

Working Paper 7

The State, Communities and Public Libraries: Their Role in Tackling Social Exclusion (Social Exclusion; An International Perspective, Part 2)

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*“When I look at and touch myself
I, John-only-) yesterday-with-Nothing,
and John-with-Everything today,
I glance around, I look and see
and touch myself and wonder
how it could have happened”*

Nicolas Guillen (1964)

Abstract

This is the second of two linked papers reviewing social exclusion at an international level and follows from the critique of globalism in the first paper (written by Shiraz Durrani). The paper applies Miller’s “models of communities” and “roles of the state (exclusive diversity; voluntary inclusion; required inclusion; and inclusive diversity) to economic and political systems in different countries. It then applies different sets of performance indicators to different countries, specifically considering indicators in the areas of literacy, education and libraries. It is argued that social exclusion is best tackled using an approach based on required inclusion or inclusive diversity, rather than on the basis of exclusive diversity or voluntary inclusion. The joint conclusion of both this and the linked paper is that social exclusion cannot be separated from a country’s political system. Social exclusion can therefore only be alleviated, by libraries and other agencies, in emerging economies, capitalist and majority world countries. Recommendations are made (May, 1999).

1. INTRODUCTION

As was made clear in Part One of this Working Paper, any international perspective on social exclusion must take globalism as its starting point. Globalism has been described as “imperialism’s newest and most potent process” (Sivanandan et al, 1998). The technological revolution which we have lived through over the last 30 years has armed capital with productive forces that give it new freedoms and powers to operate : “its assembly lines are global, its plant is movable, its workforce is flexible. It can produce ad-hoc, just in time and

custom built mass production, without stockpiling or wastage, laying off labour as and when it pleases” (Sivanandan et al, 1998).

This new international phenomenon closes factories in Britain while paying workers starvation wages to provide its labour force in the Majority World. Globalism has multifaceted dimensions, including the technological transformation of capitalism and the rise of “information capital”. For millions of working people across the world, it means a return to the misery of the beginnings of the industrial revolution and an unprecedented extension of their poverty.

As Lenin (1917) said, imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. And globalism is but the latest manifestation of imperialism. Balaguer (1998) explores the links between capitalism and social exclusion : “The exploitation, exclusion, and injustice that sprout from capitalism’s deepest roots not only take forms that are new and surprising but also reappear in those that are old and dangerous, such as the rebirth of fascism”.

Just as capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction, so there is a major in-built flaw to globalism. The developing conflicts and contradictions of the system itself are engendering a great number of diverse new social layers, while reshaping others. Globalism is creating conditions and opportunities for a broad policy of alliances. This includes environmentalists and farmers, the landless and the roofless, fighters for health and social welfare, individuals organised against gender, religious, racial and ethnic discrimination - in short, those who are not part of the prevailing political manoeuvring. The struggles of these groups are well documented in Part One of this Working Paper.

It would also be important to include a wide range of marginalised, excluded and generally unorganised sectors, among whom lies the possibility (and the necessity) of creating a new, liberating universalism. The unfolding of the system’s contradictions, especially the tendency to concentrate wealth and power, and exclude, is changing the outlook of some sectors. Small and medium sized businesses, for example, are finding that the growing polarisation closes off space to achieve their aspirations. Imperialist ideas are discredited and globalism has few supporters. It is to those countries that have most successfully opposed globalism that this Working Paper looks for examples of social inclusion and cohesion.

In analysing the approach of different countries to tackling social exclusion, this Working Paper uses the models of communities and the roles of the state that have been developed by Miller (1998). Definitions of each of Miller’s social systems are given in the next section. The economic and political systems and the country examples have been added by the author :

Social system	Economic system	Political system	Country examples
Exclusive diversity	In transition from planned to market economy	Emerging capitalism	Ex-Soviet Union Eastern Europe
Voluntary inclusion	Market economy	Developed capitalism	United Kingdom Western Europe
Required inclusion	Planned economy	Socialism	China Vietnam

Inclusive diversity Planned economy Communism Cuba
North Korea

In measuring the performance of these countries in their efforts to tackle social exclusion, two sets of performance indicators are used :

Title	Source	Indicators
Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion	New Policy Institute	Income, children, young adults, adults, older people, communities
World Guide	Third World Institute	Literacy, mortality, trade, health, employment, education

This Working Paper concludes that social exclusion is best tackled using an approach based on required inclusion or inclusive diversity, rather than on the basis of exclusive diversity or voluntary inclusion.

2. MODELS OF COMMUNITIES AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE

“The model of community to which people hold i.e. how they would like to live and how they would like others to live, and the role they would wish the state to play in achieving it, greatly affect their views of social exclusion” (Miller, 1998). Miller has identified two models of communities - social homogeneity and social diversity - and two roles of the state - social intervention and enabling self help. In combination the models of communities and the role of the state lead to four different policies that have implications for tackling social exclusion. There are overlaps between and variations within these models.

Exclusive diversity

Exclusive diversity is a community comprising a diverse range of socially exclusive groups. It is a fragmented community in which the have nots are excluded from the resources and opportunities available to the haves. However, the haves are as fragmented, one from another, as the have nots. Each group is expected to help itself at the expense of other groups. State intervention is rejected as it is thought to undermine self help and lead to dependency.

Exclusive diversity exists today in many of the countries which made up the Soviet Union and the former socialist countries in eastern Europe. An extreme example would be the break up of Yugoslavia into smaller nation states, which themselves are now fragmenting into smaller statelets. Social exclusion indicators reveal that the standard of living in many of these countries has plummeted drastically in the last 10 years, as a consequence of the transition from planned to market based economies.

Voluntary inclusion

Voluntary inclusion arises when significant minorities become detached from the mainstream to which it is assumed most would wish to become reattached. Fundamental to this view is a picture of an ideal, homogenous community of which everyone ought to aspire to be a part. If they choose not to, that is their own problem. However, if the activities of those who choose to remain excluded are perceived to threaten the mainstream society, the state would be required to intervene.

Voluntary inclusion is a feature of most developed capitalist countries in the United Kingdom and western Europe. In the UK, New Labour suggest that the reason that people who aspire to rejoin the mainstream fail to do so is primarily due to their social deficits such as lack of skills. Government policies are premised on creating opportunities and services that are open to all. It seeks to ensure that these services are of good quality and accessible to socially excluded groups, but does not go as far as providing services especially geared to their needs. To do so would be to risk the possibility of creating dependency that tailored state services are perceived to produce, with their associated extra costs that have to be borne by the socially included majority. New Labour's taxation and welfare policies are aimed at minimising this burden. The onus of moving from exclusion to inclusion is thus on the socially excluded themselves.

Required inclusion

Required inclusion is a model of community who see their ideal community as typified by a desirable social structure and set of norms and values to which everyone should wish to aspire. They agree that not everyone has the resources and opportunities to live in this way and favour an interventionist role for the state to give everyone an equal opportunity to do so. They are convinced that their model of community will be good for everyone, but can only be sustained if everyone participates. They are therefore not afraid to take strong measures to ensure that those who will not voluntarily make use of the opportunities and resources the state provides are required to do so.

Required inclusion is a feature of socialist countries such as China and Vietnam. In these countries the role of the state is not only to provide opportunities for inclusion but also to articulate the moral code of the community, enshrining it in legislation and ensuring that social institutions and public and private organisations reinforce the norms and the social structure.

