

Exclusion/Inclusion

Carolyn Liebisch-Gümüş, Britta-Marie Schenk

In 2017, political and business leaders convened at the Bloomberg Global Business Forum in New York to deliberate on the world economy and its global challenges. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton, one of the speakers, acknowledged that ‘a lot of people felt left out, left behind, alienated politically, socially, and economically’ (VOA 2017). In the same year, historian Jeremy Adelman criticized global historians for rendering the immobile (→ **Im/mobility**) invisible, asserting that they had ‘privileged motion over place, histoires qui bougent (stories that move) over tales of those who got left behind’ (Adelman 2017). This prompts the question: who exactly are these ‘left behind’ groups that appear to be sidelined by both globalisation and the historians researching it? And how do we make sense of their relationship to processes of globalisation?

In this essay, for the first time, we are considering these questions through the lens of a well-established model from sociology and historical poverty research (*historische Armutsforschung*): social exclusion and inclusion. In doing so, we focus on the exclusion of individuals from globalisation processes due to poverty, thereby aligning with the premise that the concept of exclusion/inclusion has, since the 1990s, become an alternative lens for poverty research (Kronauer 1998). With homelessness and ‘non-migration’, we have chosen examples from the Global South and the Global North that lie outside the usual intersections of global history and social inequality research (typically Global Labour History and the history of development aid), and thus broaden the scope of the debate.

Aligning the concept of *dis:connectivity* with the history of social inequality can yield valuable insights. Dis:connectivity challenges a simplistic view of global interconnections by highlighting asymmetries, interruptions (→ **Interruptions**), borders (→ **Transborder**), and delays inherent in globalisation processes. In line with this endeavour, we emphasize social inequality and poverty as another crucial aspect. Instead of viewing these phenomena as the ‘shadows’, so to speak, i.e. as the regions and groups untouched by globalisation and its expected positive outcomes, we emphasize that they are indeed ‘central, formative components of interconnect- edness’ (→ **Introduction**). Not solely because global capitalist expansion can cause or exacerbate inequality, but also because those affected by impoverishment often have more intricate relationships with global processes and thus cannot be properly understood as merely ‘left behind’ or completely excluded. Therefore, in this essay, we advocate for a non-binary understanding of exclusion and inclusion to elucidate the relationships between impoverished groups and globalisation pro-

cesses, thus supporting the move beyond the dichotomy of connectedness and disconnectedness.

Revisiting social exclusion/inclusion in global contexts

Today, many people, including individuals who belong to the middle classes of affluent countries, feel they are being left behind, as evidenced by their engagement with anti-global movements and rhetoric. At the same time, there are people who are genuinely cut off from the presumed benefits of globalisation such as the consumption of global goods, international mobility, or the ability to build political and cultural networks across borders. Living at the socioeconomic margins of societies not only in the Global South but also in the Global North, they constitute the so-called underclasses. People who may fit this category include the unemployed and the homeless, the inhabitants of underserved neighbourhoods and impoverished villages, as well as underprivileged people who entertain the idea of migrating abroad to find safety and better living conditions but lack the means to do so. There seem to be two biases concerning these groups. Firstly, in academic discussions, there is an implication that their exclusion from globalisation places them beyond the thematic scope of Global History, as hinted by Adelman. Secondly, in political discourses like the Bloomberg Global Business Forum, there is a prevalent bias assuming that globalisation is inherently positive – a belief that those who reject it simply do not benefit from it. We seek to challenge both assumptions.

Firstly, we need to clarify what ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’, terms that have become commonplace in political language, actually mean. In historical poverty research, the sociological notion of ‘social exclusion’ underscores how the lack of economic resources profoundly impacts the societal status of those affected. It is used to analyse multiple, simultaneous or sequential forms of social deprivation such as being marginalized from the job market, the housing market, the education sector or culture and consumption (Bohn and Hahn 2006; Raphael 2008). Naturally, socioeconomic factors play a key role in poverty research, but other factors such as age, dis/ability, health, gender, sexuality, ‘race’, ethnicity, nationality, and legal status can also significantly contribute to social exclusion. ‘Inclusion’, on the other hand, refers to public and political agendas that try to overcome exclusion.

When analysing phenomena of social exclusion/inclusion, social scientists and historians usually applied a national framework focusing on excluded groups within a specific country. However, sociologist Rudolf Stichweh has suggested also applying the concept of exclusion/inclusion to the ‘world society’ (*Weltgesellschaft*). While exclusion ‘always occurs locally or regionally’ (Stichweh 2016, 59), it extends to the global society which he defines as the ensemble of ‘globalized, inclusion-based functional systems’ (Stichweh 2016, 60). For example, if individu-

als are unemployed in a particular country and thus excluded from the functional system of the economy, they are also excluded from its globalised version: the global economy and its transnational labour market. Stichweh hence raises awareness for the crucial question of how social inequality is embedded within different realms of globalisation. In his theory, however, a strange distance remains between the somewhat abstract ‘world society’ and the individuals whose experiences of marginalization are rooted in local contexts.

