation of the range of forms of participation beyond the labour market. Such an approach can be thought of as provision of the infrastructure necessary for both preventing exclusion and facilitating participation—that is, as social citizenship.¹⁰⁷ Thus, in the words of the aforementioned European social exclusion study, given the ‘incentive for the state to get out of providing expensive benefits, a welfare policy organized around the provision of infrastructure ... can be attractive for both sides’.¹⁰⁸

Along these lines, some authors have argued that social policy should be conceived in terms of social investment. Proponents of this idea argue that social policy is an investment in human capital—that is, through, for example, strong education and health systems and inclusive and cohesive societies. As such, welfare is conceived as an investment aimed at overcoming what are essentially problems of poor human capital development (poor

105 See, for example, R Sennett, *The corrosion of character: the personal consequences of work in the new capitalism*, Norton, New York, 1998; B Ehrenreich, *Nickel and dimed: on (not) getting by in America*, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2001; E Wynhausen, *Dirt cheap: life at the wrong end of the job market*, MacMillan, Sydney, 2005.

106 In the words of Pelikan et al, ‘it is not for the state to press people into wage labour that is not offered in sufficient amount and quality’, op. cit., p. 257.

107. Such an approach would have much in common with the notions of ‘positive welfare’ and ‘generative welfare’ proposed by Anthony Giddens. That is, a reconstructed approach to welfare that focuses on preventive measures and citizen empowerment, rather than top-down measures designed to cope with problems once they have happened. A Giddens, *Beyond left and right: the future of radical politics*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 174–197.

108 C Pelikan, A Pilgram, H Steinert and G Vobruba, op. cit., p. 257.

education and health, social and economic marginalisation) that themselves place limits on productivity and economic growth.¹⁰⁹

An approach to social policy of this kind would appear to be consistent with what this paper has called a citizenship-based social inclusion framework. As suggested in the previous section, it would not necessarily imply a significant expansion in the welfare state but rather a refocusing of resources on strategies and institutions aimed at preventing exclusion and facilitating participation.

An important feature of such an approach could be a greater focus through the social security system on the redistribution of resources across the life course in order to assist people to cope with risks associated with transitions across the life course (for example, raising children or participating in further education). Such an approach would conceive of social security as not simply compensating people for adverse contingencies but as part of encouraging people to take the risks associated with undertaking important transitions associated with social and economic participation (for example, reducing/leaving paid employment to have children). In this connection, Secretary of the Treasury, Ken Henry, has recently foreshadowed the possibility of changes to the family payments system that would provide greater support to those with younger children and which would be ‘strongly complementary’ with the delivery of health and other services for families with children.¹¹⁰

Role of obligations and responsibilities

Notions of obligation and responsibility have been central to social policy debates in recent years (for example, reforms based around the concept of ‘mutual obligation’ in the area of welfare payments). In such debates, obligations and rights have frequently been portrayed as inherently in conflict. Discussions of the concept of social inclusion are largely silent on such matters, though the focus on paid employment could be taken to indicate that the primary obligation in society is for the unemployed to find employment.

109 P Aighon and J Williamson, *Growth, inequality and globalisation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998. See also A Sen, *op. cit.*

110. In a speech to the Australian Research Alliance for Children, Dr Henry suggested that ‘perhaps the focus of the family payment system therefore needs to be redirected toward providing a higher level of support for parents with very young children, when their caring and nurturing role is the greatest, and supporting higher levels of workforce participation for parents and carers as children move into their school years’. He added that an example of the service delivery working in concert with the benefit system would be the 35 ‘children and family centres’ to be established in Indigenous and disadvantaged areas to provide a mix of child care, early education, health and family support. See F Anderson and P Durkin, ‘Henry queries means testing’, *Australian Financial Review*, 4 September 2009, p. 3, viewed 21 October 2009, http://parlinfo.parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=:group=:holdingType=:id=:orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Henry%20queries%20means%20testing%20Dataset%3Apress_clp_jrnart,jrnart88;querytype=:rec=0;resCount=Default

An approach based around the concept of citizenship suggests the possibility for a broader and more fruitful discussion. The concept of citizenship implies not only the rights that can be claimed by citizens against the state but also highlights the relationship between citizens, including the impact of the use of social resources on other citizens.

The sorts of responsibilities that should be considered consistent with social citizenship rights would need to be negotiated. While one would expect discussions about the appropriate range of responsibilities associated with social rights to be strongly contested (and indeed controversial), discussion of such matters in the context of citizenship—the responsibilities owed to and impact of one’s actions on one’s fellow citizens—could at least provide a useful starting point. The kinds of responsibilities that might emerge from discussions could include: making responsible use of the health system (for example, not presenting at hospital emergency departments when other forms of care, including self-care, are appropriate and available options); looking after one’s health (healthy diet, not smoking, exercise); paying a fair amount of tax; and, making a contribution to society through some form of work (paid and/or voluntary).