Some may regard required inclusion as somewhat sinister with overtones of coercion. This may reflect western values and concepts such as human rights. In China social stability is highly valued and many people are willing to sacrifice western-style freedoms in order to maintain this order. The import of western methods is challenging this assumption and leading to inequality and disorder. Required inclusion is sometimes needed to suppress racism and xenophobia, to give time for education programmes to change attitudes and behaviour. When these restraints are removed ethnic tensions can break out, as in Yugoslavia which has moved from required inclusion to exclusive diversity.

Inclusive diversity

Inclusive diversity recognises that social homogeneity is more apparent than real, and diversity a feature of all parts of all communities rather than that of specific groups. It views inclusion as fostering interdependence between people and wishes to exploit the potential to be gained by people working together yet pursuing diverse lifestyles. It recognises that some sections of the community will be able, with minimal help, to pursue their preferred lifestyles but that others may lack the necessary resources to do so. It also recognises that diversity can lead one group to unwittingly undermine or actively discriminate against another. Hence there is a need for the state to intervene both to enable the fostering of diversity but also to arbitrate over social conflicts.

This policy stance can potentially not only alleviate, but eradicate social exclusion. No country has achieved this position, but it could be argued that the nearest approximation to it can be found in countries like Cuba and North Korea which are working towards communism. This is reflected in their constitutions which are based on Marxist-Leninist principles and the Juche Idea. These ideas are being implemented in every aspect of life, including libraries, education and the health service. Under inclusive diversity, social exclusion is tackled by tailoring resources to individual need. Under communism, social exclusion is tackled on the basis of “from each according to their ability, to each according to their need” (Marx and Engels, 1848)

Other models

There are a number of other frameworks for understanding and analysing different approaches to social exclusion. These include the models developed by Silver (1994) and Levitas (1998).

Silver distinguishes a four fold typology of social exclusion based on different theoretical perspectives, political ideologies and national discourse. These paradigms she labels “solidarity”, “neo organic”, “monopoly” and “specialisation”.

In the solidarity paradigm (France), exclusion is to be combated through policies which promote solidarity and aim to integrate the individual in society primarily through employment. In the neo organic paradigm (Germany and Spain) certain groups in the occupational hierarchy are favoured but in turn this is a source of exclusion for others. In Sweden the monopoly paradigm, where social exclusion is combated by citizenship, equal membership and full participation, has been a dominant paradigm since the 1930s. Britain has moved away from the monopoly paradigm and towards a predominantly liberal or specialisation conception of social integration and exclusion (Cousins, 1999).

The paradigms developed by Silver are useful for our understanding of structures and processes of social exclusion in different western European countries. These paradigms help to differentiate the approach to social exclusion within the model of voluntary inclusion. They help to explain, for example, the differences in library provision, welfare services and unemployment rates between the Nordic countries and the UK.

Levitas (1998) makes the point that “to suggest that there is a single discourse of social exclusion in Europe would be misleading”. There are, in fact, “a series of overlapping national discourses of exclusion, rather than a pan-European consensus. Discursive variation is accompanied by national policy differences, as discourses are deployed within distinct political settings”.

Levitas considers the political setting within the UK under New Labour and identifies three discourses : a redistributionist discourse (RED) ; a moral underclass discourse (MUD) ; and a social integrationist discourse (SID). Levitas argues that “the developing discourse of New Labour shifted it significantly away from RED towards an inconsistent combination of SID and MUD”.

3. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In measuring the performance of states in tackling social exclusion, we use two sets of performance indicators : Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion (NPI, 1998) ; and The World Guide (Third World Institute, 1999).

The New Policy Institute (NPI) has developed 46 performance indicators for measuring social exclusion : “the study shows that by any standard there is much to do in tackling deprivation in twenty first century Britain. Over ten million people, 2.5 times as many as in 1979, live in households with below average incomes. More than 2.5 million children are in households where nobody works. Collectively, the indicators cover a wide range of difficulties faced by people of all ages, from the 200,000 nineteen year olds who lack basic qualifications to the 5 million pensioners who are afraid to go out alone at night” (NPI, 1998).

The NPI performance indicators are grouped into six categories : income ; children ; young adults ; adults ; older people ; communities. Each of these categories is further sub-divided : income, for example, has six sub - categories, including the gap between low and median income, individuals below 50% of average income and intensity of low income. The trend of each sub category over two time spans - medium term and latest year - is indicated as either improving, steady or worsening.

The World Guide (1999) is a major alternative reference work on the countries of the world, compiled by the Third World Institute in Montevideo, Uruguay. Published biennially since 1979, the World Guide contains much information which is unavailable elsewhere and also has the advantage of being produced by a research organisation which operates in the Majority World and is able to view the West and its Eurocentric perspective of the world in a refreshing and often challenging manner.

The World Guide contains key facts and performance indicators on literacy, mortality, trade, employment, education and health and the progress that has been made in 235 countries. It prioritises the issues that are central to the lives of people in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The World Guide incorporates the Social Watch Annual Report. Social Watch is an independent communications group that monitors the performance of governments in

meeting the targets of social progress they have pledged themselves to at major United Nations environmental, health and educational meetings.

Other indicators

The performance indicators used in this paper are taken from NPI or the World Guide unless otherwise stated. However, it is worth noting that a number of other performance indicators for measuring social exclusion have also been developed.

Parker (1998) has developed a minimum income standard for the UK. Sawyer (1998) uses benefits records to measure variations in poverty. Hillier and Bullock (1999) discuss headline indicators for sustainable development. Besleme (1998) suggests how community indicators can be a powerful tool in building citizen participation and achieving policy changes. Flatley and Bardsley (1998) have reported on monitoring poverty and social exclusion in London. MacGillivray et al (1998) have produced a step by step guide to community sustainability indicators.

In terms of public libraries, Linley and Usherwood (1998) have produced new measures for the new library, and Matarosso (1998) includes some performance indicators for measuring community development in his study of the social potential of library projects.

The New Economics Foundation has issued a series of key publications on alternative performance indicators. "Accounting for Change" (MacGillivray and Zadek, 1995) cuts through the numbers to the real issues underlying the debate. Sixteen performance indicators experts from around the world cover a wide range of social, environmental and economic dimensions of new indicators. "Signals of success" (NEF, 1997) demonstrates the practical use of performance indicators for organisations and projects. "More isn't always better" (NEF, 1997) explains how the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare is a viable alternative to Gross Domestic Product. The Index enables international comparability and demonstrates that quality of life and economic growth are not the same.

These indicators are helpful because they can be used to measure the effect of policy and practice on social exclusion, across a whole range of issues. The picture which emerges from these indicators is that a state's approach and attitude to one area of policy or practice is likely to reflect its policy and practice in other areas. For example, the voluntary inclusion approach to public libraries in the UK and Western Europe is reflected in the same approach to other areas such as income, poverty, children, young adults, adults, older people and communities.

The performance indicators in section four refer specifically to education, literacy and public libraries. The indicators in appendix one refer to wider issues such as poverty, children and older people. These have been included because they are relevant to other Working Papers in this series.

4. EDUCATION, LITERACY AND LIBRARIES

In the ex Soviet Union and the former socialist countries of eastern Europe, the previously well developed library infrastructure has deteriorated. In the UK and some countries in western Europe public libraries are being encouraged to be less dependent on the state. In China and Vietnam libraries are viewed as basic requirements in building socialism. In Cuba and North Korea library provision is comprehensive and free, despite years of economic blockade.

Exclusive Diversity

In the ex-Soviet Union and the former socialist states of eastern Europe, the education system has deteriorated with fewer children attending school and gaining qualifications. Fewer young people are gaining basic qualifications or entering higher or further education

As Valley (1999) has pointed out : “Democracy depends on an educated electorate. It is likely to degenerate as a growing proportion of the population cannot read or understand arguments about budgets...Because education helps social cohesion, the prospects for inter-ethnic conflict is likely dramatically to increase”. There is already evidence of this happening in parts of the former Soviet Union, such as Chechnya.

