



## Revisiting Marx and Dahrendorf on social exclusion and inclusion

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### Abstract

Social exclusion and inclusion have become popular concepts discussed in social sciences for the last three decades. In extant literature, it is understood that discussions around these concepts rarely refer to the classical sociological thought emerged in Europe, even though these concepts are quite relative to discuss within the boundaries of sociological thought, especially in conflict tradition. Little attention has also been paid to explanation of social exclusion and social inclusion as regards to the conflict tradition. In this regard, this piece of work relates the issue to thoughts of two leading scholars of conflict tradition. This study traces roots of notions of social exclusion and inclusion in the conflict tradition by examining original works of Marx and Dahrendorf. This paper shows contending and converging ideas of Marx and Dahrendorf on social exclusion and social inclusion. Finally, the paper rejuvenates the ideas of conflict tradition on the domain of social exclusion and inclusion.

**Keywords:** Social exclusion; social inclusion; sociological thought; Marx; Dahrendorf; conflict.

### Introduction

Social exclusion and social inclusion have become important concepts within the last decades of European philosophical thought. Especially, social exclusion has been widely discussed in the social politics of Europe (Bryne, 1999:1).

Pierson (2002) defines social exclusion as “a process that deprives individuals of the resources required for participation in the social, economic and political activity of society as a whole”.

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Poverty, low income, lack of access to jobs, discrimination and low educational attainment are primary causes of this process. Due to social exclusion, people are excluded from institutions and services, social networks and opportunities enjoyed by the majority of people in society. In this regard, social exclusion reflects various forms of deprivation of people from the norms and standards of wellbeing (Pierson, 2002:7- 9).

Social exclusion has inherently a dynamic character in the sense that it “happens in a time of history and determines the lives of the individuals and collectivities that are excluded and of those individuals and collectivities that are not” (Bryne, 1999:1). Therefore, it has also implications for social system, development of social structures as well as for agency. For Bryne (1999), social exclusion occurs as a result of economic transformations and it seems to be a fault of society. In that, people leading society have the power to shape politics, economics and other social arrangements in favor of their advantage and to the disadvantage of others (Bryne, 1999:2).

Social exclusion is “being shut off from social, economic, political and cultural systems that determine the social integration of the individuals in a society”. Moreover, according to Madanipour (1998), social exclusion is a multi-dimensional process including various forms such as exclusion from “decision-making and political processes, access to employment and material resources ...” (as cited in Bryne, 1999:2).

As opposed to exclusion, social inclusion refers to struggling with the social exclusion in order to change the system in favor of those who are excluded, alienated and oppressed. It also stands for the abolition of all factors leading to deprivation. It is “an attempt to re-integrate or increase the participation of marginalized groups within mainstream goals” (Pease, 2009:37).

It is evident that all societies are established and organized on the basis of social exclusion and social inclusion. Class formations in the societies are also natural products of social exclusion and social inclusion. Within this framework, this study explained the notions of social exclusion and social inclusion scrutinizing the ideas of Karl Marx and Ralph Dahrendorf. In this regard, this paper traced the implications of social exclusion and social inclusion in the writings of these two prominent sociologists of the history.

### **Class struggle, social exclusion and inclusion**

Marx, being the forerunner of conflict theory, believes that struggle between the classes exists throughout the historical stages (Marx, 1845). Adopting Hegel's dialectic approach, he claims that all history of human kinds is the history of struggles (Marx, 1848). This struggle is not between the ideas but between the classes. The main reason for these struggles is the struggle for the allocation of limited resources.

Contrary to Hegel, he believes that ideology is a tool for the ruling classes, which imposes their ideas on the ruled classes. In "The German Ideology", Marx (1845) is quite critical about the control of both material and mental production by the ruling classes:

"The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production..., the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence, of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance... Hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age ..." (Marx, 1845).

For Marx, in every society, there is possession and exclusion from private property and legitimate power (Marx, 1867). Therefore, class formation and division occur on the basis of property ownership and control of surplus value. In a way, for Marx, social exclusion stems from the control of means of production. Those who have the private property and control surplus value, which he terms as bourgeoisie, exclude the lower classes from any material power (Dahrendorf, 1959:23). In that sense, Marx accounts social exclusion with a materialistic approach. In "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844", Marx therefore divides society into two classes - "property owners" and "propertyless workers". Similarly, in "Communist Manifesto", Marx defines proletarians as wage laborers who do not have any means of production and therefore sell their labor power to survive (Marx, 1848).

In "The German Ideology", Marx (1845) examines different societies in different historical stages with his historical perspective in order to trace the impact of economical forces on society. For him, the first stage is the primitive stage, which he also defines as primitive communism. In that, in this stage, there is no differentiation or stratification based on economical forces. The primitive

societies do not have any knowledge of private property or surplus value. Thus, social exclusion is not observed in this phase. Marx thinks that evil appears during the ancient empires, which means that private property and the first stages of class formations emerge during this stage. For Marx, class division sharpens during feudal empires and reaches its peak during the capitalism.