Self exclusion

As discussed above, social exclusion can be a reflection of people’s choices. However, while some wealthy people’s choices to exclude themselves (for example, through living in ‘gated communities’)¹¹¹ are deemed acceptable, those of many poor or ‘separate’ people are not. The existence of different forms of exclusion may be seen as raising the (hitherto largely neglected) question of whether or not people (both wealthy *and* poor) may be *obliged* to be included.

The concept of social citizenship, with its emphasis on responsibilities owed by citizens to one another, provides one way of beginning to address such issues. If social exclusion is viewed in a holistic sense as posing a threat to social cohesion and order, and as highlighting people’s obligations as a whole, then arguably, efforts at social inclusion should themselves be inclusive. That is, they should focus on *all those* people who actively exclude themselves.

If, on the other, hand people regard some forms of self-exclusion as appropriate and others as not, then some thought needs to go into what might constitute acceptable forms of self-exclusion and what forms are unacceptable. Along these lines, Georg Vobruba has argued for the possibility that there are ‘bad’ and ‘good’ kinds of exclusion, as well as ‘bad’ and ‘good’ inclusion.¹¹²

111. Broadly speaking, gated communities are exclusive residential developments in which access by non-residents is tightly restricted.

112. G Vobruba, ‘Inclusion, exclusion: towards a dynamic approach’, in H Steinert and A Pilgram (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 30–31. For further discussion of the question of whether voluntary social exclusion should be perceived as a problem, see J Le Grand, ‘Individual choice and social exclusion’, CASE Paper 75, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London, 2003.

Those arguing from the Anglo-liberal tradition discussed above, may suggest that self exclusion by the wealthy is both consistent with the idea of society as made up of autonomous individuals seeking to maximise their interests *and* a necessary aspiration for driving social development. Alternatively, those arguing from the more solidaristic, communitarian or egalitarian perspective would most likely focus on the impact of such exclusion on the strength of social bonds and quality of social relationships. Furthermore, from an ecological point of view, some would ask whether it remains a viable strategy for individuals to conceive of themselves as having separate interests from their fellow citizens and the environment. The important point is that social citizenship provides a framework for the consideration of an issue that is largely neglected in most attempts to outline the concept of social inclusion.

Opportunities for participation

As noted above, the concept of social inclusion carries the implication of passivity on the part of the excluded. That is, the basic model is one in which the excluded are brought ‘into the fold’ by the included. Arguably, a commitment to social inclusion suggests the need for opportunities for excluded people to participate as far as possible in such matters. In that sense, the concept of social citizenship—with its focus on the activation of social rights—offers greater promise than does the concept of social inclusion.

Central to a more inclusive, social citizenship approach would be opportunities for citizens to participate in the design and setting of objectives and priorities of social institutions such as the public health and education system. An important question is whether the opportunity to participate in periodic federal and state/territory elections, the occasional parliamentary (or other) inquiry or government consultation process can be regarded as sufficiently inclusive and participatory. Some observers have suggested that forms of deliberative democracy such as citizens’ juries (for example, on the issue of priority setting in the health system) can play a role in enhancing citizen participation both at the local and national levels.¹¹³ Others have questioned the capacity of such initiatives to give genuine voice to the concerns and perspectives of those who do not normally participate in debates about social institutions.¹¹⁴ The important point is that there is discussion about the appropriate mechanisms for

113. J Hartz-Karp and M Briand, ‘Institutionalising deliberative democracy: theoretical and practical challenges’, *Australasian Parliamentary Review*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2009, pp. 167–198, viewed 21 October 2009, <http://parlinfo/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;db=;group=;holdingType=;id=;orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Institutionalising%20deliberative%20democracy%20theoretical%20and%20practical%20challenge%20Dataset%3Ajrnart,jrnart88;querytype=;rec=0;resCount=Default>; J Uhr, *Deliberative democracy in Australia: the changing place of Parliament*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Eng., 1998; G Mooney and S Blackwell, ‘Whose health service is it anyway? Community values in healthcare’, *Medical Journal of Australia*, vol. 180, 19 January 2004, pp. 76–78.

114. J Parkinson, ‘Legitimacy problems in deliberative democracy’, *Political Studies*, vol. 52, 2003.

enhancing opportunities for such participation as a part of efforts to bring about social inclusion.

Conclusion

The concept of social inclusion has a number of definitional and conceptual problems that limit its capacity to serve as a framework for the development of social policy. This is not to say that the concept is without its merits, or that its deficiencies cannot be addressed. However, this paper has argued that, without further development and clarification, the concept's potential for making serious and lasting inroads into social disadvantage and marginality is likely to go unrealised.

The main problem with social inclusion is that it lacks a clear conceptual core, that is, something that could give it the grounding necessary to ensure that exclusion could be tackled in a fundamental way. This paper has suggested that an effective means to bolster the social inclusion concept and agenda would be to locate it within a contemporary and reflexive social citizenship framework. To do so would be to address a number of the limitations of social inclusion identified in this paper. At the same time, through its emphasis on equal membership of, and full and active participation in, the community, a social citizenship framework could significantly broaden the scope and ambition of social inclusion. Given the traditionally egalitarian inclinations of Australian society, the notion of equality of status that is at the heart of social citizenship may well find strong resonance in the Australian community.

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