The ex-Soviet Union was amongst the world’s greatest producers of books (nearly 4 million each year). It possessed the largest number of libraries in the world (330,000). The country’s information collection was one of the world’s largest (over three billion volumes in total). Approximately seven titles per head of population were printed annually. UNESCO, for many years, referred to these Soviet achievements in the production and dissemination of information to the majority of its society, as a model to be emulated by other countries. Today that model is in ruins. Libraries have closed, staff have been sacked and book budgets have been cut. The status and pay of library staff have been reduced. Book publishing is at an all-time low and book prices are out of the reach of most ordinary people (Pateman, 1995).

A similar picture can be found in the former socialist countries of eastern Europe. Yugoslavia has witnessed the destruction of libraries in many of its constituent provinces (in Croatia alone over 200 libraries have either been put out of action or destroyed). Economic sanctions have made it difficult to rebuild the library infrastructure. In the Ukraine library staff earn the equivalent of 20 dollars a month. Many Romanian libraries have been closed or privatised and rely on international donations. Inflation has ruined many publishers in Czechoslovakia, and East German libraries have suffered the imposition of western content and organisational structures. Polish libraries are desperately short of resources, and library subscriptions are being introduced in Hungary. In the capital of Albania, all but two branch libraries have been closed (Pateman, 1995).

Voluntary inclusion

In the UK Black children are more than three times as likely to be permanently excluded from schools as white children. School achievement levels are of concern, with a large

number of failing schools. Educational standards are also being reviewed with the introduction of initiatives such as a literacy hour in schools to increase the number of people who leave school with basic reading skills. Access to higher education is now partly based on ability to pay tuition fees. While the percentage without qualifications has declined, nearly a third of 19 year olds still lack a recognised basic qualification, such as an NVQ level 2 or five GCSEs.

Library statistics from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability reveal that net total spending on public libraries in the UK was expected to rise by 2.8 percent in 1998 - 1999, a reduction in expenditure when set against a 3.5 percent increase in the retail price index over the same period. Over the last three years 107 service points have been lost (down to 19,203) and opening hours have declined. Book stocks have also dropped, from 138 million volumes in 1991 - 1992 to just under 125 million in 1998 - 1999 (James, 1999).

Of the libraries that remain, there is evidence that few library authorities have a strategy, structure and culture in place that is aimed at tackling exclusion. As part of their assessment of Annual Library Plans, consultants were given a guidance question on social inclusion : “How far does the service meet the needs of all sections of the community ? Is it combating social exclusion ?” (IPF, 1999). In answering this question the consultants reported that :

“Social inclusion was scored poorly by our readers. It was well below average in a large number of plans....We have found many individual initiatives which are clearly directed at one or more minority groups, but what seems to be lacking is a comprehensive review of social inclusion (from a library service standpoint) and a co-ordinated response to this particular challenge” (IPF, 1999).

UK public libraries have also been criticised for their failure to engage with ethnic communities. Roach and Morrison (1998) found that “a social distance exists between the public library and ethnic minority communities which tends to exclude ethnic minority citizens whilst preserving professional autonomy.” A similar picture has emerged with regard to social class (Pateman, 1996). The failure of UK public libraries to address social exclusion in other areas (such as lesbians, women and children) are covered by Working Papers in this series.

The picture across the rest of western Europe is patchy, with excellent provision in countries such as Finland, Denmark and Sweden, while in Italy Portugal and Spain the library infrastructure is not so well developed. In others countries, such as Ireland, the public library service is striving to become more inclusive.

Finland has, like all Nordic countries, public libraries of a high quality standard, frequently used (60-80%) by the public and well supported by government policy. Public libraries are considered to be amongst the basic public services. In 1994 the Ministry of Finance prepared a national information management strategy “Towards a Finnish Information Society” (EC, 1997). During the debate on this strategy the issue of library charging was raised and firmly rejected. The Secretary General of the Finnish Library Association said : “Great educational and cultural capital has been amassed in libraries - what is the point of excluding people from them, especially at the dawn of the information society ?” (Haavisto, 1998).

One of the strategy's aims is that all citizens will have access to electronic information and communication services, and possess the skills to use them : "There can be no doubt that the Finns have embraced information technology to the fullest extent. The country has the highest Internet penetration in the world. Almost 40% of all personal mail is sent electronically. More than 140 of the city's 180 schools are linked to 40 libraries around Helsinki" (Dawson, 1999). All Finnish libraries offer access to the Internet free of charge. Helsinki City Library was the first public library in the world to offer public access to the Internet. The state provides financial support to help public libraries gain access to the Internet.

Finnish libraries also provide services to ethnic minorities (for example, via the Multicultural Library of Helsinki City Library), the unemployed, women and people with disabilities (EC, 1997). There are no school libraries in Finland since the public library network is considered to be adequate and makes better use of resources.

In 1994 the Danish government published the report "Info-Society 2000" which included the statement : "Public libraries have a central role in order to ensure that the Danes will not become divided into an A-team and a B-team in terms of information technology" (EC, 1997). The Danish Public Libraries Act (1994) states that all basic services, including Internet access, must be free. State funding is available to enable all public libraries to gain Internet access.

In 1996 the municipality of Naestved launched one of the most advanced Internet based sites for a whole community in Denmark. About 19,000 of the 23,000 households are now connected to a fibre optic infrastructure. All public institutions and schools are also connected and there has been a major investment to provide high specification PCs for the end user (Dawson, 1999).

In Sweden public libraries are the most widespread and well-visited cultural institutions. The task of the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs is to support and stimulate library activities, among other things to increase the libraries' chances of reaching new groups of library visitors. Proposed library legislation, covering the entire public library system, has been submitted to the Swedish parliament. The bill prescribes that all citizens shall have access to a public library. The bill also specifies that the public libraries shall make computer based information available to all citizens : "IT at the public library has an aspect of social justice - differences due to geographical distance and private finance can be evened out" (EC, 1997).

Public services in Scandinavia - including public libraries - appear to be better organised and used than those in the UK and in other western European countries. This may be because Scandinavia conforms to the monopolistic paradigm of social exclusion whereas the UK is typified by the specialist paradigm (Silver, 1994).

The development of public libraries in Italy has been hampered by administrative and institutional problems, shortage and discontinuity of financial resources, lack of professional up-dating, and problems with buildings and structures. Portugal has only 46 access points to

the Internet, many municipalities do not have a public library, and “traditionally, libraries do not co-operate with each other” (EC, 1997). Spain has 51 State Public Libraries which face a number of economic, technical, professional and social barriers : “The effort made in the last years to improve public library services has not been accompanied by an improvement of the poor social image that public libraries have in Spain. The idea of libraries as information centres to serve a community is a recent idea due to historical reasons. At present there is the risk that some other institutions play the role of general information providers to citizens” (EC, 1997).

Branching out : a new public library service (1998), is the Irish government’s policy for the service in the 21st century. Two of the key priorities among the government’s overall policy objectives are : “to ensure that Ireland moves rapidly to embrace the opportunities of the Information Society so as to support economic and social progress as well as more participative democracy ; and to establish an inclusive society in which all citizens can participate fully in the social and economic life of the country. The public library system has the potential to make a major contribution to furthering both of these important objectives”.

The Branching out report asserts that “Everyone in Ireland has an equal right to information and learning. This access can only be delivered if a comprehensive network of library infrastructure is in place”. It calls on library authorities to increase the amounts they spend annually on stock to a level of at least IR£2.50 per head by the year 2002. To help authorities achieve this the report proposes that central government subvent their bookfunds with a grant of IR£3.6 million over four years.