In the stage of capitalism, the bourgeoisie obtains the control of modes of production. More significantly, they exclude and exploit a new emerging class called as proletariat. Proletariat emerges as a servant class for the bourgeoisie. They are oppressed and exploited for their labor, and alienated even from their human nature. Ironically, they are only able to use their labor for the upper classes and for the capitalist production. In “Communist Manifesto”, Marx describes the condition of the laborers as follows: “The modern labourer . . . , instead of rising with the process of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth” (Marx, 1848). Here, the term pauper explains how the working class becomes poorer and poorer, being deprived of the opportunities of the capitalist production enjoyed only by the ruling class.

Moreover, for Marx, social exclusion emerging due to the economical reasons is the ultimate cause for the conflict between the excluding class (capitalist class) and the excluded class (working class). In that, extreme possession of, and exclusion from property and power increases the level of differentiation of classes (Dahrendorf, 1959:26). Emergence of property ownership and social classes leads to the allocation of resources, and inevitably the conflict among the social classes. For Marx, “without conflict no progress: this is the law which civilization has followed to the present” (Dahrendorf, 1959:27). Hence, conflict is a root cause of change and growth in society as well.

Marx establishes a strong link between macro and micro effects of social exclusion on the notion of conflict in society. From alienation of the individuals to the exploitation of all working class, every aspect of capitalism leads to social exclusion as well as conflict. In that, ruling class, which is the excluding class, accumulates the wealth by exploiting the labor of the working class. In “German Ideology”, Marx (1845) states that “history is . . . the succession of the separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations...”

In that sense, exploitation is the main action of Marx’s account of capitalism. Moreover, main priority of capitalism is to maximize the profit through exploiting the labor of working class as well

as obtaining surplus value. In “Capital, Volume I”, Marx (1867) is highly critical about the fluctuations in the amount of employment. While capitalistic accumulation constantly produces itself, it also creates a population of labourers. However, this is heavily dependent on the balance of supply-demand in the market. Creation of a surplus-population called as reserve army is a result of the fluctuations in the capitalist system. According to Marx;

“The relative surplus-population, the stagnant, forms a part of the active labour army, but with extremely irregular employment. Hence, it furnishes to capital an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour-power. Its conditions of life sink below the average normal level of the working-class; this makes it at once the broad basis of special branches of capitalist exploitation. It is characterized by maximum of working-time, and minimum of wages” (Marx, 1867).

This situation is also “a self-reproducing and self-perpetuating element of the working class” (Marx, 1867). Marx states, “The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates” (Marx, 1844). Therefore, Marx is concerned with the dehumanizing effects of capitalist system. Furthermore, division of labor is the ultimate point that alienates the workers from themselves as well as the final product that they labored for:

“The worker is related to the product of labor as to an alien object. For on this premise it is clear that the more the worker spends himself, the more powerful becomes the alien world of objects which he creates over and against himself, the poorer he himself – his inner world – becomes, the less belongs to him as his own... The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him... An immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labor, from his life activity, from his species being, is the estrangement of man from man. When man confronts himself, he confronts the other man. What applies to a man’s relation to his work, to the product of his labor and to himself, also holds of a man’s relation to the other man, and to the other man’s labor and object of labor” (Marx, 1844).

At this point, social exclusion has another dimension in the sense that the working class already excluded from society is also, in one sense, excluded from themselves as well as from the other workers. As a result of social exclusion of lower classes, Marx is highly critical about the capitalism. In that, capitalist class excluded the working class by dehumanizing them through alienation and commodification.

As a solution of social exclusion, in “The German Ideology”, Marx (1845) lays out his original thoughts about the revolution, which refers to social inclusion in our terms. For Marx, revolution is “a transformation of existing conditions”. Its main target is to abolish the forces creating social exclusion in society. He underlines social exclusion and negation of proletariat as a class as follows:

“The communist revolution is directed against the preceding mode of activity, does away with labour, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried by the class, which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognized as a class ...” (Marx, 1845).

In order to end the exclusion and deprivation of working classes from the life chances, and the rule of bourgeoisie, Marx claims that the working class has to develop class-consciousness. “Communist consciousness is necessary for the success of the cause itself, for the alteration of men on a mass scale, and for a practical movement, a revolution” (Marx, 1845). Class-consciousness, in Marxian terms, refers to gaining awareness of the working classes regarding their exploitation by the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the working class can only reach their freedom by gaining class-consciousness, emerging as a class with a strong consciousness, and finally revolting against the upper classes. Extreme possession of and exclusion from property and power will increase the gap between class conditions. As the gap grows, a political class struggle between the excluding and excluded class will begin, thus leading to a revolutionary action (Dahrendorf, 1959:26). In a way, for Marx, social inclusion is only possible through the revolution of the working class. Revolution will eradicate the source of inequalities, deprivations and exploitations.