As we argue in the following, based on our two examples, there are instances where it is worth delving into empirical cases to unveil more complex relationships between globalisation processes and individuals or groups deemed to be left behind. At the same time, we think that there is valuable insight to be gained from sociological discussions that have challenged rather than just applied the concept of social exclusion and inclusion, criticizing the oversimplified nature of this binary distinction. This leads to more intricate narratives along the lines of dis:connectivity, instead of straightforward stories of certain individuals being shut out.

Left behind? Homelessness and non-migration

Let us begin with the example of homelessness, often regarded as an extreme manifestation of social exclusion. Homelessness is a global phenomenon, but those affected typically do not actively participate in processes of globalisation. They do not enjoy expensive vacations around the globe, do not work in international companies, and usually seldom use the services of firms that operate globally such as Amazon or Uber. While similar things could be said about other groups affected by poverty, individuals without a permanent residence often have daily routines that are vastly different from those of the majority of society. These routines are not necessarily local and immobile, though. Throughout history, homeless individuals have crossed borders to leverage different countries’ advantages. However, the scope of their movements generally remains limited.

Still, there are good reasons to link research on homelessness with research on globalisation. To begin with, we must follow sociologist Robert Castel’s urge to move beyond merely employing ‘social exclusion’ as a diagnostic tool and delve into its root causes. By historicizing homelessness, we may understand that in many instances at least some of its causes stem from effects associated with globalisation. For instance, economic globalisation played a role in causing homelessness in Osaka, Japan, during the 1990s and in Metropolitan Manila, Philippines, in the early 2000s. In the case of Osaka, this had much to do with the transformation of the local day-labour market and informal work sector. In Manila, many of those living on the streets were former residents of squatter settlements who were displaced, especially due to global investments and gentrification (Aoki 2003, 2008).

Immigration can result in homelessness, too – even in welfare states: A 2012 survey on migration and homelessness in the United Kingdom mentions that although the majority of refugees and asylum seekers are provided with accommodation by the government, some decline the assigned housing due to the absence of choice in location selection, consequently opting to live on the streets (Fitzpatrick, Johnsen and Bramley 2012, 35).

Not only the causes of homelessness, but also everyday life on the streets and in shelters are sometimes linked to global processes. As Hideo Aoki describes for the case of Manila: ‘Globalization has resulted in the expansion of the service economy, which has increased the life chances of the street homeless. [. . .] Because of the increase in business facilities, convenience stores, family restaurants [. . .] life resources (such as scrap) on which the street homeless survive have increased. The opportunity for the street homeless to beg money has increased’ (Aoki 2008, 73). In this instance, homeless individuals have experienced at least some indirect benefits from globalisation. However, there are also global influences that have a more ambivalent impact on the daily lives of homeless people. One example is the emergence of street newspapers, which originated in New York in the 1980s and spread to Western Europe via London in the 1990s, eventually being distributed worldwide. Initially, the New York publication ‘Street News’ featured articles written by homeless individuals themselves, focusing on topics relevant to their daily lives and advocating for socio-political change. This bottom-up approach shifted in its London counterpart, ‘The Big Issue’. Under the editorship of John Bird, the slogan ‘Let’s do business for the underclass’ (Bird 1997) stood for commercialization and a new form of private charity, which degraded the homeless to mere recipients of aid. Once a platform for the voices of the homeless, street magazines now became professional outlets mainly curated by journalists, with socio-political demands taking a backseat. Homeless individuals were relegated to a small section within the publication, often depicted rather than given any real power to communicate. Their role was limited to selling the newspapers for pocket money (Bono 1999). The original grassroots approach from the U.S. faded into the background during the fragmented globalisation process of street magazines. While homeless individuals were included in a global network of charitable practices, they did not gain the power to freely address local and global audiences. Street magazines did not contribute to their inclusion into mainstream society, nor did they inspire a global movement.

Our second example comes from the history of migration, and global South-North migration in particular. In the 1980s, migration researchers, who typically focused on those who migrate, started showing interest in individuals who do not move and their reasons for this. From the perspective of inclusion/exclusion, the explanation seems clear: economic constraints can hinder migration (as can

reasons like fear or societal constraints that affect demographic groups such as women, children, and the elderly or disabled). Indeed, migration scholars speak of ‘involuntary immobility’ to emphasize that more people desire to migrate than actually do, particularly among marginalized households facing financial limitations (e.g. Carling 2002; Cohen 2002). In the words of anthropologist Nicholas van Hear, ‘international migration is not typically for the poorest of the poor’ (Van Hear 2014, 111). This results in countless ‘unfulfilled dreams about migration’ (Carling 2002, 6).