Branching out calls on each library authority to prepare an Access Strategy, covering the removal of physical, social and financial barriers to usage. The report recognises the role that libraries can play in the lives of people facing exclusion, and it calls on library authorities to review all library charges. Co-operation with community development agencies is needed if libraries are to achieve their potential as agents of community empowerment.

Staff Development Plans are to be drawn up and research funds established. A sum of IR£7.6 million for new library projects in 1999 is to be provided by the government (Ronayne, 1999).

Required inclusion

Access to education and qualifications is improving in China and Vietnam.

Oxfam’s Education Performance Index (Vallely, 1999) measures how many children enrol in school, how many complete the course, and how many girls that includes. The Index is predictable, with Bahrain and Singapore at the top and Niger and Ethiopia at the bottom. It also shows that good policy can partially counteract problems of low incomes. China punches educationally well above its economic weight. So does Vietnam, as a result of increased investments, reduced costs and a strong political commitment to education. China has an average income similar to that of Pakistan, but its children are three times more likely to enrol in school and twice as likely to finish.

89% of children in China receive what UNESCO defines as a basic education. This compares favourably with other Majority World countries such as Bangladesh (51%), Brazil (50%), Indonesia (88%), Mexico (82%) and Nigeria (71%). One in every three Chinese families has a child attending a primary or junior high school. About 70% of the schools are in rural areas.

Basic education expenditure in China has increased from 44 million yuan (270 yuan per student) in 1991 to a projected 191.6 billion yuan (610 yuan per student) by 2001. This represents 4% of the GNP. Basic education takes 65% of China's total education budget. A nine year compulsory education programme has been implemented and China's illiteracy rate dropped from 80% in 1949 to 15% in 1990.

Vietnam also has a very high rate of literacy, compared to its neighbours. It is estimated that over 95% of the people of school age can read and write. This is the reversal of the position at the declaration of independence in 1945 when 95% of the population was considered illiterate (Aldis, 1996).

In 1945 Vietnam had only 300 university graduates. In the academic year 1992/93 (just 15 years after the end of the Vietnam war with America) Vietnam had almost 162,000 university and college students. A similar picture has emerged in China since the Revolution in 1949.

China has 388,900 libraries in all (not counting those run by military units) including the new Shanghai Public Library, the largest in China and one of the ten largest in the world. It has over 10 million holdings, including two million items for circulation and over 1000 Chinese-language newspapers. Housed in a new 900,000 square feet facility equipped with advanced technology, it is open at least 12 hours per day, 7 days a week (Pateman, 1998).

Inclusive diversity

Access to education and the number of students gaining qualifications has improved in North Korea (DPRK) where universal 11 year compulsory education was introduced in 1975. The literacy rate is 99%. The 50th anniversary of the abolition of illiteracy in DPRK was celebrated in 1999 : "In March, Juche 38 (1949) DPRK became the first country in the East to abolish literacy. Over the last 50 years since the abolition of illiteracy, not a single illiterate has appeared in DPRK and the general level of the people has steadily increased thanks to the popular policy of the Workers' Party of DPRK on education. The cultural revolution which began with the campaign to wipe out illiteracy has made a leaping advance with the result that DPRK has ushered in a bright heyday of socialist culture" (Korea Friendship Bulletin, 1999).

Cuba has the highest literacy rate in the Americas and one of the highest in the world, with 98% of the population having received at least an 8th grade education, according to UNESCO endorsed figures. It has achieved the highest number of teachers per capita in the world, with one teacher per 37 inhabitants (Tovar, 1997)

Cuba has a ninth grade minimum educational level. It has more than one million technicians and university graduates. Practically the whole infant population that needs special education

for those with disabilities is provided with it. Schooling for elementary and junior high school levels is universal. The educational budget is high and, regardless of the critical economic situation the country is facing, there is not a single pupil or student that has not had the teachers and minimum material resources to continue studying. Cuba has the world's lowest student teacher ratio (Ruiz, 1998).

The Cuban model has produced over 500,000 university graduates and hundreds of thousands of technical students. It has 200,000 teachers and professors (many of whom have university degrees and postgraduate studies). It has 11,000 scientists, the vast majority of whom are young. The educational budget for 1994 was in excess of 1.3 billion pesos. Free education has been maintained for 40 years. The per capita of students is the highest in the world (Tovar, 1997).

Cuba occupies one of the first places in the world in the per capita of postgraduates that hold scientific degrees. Although, from the qualitative point of view there are still some inefficiencies to be overcome in the teaching and educational process, Cuba ranks in these parameters among the richest nations of the world (Ruiz, 1998).

Before liberation there were no universities in the northern half of Korea. In 1946 the first university was established. By 1970 there were 129 universities and today there are over 200. Nearly 1.5 million students have graduated. Students in Korea do not have to pay tuition fees, which are paid by the state, and their living expenses are also borne by the state. Students are provided with free uniforms. Education at all levels in the DPRK is free (Hudson, 1999).

Millions of volumes are stored in Cuban libraries, spread throughout every city and town. Travelling libraries have also been established to transport culture to the country's remotest areas. In 1997 Cuba published 1,858 titles with a print run of 45 million copies. There are 338 public libraries used by 6 million people who borrow 8 million books (Tovar, 1997).

Fidel Castro's (1961) speech at the National Library, Havana, known in Cuba as his "words to the intellectuals" is one of the Cuban revolution's main statements of cultural policy. Its guidelines for artistic expression - "within the revolution, anything ; against the revolution, nothing" - serves as a summary of the revolution's cultural policy to this day.

"From the very first days of the revolution, the Cuban leadership has always given a great deal of importance to the fight to extend culture and raise the cultural level of all working people in Cuba. At the beginning of the revolution, when I was working at the National Library, we made a sign carrying a statement by Fidel (Castro) : "The revolution doesn't tell you to believe - the revolution tells you to read". In other words, being exposed to reading and knowledge is in itself an act of liberation" (Pogolotti, 1998)

There was also the development of the national publishing industry, which not only gave Cuban writers the possibility of publishing their work - an opportunity they had not enjoyed before - but led to the publishing of authors from the whole world, including something that is not published very much elsewhere : literature from Africa and other parts of the Majority World : "that too was an opening to the world that enriched our culture" (Pogolotti, 1998)

Projects were launched that aimed to reduce the cultural gap between the capital and the provinces and rural areas. The role of women and black people in cultural activities was also addressed. Culture was used to take on prejudices, for example by using films like *Fresa y chocolate* (Strawberry and Chocolate) to challenge homophobia.

There is a convergence in the understanding of the political leadership of the Cuban revolution, which is confronting the problem of globalisation, and the defence of Cuban culture. Indeed, Cuba is going on the offensive and using culture as a trench in the struggle to defend the socialist course of the revolution against the challenges to the revolution's social values. As part of this strategy, Cuban artists who work abroad are required to pay some of their hard currency earnings into a state fund which supports cultural activities in Cuba.

Before Liberation there were only seven libraries in DPRK. Now there is the Grand People's Study House in the centre and the well organised State library system at the provincial, city and county levels in the country. By 1947 the number of libraries had increased to 102 and book rooms to 1253. Today libraries and book rooms total over 15,000. In every district there are regional libraries and students and pupils libraries. Reading rooms for newspapers and books are everywhere. There are libraries for science research, university libraries, factory and enterprise libraries and countryside libraries (Rip, 1996).