In mentioned context, Marx’s ideas shed light on how economic resources are produced and allocated among social classes in the capitalist society, therefore social exclusion and inclusion is quite apparent in Marx’s cited works. Class division on the basis of property ownership forms the first step of social exclusion in society. Propertyless class, proletariat, is deprived of ownership of any material entity and capital.

Moreover, mental production is also under the control of ruling class, which also means that proletarians are kept out of political life of society. In the second step, exclusion is intensified with the exploitation of the labor of working class. Proletarians sell their labor in order to maintain their lives. Finally, they are alienated from themselves, the final products that they labored for and surplus value. As to social inclusion, in Marxian terms, revolution will end the social exclusion of the proletariat from the social life. In that sense, revolution is a necessary step for social inclusion.

### **Authority, domination and social exclusion**

Ralf Dahrendorf revises Marxist idea of classes on the basis of the notion of authority. He supports Marx in the sense that conflict is the effect of change in the social structures. He also adopts two-class model of Marx (Collins, 1994b:61-62; Dahrendorf, 1959:126). Being a contemporary follower of Marx, Dahrendorf accepts that conflict between different groups of people exist in the modern

society. For him, existence of two contending parties is the root cause for the conflict in society. In “Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society”, Dahrendorf (1959) explains his notion of conflict and two class- model as follows: “There are but two contending parties .... from the point of view of a given clash of interests, there are never more than two positions that struggle of domination” (Dahrendorf, 1959:126).

However, he rejects the idea that conflict and social exclusion stem from the ownership of property and control of surplus value (Dahrendorf, 1959). Moreover, he proposes that conflicts in any type of organizations and societies emerge from the relationship between “order-givers” and “order-takers” (Collins, 1994a:103). He also refuses the idea that economic classes become the power classes, where the property is a kind of measurement for power. For him, power division cannot be solely based on the capital. The power is a legitimate authority within the organizations and the associations. The authority and its distribution in society is the main reason for social conflict and social change (Collins, 1994b:63).

Dahrendorf also thinks that classes are not economical realities, but they are social phenomena. For him, classes can be defined by the relations of the authority, which means that classes can be within an economic organization as well as in an industrial organization. In that sense, in comparison to Marx’s ideas, classes are not the product of economical relations (p. 65). He also maintains that “classes are based on the differences in legitimate power associated with certain positions, i.e., on the structure of social roles with respect to their authority expectations” (Dahrendorf, 1959:149).

Dahrendorf claims that class formation is also the organization of common interests as in the case of political parties. For him, class-consciousness refers to the awareness of the individuals about their personal interests as well as the common interest (Dahrendorf, 1959:17). At this point, Dahrendorf also rejects Marx’s idea on class-consciousness. Class-consciousness may not essentially lead to revolution. Nevertheless, it allows the members of the group to pursue their own interests. This view also explains another aspect of social exclusion. For Dahrendorf, the individuals are excluded from any group or class in society, as they do not have the same interests with the other members of society.

Furthermore, Dahrendorf explains conflict as “the inequality of power and authority which inevitably accompanies social organizations” (Dahrendorf, 1959:64). According to Dahrendorf, conflict emerges between groups and classes due to the authority and exercise of it. The universal

principle for Dahrendorf is that classes are divided on the basis of holding authority and use of it. In one sense, social exclusion is only possible through use of authority on people who do not have any authority. Yet, exertion of authority does not necessarily mean that social exclusion has an illegitimate character, on the contrary, it results from the use of legitimate power on other people. Exclusion is in the nature of social positions in associations.

For Dahrendorf, authority is a legitimate power based on ‘domination’ and ‘subjection’. While ‘domination’ refers to be endowed with authority or participation in the use of authority, ‘subjection’ means deprivation from authority or exclusion from the use of authority. Essentially, authority is the relationship between ‘super-ordination’ and ‘sub-ordination’ in society. Authority relations socially require super-ordinate position to control behaviors of the sub-ordinate with orders and commands. Therefore, conflict is the product of these relations where the authority is exercised (Dahrendorf, 1959:166-167). With this definition, Dahrendorf also clarifies that ruling classes are not the property owners, but they are the group of people with authority. The new ruling class is the people who hold managerial positions in society.