The implicit assumption that individuals with limited financial resources would naturally desire to migrate to wealthier countries but are hindered by circumstances has faced criticism. There are ‘different ways of staying put’ (Mata-Codesal 2015) and for some people immobility is desirable – even if they are impoverished. Sociologist Kerilyn Schewel (→ **Im/mobility**) introduced the notion of ‘acquiescent immobility’ to denote people who lack the means to migrate but also do not want to migrate in the first place: ‘Yet even though push factors are significant for many of the world’s poor and even though migration often brings substantial income gains, many people who migration theories assume should desire to migrate may not, in fact, wish to do so’ (Schewel 2019, 336). The reasons are various, including psychological factors and risk aversion but also people’s attachment to their local and social environments. Therefore, not having the resources to engage in global migration is not always perceived as negative or indeed exclusionary by everyone impacted by it.

However, ‘acquiescent immobility’ should not be immediately associated with disconnectedness. This is especially pertinent when broadening our perspective from individuals to families. In many countries in Africa, Asia, and South America, it is common for some family members to migrate while others remain behind and receive remittances from their relatives abroad. As Schewel points out, ‘mobility and immobility are often part of the same household livelihood strategy’ (Schewel 2019, 337). For instance, historian Linda Reeder demonstrated that women in rural Sicily whose husbands migrated to the United States in the 1900s ‘invested their own dreams in the decision to send a family member overseas. Mass male migration did not leave rural women behind; instead, it provided the resources to carve out new economic, social, and political spaces in their rural world’ (Reeder 2003, 57). And in the late 1990s, to cite a different example, Maya immigrants in the United States sent money back to their relatives in Guatemala, which altered the local social fabric. Previously dependent on working for farmers of Hispanic origin, with only few economic possibilities and facing racism and discrimination, Maya families with remittances gained a degree of independence and improved living standards with many Hispanic Guatemalans expressing their resentment that the Maya had become ‘lazier’ and ‘less respectful’ (Taylor, Moran-Taylor and Rodman

Ruiz 2006, 50–51). Poor but voluntary stay-at-homes like the Sicilian women or the Maya families are not simply excluded from migration and globalisation. Rather, the integration of their relatives into migration movements and the ensuing transnational finance flows allow them to stay at home and benefit from improved living conditions.

It is important to exercise caution, though, when considering remittances as a solution for social inclusion. Some migration scholars rightly caution against viewing remittances as a superior form of development aid ‘from below’, as this perspective can obscure the responsibility of states in providing welfare (de Haas 2012, 19). Despite the undeniable influence of international organizations like the United Nations and the International Labour Organization in promoting social agendas and development cooperation among states worldwide, a global institution to regulate individual legal entitlements and social benefits across borders is lacking (Leisering 2008). This absence underscores the continued significance of nation states in addressing social exclusion within processes of globalisation. At the same time, paradoxically, it is nation states that perpetuate global inequality and the North–South divide through their sheer existence and their maintaining of separate national social and welfare systems (Stichweh 2016, 195).

Conclusion

With homeless individuals and those unable to afford South–North migration, we have highlighted two groups emblematic of social exclusion rooted in poverty. Through these examples, we argue for the integration of the history of poverty and social inequality with research on global connections in two distinct ways. Firstly, it is crucial to examine how globalisation dynamics can directly contribute to or worsen poverty and social exclusion. Secondly, despite their passive role in global interactions, the latter’s effect may still permeate these groups’ lives and daily experience. Homeless individuals sometimes indirectly benefit from emerging globalised consumer societies, while many households in the Global South receive remittances from relatives working in the Global North. This underscores the significance of considering such marginalized and seemingly cut-off groups within the broader discourse on dis:connectivity.

Furthermore, our examples underline the blurred nature of the distinction between exclusion and inclusion, revealing the existence of different hybrid forms. Individuals can often find themselves experiencing a form of ‘inclusion within exclusion’ (Stichweh 2016, 63), as in the case of remittances. Conversely, attempts to foster social inclusion can reproduce exclusion, as shown by the example of street magazines. While we believe it is beneficial to integrate research on globalisation with studies on poverty and marginalized groups in both the Global North and

South, we also caution against simply expanding a binary model of exclusion/inclusion to the ‘world society’ or any subsets of it. Instead, we should learn from critical sociological discussions, stressing, first the importance of historicizing exclusion and questioning its underlying causes; and second, the need to move beyond the dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion. A non-binary understanding of exclusion and inclusion provides us with the analytical capacity to integrate the study of social inequality and poverty within the dialectical interplay of global interconnectedness and disconnection.

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