Other indicators

Education, literacy and libraries are three performance indicators for measuring the success of a state in its attempts to tackle social exclusion. NPI and the World Guide have developed other indicators for measuring social exclusion which are relevant to Working Papers in this series. A detailed analysis of these indicators can be found at Appendix One. This section summarises some of these indicators.

Exclusive diversity

The last 10 years has seen the situation going backwards for the people of the ex Soviet Union and the former socialist countries of eastern Europe. The transition from socialism to capitalism has made the situation worse for the overall majority of the Russian people. A World Bank Report (Morning Star, 1999) points out that one fifth of Russians will be living in poverty by the end of 1999. While crime rises in capitalist Russia, there is a rundown in the school system, which, under socialism, was, in many ways, in advance of western Europe.

In their eye witness report of Russia, Morales and Williams (1999) paint a bleak picture : "Older citizens are denied their pensions, infant mortality is on the rise, and 90% of the working class is living below the poverty line. One hundred workers a month commit suicide from despair. From January through October 1998, 311,000 people have died in Russia alone. The prime victims are working class".

Some 40 percent of workers in Russia have gone weeks or months without pay. Average life expectancy in Russia for men plummeted from 64 years in 1990 to 57 in 1995 and from 74 to

72 years for women. Since 1985 the birth rate in Russia almost halved, resulting in a population decline of nearly a million a year (Barnes, 1999).

Voluntary inclusion

Three times as many people in the UK now live in relative poverty than when Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979. Twelve million people - nearly a quarter of the population - are living in poverty, with Britain almost unique among developed countries in showing worsening poverty levels. Inequality passes through generations, with the children of the low paid much more likely to be low paid themselves (Treasury, 1999).

Four million children are living in poverty in the UK - treble the number 20 years ago. Two out of every five children are born poor. An estimated one in six families are pushed into poverty with the birth of a child. By the time that children are 22 months old, there are clear social class differences in the rate of educational development and these widen when children start school (Treasury, 1999).

The Swedish government has announced plans for cuts in health care, pensions, child support, and sick leave benefits. The “Swedish miracle” is disappearing quickly. In a matter of two and a half years, Sweden has gone from being the country that remained the model of social welfare, to being a harbinger of what is coming for workers throughout the imperialist world. The Swedish government, for example, has recently cut unemployment benefits - at a time when joblessness has leapt, by official figures, from 3 percent to 12 percent in the last two years (Barnes, 1999).

Required inclusion

In our section on education, literacy and libraries, China was compared with Pakistan. On other issues China can be compared with India, which is similar to China in many ways - not the least in its size, some 900 million people compared to China’s 1.2 billion. More than 70 percent of the population of India lives in rural areas. Both countries experienced centuries of colonial domination and super-exploitation. But India never had a socialist revolution. And that is a big difference.

The manifestations of this class difference between China and India are tangible and dramatic. To this day, life expectancy in China is about ten years longer than in India ; infant mortality is a third lower than in India ; and the illiteracy rate in India is twice that in China. During the past quarter century, China’s economy has grown considerably faster than India’s, on average roughly 8% a year vs. 4.5%. Internally, China has built a more extensive infrastructure than India and has a healthier and better educated workforce than India (Barnes, 1999).

Inclusive diversity

An article in “Workers” (January, 1999) gives an indication of how the Cuban revolution has tackled social exclusion : “Cuba’s sportsmen and women have won it prestige. Its health system is world famous. Its mass vaccination against meningitis, which it has eradicated, was

a prominent item on TV news in Britain recently where the virus kills over 200 children every year. Cuban life expectancy has risen dramatically over recent decades as living standards improved. Cuba's 11 million population has achieved all this. In Britain with over five times the population, inventive even though denied funds, a huge skill base and a range of diverse industries, it makes us wonder what we could do if we set our minds to it".

5. SUMMARY

This working paper uses Miller's (1998) models of communities and the role of the state to analyse four different approaches to tackling social exclusion :

* Emerging capitalist countries (in transition from planned to market economies) such as the ex-Soviet Union and former socialist countries in eastern Europe base their approach to social exclusion on exclusive diversity. This requires self sufficient communities in which the state intervenes only in extremis. In these countries the standard of living is falling and the previously well developed library infrastructure has deteriorated.

* Developed capitalist countries (market economies) such as those in the UK and western Europe base their approach to social exclusion on voluntary inclusion. This requires universalistic services in which the state seeks to avoid dependency and remove threats to mainstream society. Public services, including public libraries, are being encouraged to become less dependent on the state. This has led to the development of public-private initiatives, growing commercialism and the extension of charging.

* Socialist countries (planned economies) such as those in China and Vietnam base their approach to social exclusion on required inclusion. This requires universal and tailored services and a shared moral code in which the state uses compulsion if necessary. Education and libraries are viewed as basic requirements in building socialism, although the introduction of foreign capital may affect these developments.

* Communist countries (working towards communism) such as Cuba and North Korea base their approach to social exclusion on universal and tailored services and arbitration in which the state encourages political engagement. Education and library provision is comprehensive and free, despite years of economic blockade.

We have used two sets of performance indicators to measure social exclusion around the world : New Labour's official indicators, "Monitoring poverty and social exclusion", developed by the New Policy Institute (1998) ; and a set of alternative indicators, "The World Guide", developed by the Third World Institute (1999).

6. CONCLUSION

Both parts of this Working Paper are based on the over riding and underlying issue of globalisation. This metaphor for imperialism and neo-liberalism divides the world into a number of camps :

* capitalist / social democratic countries - economically advanced industrial powers with a class structure : United States, Canada, the countries of Western Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

* socialist / communist countries - the workers' states of China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

* emerging economies - the ex Soviet Union and former socialist countries of Eastern Europe

* Majority World countries - those countries which are usually described as "Third World" or "Developing Countries".

As Barnes (1999) has noted : "When you read or hear the terms "developing countries" or "emerging economies" be sure to notice the "-ing" on the end of the adjectives - "developing", "emerg-ing". That is the tip off that not one of these "developing" countries has developed into an advanced industrial power in the twentieth century. Emerging forever ; emerged never."

There are, of course, variations between countries within each camp. The Nordic countries and the UK, for example, are in the capitalist / social democratic camp and base their approach to social exclusion on voluntary inclusion. But while Scandinavia conforms to the monopolistic paradigm of social exclusion, the UK has moved towards the specialist paradigm.

As social, economic and political circumstances change, so countries can move from one camp / approach to social exclusion to another. The ex Soviet Union and the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe have moved from required inclusion to exclusive diversity, for example, and from the socialist camp to emerging economies.

This Working Paper has looked at the situation in twenty countries which represent each of the above camps. Part One looked at the struggles of workers for social inclusion in countries in the "Majority World" : Chile, Kenya, Mexico, Kurdistan, Algeria, and Tamil Nadu. Resistance movements to social exclusion were considered, as well as the lessons to be learnt from these experiences.

The struggle of workers to be socially included is not confined to Majority World countries. Resistance to globalisation is emerging all over the world. As Barnes (1999) has said : "A new pattern is being woven in struggle as working people emerge from a period of retreat, resisting the consequences of the rulers' final blow-off boom, of "globalisation" - their grandiloquent term that displays imperial arrogance while it masks brutal assaults on human dignity the world over. The emerging pattern is taking place, defined by the actions of a vanguard resisting indignity and isolation, whose ranks increase with every single worker or farmer who reaches out to others with the hand of solidarity and offers to fight together."

This resistance is manifesting itself in countries which base their approach to social exclusion on exclusive diversity: "Resistance is building in the working class of the former Soviet Union. In about half a dozen towns there is dual power where workers have seized control of

their industry and infrastructure. Trade union organisation has re-emerged and workers' circles are also rising" (Morales and Williams, 1999).