Similar to Marx, Dahrendorf sharply excludes the people without any authority, and he categorizes them as sub-ordination. Yet, authority is not static. Super-ordination position in one setting may have a sub-ordination position in other setting. Adopting from Weber, Dahrendorf claims that society is based on “imperatively associated coordinations” (Dahrendorf, 1959:167). For Dahrendorf, “the state, a church, an enterprise, a political party, a trade union and a chess club are associations which implies the coordination of organized aggregates of roles of domination and subjection” (Dahrendorf, 1959:168). Any conflict between the classes emerges in these associations. Distribution of authority among the classes in these associations also causes conflict (Dahrendorf, 1959:207). In a way, social exclusion is not static in terms of Dahrendorf’s ideas. Any individual excluded in one setting may exclude others in other settings on the basis of the authority he/she holds in that setting. For Dahrendorf, class inequality is inevitable in the social life, as the authority is quite common and ever-existing phenomenon. In this regard, for Dahrendorf, social exclusion is also quite normal fact, as it depends on the use of authority in different spheres of life.

Moreover, Dahrendorf (1958) also mentions about consensus and conflict as two dynamics of society (Dahrendorf, 1958:127). For him, both of them may lead to each other. Yet, society changes and develops through these notions.

In addition to these notions, Dahrendorf also introduces three forms of conflict regulation such as conciliation, mediation and arbitration, which possibly reduce the influence of class conflict, in our terms, social exclusion. Dahrendorf's views on exclusion are also in accordance with different situations in imperatively associated organizations. In other words, three forms of conflict regulation are effective in different spheres. In line with this conception, conciliation is the most appropriate form that can be effective in parliamentary and quasi-parliamentary bodies, while mediation and arbitration are successful relatively in international and industrial conflicts (Dahrendorf, 1959:228-229). Dahrendorf also emphasizes that recognition of the conflict, organization of interests and agreement on the rules of regulation are prerequisites of effective conflict regulation (Dahrendorf, 1959:225-226). Once these relationships are established in different spheres of society, then, Dahrendorf concludes that, "group conflict loses its sting and becomes institutionalized pattern of social life" (Dahrendorf, 1959:230).

As a result, it may be said that this effort of regulation actually eliminates the possibility of social inclusion in the form of revolution in Marxian terms.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

Similarities and differences can be mentioned regarding social exclusion and inclusion implied in the forms of class conflict, class formation, revolution, and conflict regulation in society.

Both Marx and Dahrendorf have similar approaches in the sense that there are two contending groups in society. The first one is ruling class either using economic sources or using authority and the second group is the one who is deprived of either economical power or authority. Moreover, both thinkers claim that conflict and social exclusion are inevitable in society as long as individuals, groups and classes with different characteristics exist side by side.

However, Dahrendorf finds Marx's ideas on the issue of social classes as a kind of reductionism. In that, Marx explains the classes, class formation and conflict on the basis of economical relations and in a historically specific context. Yet, for Dahrendorf, social classes are social phenomena rather than the products of economic processes. Similarly, the classes do not emerge as a result of the control of modes of production. The authority solely determines the class division. The property ownership is not a kind of authority by itself. Hence, distribution of authority is the cause of social exclusion rather than distribution of wealth.

Moreover, for Dahrendorf, social exclusion is not strict as formulated in Marx's ideas since it may abruptly change in conflict-consensus equilibrium. In Marxian terms, the upper classes continuously exclude the lower classes from the social life. In one sense, the upper classes negate the existence of the lower classes. They never accept them as other parties. Yet, Dahrendorf's notion of consensus recognizes the contending parties equally and gives them a chance to end the social exclusion or to alleviate the impact of social exclusion in various imperatively associated organizations. Marx's formulation of social exclusion also necessitates the social inclusion in the form of revolution, but Dahrendorf's concept of consensus decreases the chances for such a social inclusion illustrated in Marxian terms.

Contrary to Marx's ideas, Dahrendorf (1959) claims that there is no need for revolutionary upheavals leading to evolutionary changes in society. By effective regulation of conflict, class conflict turns into an element of order in "a continuously changing world" (Dahrendorf, 1959:230). In other words, social inclusion is only achievable through conflict regulation that unifies the conflict groups simultaneously.

For Marx, social exclusion is influential on society, and specifically on proletariat absolutely excluded from social and economic rewards in society. However, Dahrendorf states that exclusion is only observable in imperatively associated coordinations. Dahrendorf also believes that "Absolute exclusion from wealth and liberty of society is a possible but unnecessary attribute of subjection". In that, domination and subjection roles are interchangeable in different settings in social life. Therefore, "members of subjected groups in one association may belong to dominating group of another association". Suppressed classes may also enjoy legitimate power in another association despite their exclusion in previous association (Dahrendorf, 1959:200).

Finally, both of philosophers touch upon different aspects of social exclusion and inclusion. They also display how society changes and develops through these terms. Marx provides an economical overview of the issue, while Dahrendorf handles the issue as social phenomena.

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