Resistance is emerging in countries which base their approach to social exclusion on voluntary inclusion : "The European Marches organised a mass demonstration in Amsterdam in 1997. Now it is calling another major protest (50,000 or more) in Cologne in May 1999, to coincide with the Heads of Government Summit of the European Union. This march will be to protest against unemployment, job insecurity, social exclusion and racism" (Robertson, 1999).

Resistance is becoming necessary in countries which base their approach to social exclusion on required inclusion : "The US, Japanese, Taiwanese, Hong Kong, and other capitalists setting up shop in China today - as well as the expanding capitalist layers and wannabe capitalists within China's dominant social caste - are already meeting resistance from workers and peasants" (Barnes, 1999).

Resistance in countries which base their approach to social exclusion on inclusive diversity, manifests itself as opposition to imperialism, neo-liberalism and the economic blockades against Cuba and North Korea.

Part Two examines the success of these different approaches to tackling social exclusion. With regard to the emerging economies (ex Soviet Union, former countries of Eastern Europe) and capitalist countries (UK, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Ireland), these were examined to determine : the extent of social exclusion ; whether there are any pockets of ideas or practices which are attempting to tackle social exclusion ; whether libraries are playing a role in this. With regard to the socialist and communist countries (China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam), these were examined to see : the extent of social inclusion ; how this is fostered and enabled by the library service ; and any lessons which can be learnt from these different approaches.

Our conclusion is that social exclusion cannot be divorced from the political, economic and social system of individual countries. Social exclusion is a systemic problem and a symptom of the inherent contradictions of capitalism. Social exclusion can be alleviated, (by library and other agencies) but not eliminated in emerging economies, capitalist or Majority World countries. This would require the introduction of a workers' state.

Socialist / communist countries are more socially cohesive because property and services are commonly owned and equal rights are reflected in the constitution, education, health, library and welfare system. Race and class - the main bases of social exclusion - are not such an issue in socialist / communist countries. The empowerment of the working class is a vital prerequisite to abolishing social exclusion.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- * that UK public libraries consider the lessons to be learnt from workers who are struggling for social inclusion.
- * that UK public libraries examine the approaches to tackling social exclusion in communist / socialist countries based on inclusive diversity and required inclusion.
- * that UK public libraries consider some of the approaches to tackling social exclusion based on voluntary inclusion in countries such as Sweden, Denmark and Finland.
- * that UK public libraries develop a wide range of performance indicators for measuring their success in tackling social exclusion, and that these are reported as part of the Annual Library Plan process.
- * that UK public libraries adopt appropriate strategies, structures and cultures for tackling social exclusion in the light of these recommendations.

8. APPENDIX ONE : INCOME, POVERTY, CHILDREN, YOUNG ADULTS, ADULTS, OLDER PEOPLE, AND COMMUNITIES

Income and Poverty

Poverty levels have increased in the ex Soviet Union and in some of the former socialist countries of eastern Europe since the collapse of communism. Levels of poverty vary within the European Union, with the UK grouped amongst the poorest nations. Differentials between income are increasing in China and Vietnam as their economies are increasingly exposed to market forces. Income levels are relatively equitable in Cuba and North Korea and poverty is not a major problem, although economic development has been significantly hindered by economic blockade.

Exclusive diversity

Poverty has become a major problem in many countries which made up the ex-Soviet Union and the former socialist states in eastern Europe. The collapse of communism has led to a transition from planned to market economies. Much of the old state sector has been privatised leading to mass unemployment. In Russia the development of “gangster capitalism” has created a super-rich elite. At the same time the withdrawal of welfare benefits and the late, or non, payment of wages has created widespread poverty.

The gap between low and median income has increased and the number of individuals with below 50% of average income is worsening. The intensity of low income is getting worse and there are more long term recipients of benefits. The number of people with spells of low income has risen dramatically as has the incidence of self-reported difficulty managing financially.

Voluntary inclusion

The number of people living on low incomes in the UK relative to the average is far higher than 20 years ago, with the numbers in households with below half average income rising from 4 million in 1982 to more than 11 million in 1992. Although the number fell in the mid 1990s, 1996/97 again showed a significant increase of over 9 per cent to 10.5 million individuals.

While poverty increased across the EU, there were notable distinctions. There was clearly a convergence of poverty rates by 1993 within three groups of countries : the Scandinavian countries had 5-6% of their citizens in poverty ; the Benelux countries, and in Germany and France, the rates converged around 11-15% of the population ; the Mediterranean countries, along with the UK and Eire, experienced rates in excess of 20%, with Portugal remaining the poorest in the EU.

The UK has done well in the latest EU funds allocation for 2000 - 2006. The UK has gained three new areas under Objective 1 funding for under-developing regions. These are the only new regions in the entire EU to be added to the list. The criteria for Objective 1 eligibility is that the region must have a GDP per head of below 75% of the EU average. As Burton

(1999) points out : “The UK is now grouped with the poorer states of the former East Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain”. The UK will also receive a quarter of the entire EU budget for Objective 2 funding. In addition, the UK will benefit from the new Objective 3, which covers social exclusion and low education attainment.

Whilst the rate of increase, the extent and the complex structure of poverty across the EU is considerable, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) believes strongly that poverty “can be stamped out if there is real political will” (EAPN, 1998) at both EU and member state level. What is clear from the EAPN report is that, important as it is, reducing unemployment alone is not sufficient if poverty is to be eradicated from what is one of the richest regions of the world.

Required inclusion

In China and Vietnam there is less of a gap between low and median income, although this gap has widened in recent years as their economies have been opened up to foreign investment. China has abandoned its policy of the “iron rice bowl” which was based on guaranteed employment and free welfare services. The development of enterprise zones on the east coast have led to these areas becoming significantly wealthier than the rest of the country. The number of individuals with below 50% of average income is increasing. Both China and Vietnam have seen a shift of population from rural to urban areas which has created problems in the city and widened the gap in standards of living between these areas. Intensity of low income is becoming an increasing problem.

Inclusive diversity

There was much greater equality of income in Cuba before the dollar economy was introduced in 1993. This measure was taken in response to the collapse of 85% of Cuba’s trade with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, made worse by the continuing US economic blockade. Cuba entered a Special Period which has now been stabilised as a result of foreign investment and expanded tourism. Both have created greater inequalities of income. Workers in tourism, for example, have the opportunity to earn much more than professionals and manual workers. There is evidence, however, that the benefits of tourism are being fed back into other sectors of the economy. A recent 30% increase in teacher’s salaries is an example of this.

During the 1950s the DPRK completed the socialist transformation of the remaining private trade industry (the socialist sector already constituted 90%) and also the cooperativisation of agriculture. In 1957 the rate of growth of industrial output hit 44%, a rate of growth unprecedented in the world. During the period 1957-1970, the economy grew at the rate of 19% per annum. Income levels have been influenced by the US blockade and a series of natural disasters. There are few long term recipients of benefits, individuals with spells of low income, and self reported difficulty managing financially (Hudson, 1999).

Children

Child poverty has increased in the ex Soviet Union and in some of the former socialist countries of eastern Europe. Child poverty is particularly acute in some western European countries, notably in the UK. Child poverty is a growing problem in China and Vietnam as a consequence of economic restructuring. Child poverty is not a major problem in Cuba and North Korea, where infant mortality rates are falling and lower than the regional average.

Exclusive diversity

In Russia child poverty has increased : the levels of deprivation for some people in Russia are extreme. Mr Khazov, President of the St Petersburg committee on Family, Childhood and Youth described how the transition to democracy had been difficult, children had been left by their parents and “social orphans” had increased almost three times over since 1990. There are between 800 and 1500 children living on the streets of St Petersburg, which has a population of 4 million. They are undernourished, in poor health and many are addicted to drugs and substances such as glue” (Davies, 1998).

The number of children living in workless households has increased, as has the number of children living in households with below average income. The number of low birthweight babies and accidental deaths has increased. The incidence of divorce, births to girls under 16 and children in young offenders institutions has increased.

Voluntary inclusion

Children are more likely than adults to live in poverty in the UK and more than 2.5 million live in workless households. Those born in the bottom two social classes are 25 per cent more likely to be underweight as babies and twice as likely to die in childhood accidents.

Children growing up in low income families are “learning to be poor” from an early age. Children brought up in a poor family have lower aspirations than the children of wealthier families. Children living in households claiming income support are five times more likely to think that their family income is inadequate than other children (Middleton, 1999).

Children from single parent families and families on income support are more frequently involved in family discussions about money. Two thirds of them are often told that they cannot afford what they want, compared with less than half of the other children. Many have learnt from an early age not to ask for the things that they want. They are also more likely to choose jobs requiring fewer qualifications and little training :

“Children from low income families are learning to expect and accept less from an early age and to find ways of covering up the disappointment. It seems entirely possible that, for some children, it is early learning of this sort that reduces both their immediate expectations and their future aspirations. There is a real sense in which they are learning to be poor” (Middleton, 1999).

Poverty rates within the EU differ across household types. Child poverty is particularly acute in some countries, notably in the UK, where the number of children living in poor households

totals almost four million, or 32% of all children living in such households. This compares with 20% of children in the EU as a whole, and just 5% in Denmark.

This high level of child poverty may be linked to the extremely high proportion of UK lone parents living in poverty : in the UK, lone parent households made up just 4.23% of all households in 1993, but 9.82% of households in poverty. Compare this to Denmark again, where 3.42% of households are headed by lone parents, but just 3.41% of households in poverty are, suggesting that Danish lone parents are at no greater risk of poverty than other household types (EAPN, 1998).

Required inclusion

The number of children living in workless households / households with below half average income is increasing in China and Vietnam. Infant mortality in China improved from 53 deaths per 1000 live births in 1996 to 31 in 1997. The regional average is 29. In Vietnam infant mortality fell from 45 deaths per 1000 live births in 1996 to 38 in 1997. The regional average is 52.

Inclusive diversity

Child poverty is not a major problem in Cuba and North Korea, although rural areas have suffered from the effects of economic blockade and natural disasters. The infant mortality rate in Cuba is 7.1 death per 1000 live births, which is lower than most capitalist countries, including the USA. The regional average is 32 deaths per 1000 live births. In the case of North Korea infant mortality fell from 30 deaths per 1000 live births in 1996 to 28 in 1997. The regional average is 29.

There are few pupil exclusions from schools in Cuba and North Korea and the incidence of divorce, births to girls under 16 and children in young offenders institutions is low.

Young adults

Incidences of drug abuse, suicide and crime are increasing among the young people of the ex Soviet Union and in some of the former socialist countries of eastern Europe. Youth unemployment is a problem in parts of western Europe, including the UK where young adults have twice the average rate of unemployment. Social problems are increasing among young people in China and Vietnam. There are low levels of youth crime, suicide and drug abuse in Cuba and North Korea.

Exclusive diversity

The effects of economic restructuring in the ex-Soviet Union and former socialist states of eastern Europe are leading to youth unemployment, low pay and young adults receiving severe hardship payments. There are rising levels of youth drug treatment, suicide and crime.

Voluntary inclusion

In the UK young adults have twice the average rate of unemployment, and those who have jobs are five times as likely to be paid below half the male average wage than older workers. Suicide rates amongst young men with no known occupation are nearly four times the rate as those amongst young men in social classes I and II.

Required inclusion

Youth unemployment and low rates of pay in China and Vietnam are a consequence of economic restructuring. Receipt of severe hardship payments is increasing as are youth drug abuse, suicide and crime.

Inclusive diversity

Youth unemployment, pay differentials and reliance on hardship payments are not significant in most parts of Cuba and North Korea. There are low levels of youth drug abuse, suicide and crime.

Adults

Unemployment, low rates of pay and non payment of wages are major problems in the ex Soviet Union and in some of the former socialist countries of eastern Europe. The number of workless households has increased in some countries in western Europe, and the number of these households has more than doubled in the UK over the last 20 years. Unemployment is rising in China and Vietnam and there is a move of people from rural to urban areas in search of jobs. Unemployment, workless households, low rates of pay and insecure employment are consequences of the economic blockade of Cuba and North Korea.

Exclusive diversity

The number of individuals wanting paid work has increased in the ex Soviet Union and former socialist countries of eastern Europe. The number of households without work for two years or more has increased and many adults who are in employment suffer low rates of pay, late and non payment of wages. Employment has become increasingly insecure and training opportunities have decreased. In Russia the rise in the number of premature deaths has been dramatic : since 1991 average life expectancy has fallen by 10 years. Long standing illness and depression have also increased.

Voluntary inclusion

In the UK over four million working-age adults would like to work but do not. Whilst the number officially counted as unemployed has dropped from three million to less than two million in the last five years, the number of other “inactive” people who want work actually rose from two to two point five million. Low pay, insecure employment and access to training are of serious concern. Long term illness and depression have been linked to poverty and unemployment. The ability of the health service to remain free and comprehensive is being questioned.

Low pay in the UK is being tackled by the introduction of a national minimum wage (NMW) of £3.60 per hour (a lower limit has been set for younger workers). However, according to a recent report the NMW “will fail to lift the working poor out of poverty” (Parker, 1998). Research, conducted by the Family Budget Unit, indicates that a NMW of £6.90 per hour is required for two parent families to escape poverty (£6.94 for a lone parent family). Having a job is not in itself a safe-guard against poverty.

Whilst unemployment is clearly a major factor in increasing poverty, it is significant that 10% of those actually in work in the EU in 1993 were also in poverty. Indeed, the largest single group of poor households across the EU comprised people in work : 35% of poor households included someone in work ; 20% of poor households were categorised as “other economically active” (EAPN, 1998).

Between the late 1980s and 1993, poverty levels across the EU increased dramatically. Rates of increases in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and the UK were above 20% : “This growth of poverty has been driven by rising unemployment, increasingly insecure and low paid work, and the failure of social security systems, including wider welfare services such as health and housing” (EAPN, 1998).

Required inclusion

In China and Vietnam the number of individuals wanting paid work and the number of households without work for two years or more is increasing. Low rates of pay and insecure employment are also rising. Training opportunities are concentrated in urban areas and regions designated for rapid economic growth. Life expectancy is 70 in China which is one year less than the regional average. In Vietnam life expectancy is 67, which is three years above the regional average. Depression, suicide rates and long standing illness are likely to increase.

Inclusive diversity

Unemployment, workless households, low rates of pay and insecure employment are consequences of the economic blockade of Cuba and North Korea. Access to training is good and life expectancy is above the regional average. There are low incidences of long standing illness, disability and depression.

With a life expectancy of 75 (6 years above the regional average) the Cuban people are the healthiest in the Majority World, and on a par with British people. This is the result of a government that puts peoples’ health at the top of its priorities ensuring an outstanding free health service. But Cuba’s achievements are under threat from an intensifying economic blockade by the United States government. This blockade is causing severe shortages of many medical supplies (CSC, 1999).

Medical care is also free in North Korea. Life expectancy has increased to an average 74 years, three years above the regional average. The DPRK has a comprehensive infrastructure of hospitals and clinics and a high number of doctors per head of population (Hudson, 1999).

Older people

The number of old people in poverty has increased in the ex Soviet Union and in some of the former socialist countries of eastern Europe. In western Europe single pensioner households are the largest group in poverty, and in the UK 30% of pensioners are in the bottom fifth of the income distribution. The ability and willingness of the state to help pensioners in China and Vietnam is decreasing. Pensioners in Cuba and North Korea are provided for via the welfare state, free health care and rationing of essential items.

Exclusive diversity

The number of pensioners with no private income has increased in the ex-Soviet Union and former socialist countries of eastern Europe. Spending on essentials has decreased while illness, disability and anxiety are rising. More pensioners need help from social services to live at home, but the ability of the state to provide these services is stretched. Many pensioners can no longer afford a telephone or other basic essentials

Voluntary inclusion

In the UK thirty per cent of pensioners are in the bottom fifth of the income distribution and 1.5 million live off state pensions and benefits alone. Poorer pensioners are more likely to suffer from ill health, disability and anxiety, and to have low spending on items such as food.

For the EU as a whole, single pensioner households are the largest group in poverty, representing 19% of all poor households. 33% of poor households are pensioner households (EAPN, 1998).

Required inclusion

In China and Vietnam the number of pensioners with no private income has increased while spending on essentials has gone down. Long standing illness, disability and anxiety are rising. The ability of the state to help pensioners living at home is declining. Telephones tend to be owned by younger and more better-off people.

Inclusive diversity

Cuba and North Korea have systems in place to ensure that pensioners are not disadvantaged by changing economic circumstances. State rationing, for example, ensures that spending on essentials is maintained. Free and comprehensive medical facilities, including an extensive family doctor system, cater for those with long standing illness or disability. Anxiety is likely to be caused by the on-going economic blockades and the constant sabre rattling by the US government, although some of the elderly may have grown used to this after 40 years. The state provides social services to help pensioners live at home, and the telephone is more of a luxury than an essential item.

Communities

Participation in civic society has declined in the ex Soviet Union and in some of the former socialist countries of eastern Europe. Disadvantage is concentrated within certain communities in the UK and in other parts of western Europe. Many people in China and Vietnam still belong to mass organisations. Cuba and North Korea invest in the social capital of their people and encourage social cohesion.

Exclusive diversity

Countries of the ex-Soviet Union and the former socialist states in eastern Europe have seen a polarisation of work and a decline in spending on travel. Many people lack a bank or building society account and many financial institutions have gone out of business. There is evidence of non-participation in civic organisations and dissatisfaction with the local area. People feel vulnerable to crime and many homes lack central heating. Homelessness has increased as have the number of households in temporary accommodation. Overcrowding and rent arrears are becoming a problem.

Voluntary inclusion

In the UK disadvantage is concentrated within certain communities. Eighty per cent of households in social housing have a weekly income of less than £200, and in 70 per cent of such households the head of the household is not in paid work. Although much more likely to be burgled, over 50 per cent of the poorest fifth of households do not have household insurance.

Community based activity is an important mechanism for social inclusion, yet the poorest participate in civic organisations at only about half the rate of richer people and are generally less satisfied with their neighbourhoods. Nearly 20 per cent of the poorest fifth of the population lack bank accounts.

Required inclusion

Many of these performance indicators are not relevant to communities in China and Vietnam. Polarisation of work is an issue, but relatively few people travel to work and the need to have access to a bank is a recent phenomenon. Participation in civic organisations is high and dissatisfaction in local areas has manifested itself in a shift of population from rural to urban areas. The remaining factors tend to affect urban dwellers - who are still the minority - the most : crime, poor heating systems, temporary accommodation, overcrowding and rent arrears.

Inclusive diversity

If socialism is the opposite of capitalism, then “internationalism is the answer to globalisation” (Benn, 1999). Cuba has exhibited socialism and internationalism in equal measure. As such it can claim to be one of the most socially inclusive countries in the world. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that Cuba has gone beyond social inclusion to achieve social cohesion :

“Social cohesion focuses on whole communities, on participation and governance, as well as on the needs of those who are excluded. It sees the development and maintenance of “social capital” as a fundamental building block, alongside employment, services and a sustainable living environment. By “social capital” is meant the networks of interactions that we have with one another, that bind us together and act as a primary means of exchanging the information, skills and help that anyone needs in their day to day life. These networks are also fundamental to what is often referred to as a “civil society”, one in which everybody has a say in the way they live, at national and local government level, in the workplace, school and neighbourhood and in family life” (Miller, 1998).

Cuba invests heavily in its social capital and promotes the development of civil society. This includes concerns about community governance, for example the high turn out for elections to People’s Power, Cuba’s local, municipal and national assemblies. Cuba also has a number of mass organisations, covering most members of society : women, trade unions, farmers, writers and artists, students, children . When the Communist Party suggests major changes in domestic and foreign policy (for example, opening up the economy to foreign investment), these are discussed by all sectors of society, and the people’s views are fed back to the government via work place forums and Committees for the Defence of the Revolution :

“Formed in the early 1960s, when invasion threatened and sabotage by outside agencies was commonplace, the committees - or CDRs as they are known - quickly became not only the first line of civil defence but also the raw building blocks of popular democracy. Every street has its own committee and membership is open to everyone over the age of 14. There is an inclusive political culture in which local problems are hammered out and wider campaigns for blood donations or the vaccination of children are organised and implemented” (Callow, 1999).

A similar situation can be found in North Korea : “Recently the DPRK has demonstrated its indestructible unity of the masses. In July (1998) the elections to the Supreme People’s Assembly produced a turnout of 100%. Such a turnout is unknown in electoral history. In Britain at a general election the turnout is around 60-70%, with some MPs being elected by less than 50% of the electorate. Elections in capitalist countries are such undignified affairs with abuse and name-calling, lies, promises made only to be broken and attempts to bribe the electorate, usually indirectly but in some cases directly as well” (Hudson, 1999).

9. APPENDIX TWO : “I HAVE” BY NICHOLAS GUILLEN

When I look at and touch myself
I, John-only-yesterday-with-Nothing,
and John-with-Everything today,
with everything today,
I glance around, I look and see
and touch myself and wonder
how it could have happened.

I have, let's see :
I have the pleasure of walking my country,
the owner of all there is in it,
examining at very close range what
I could not and did not have before.
I can say cane,
I can say mountain,
I can say city,
I can say army,
army say,
now mine forever and yours, ours,
and the vast splendor of
the sunbeam, the star, the flower.

I have, let's see :
I have the pleasure of going,
me, a peasant, a worker, a simple man,
I have the pleasure of going
(just an example)
to a bank and speaking to the manager,
not in English,
not in Sir,
but in companero as we say in Spanish.

I have, let's see :
that being Black
I can be stopped by no one at
the door of a dancing hall or bar.
Or even at the desk of a hotel
have someone yell at me there are no rooms,
a small room and not one that's immense,
a tiny room where I might rest.
I have, let's see :
that there are no rural police
to seize me and lock me in a precinct jail,
or tear me from my land and cast me
in the middle of the highway.

I have that having the land I have the sea,
no country clubs,
no high life,
no tennis and no yachts,
but, from beach to beach and wave on wave,
gigantic blue open democratic :
in short, the sea.

I have, let's see :
that I have learned to read,
to count,
I have that I have learned to write,
and to think
and to laugh.
I have that now I have
a place to work
and earn
what I have to eat
I have, let's see :
I have what was coming to me.

Written by a Black Cuban, this poem powerfully describes the changes in Cuban society five years after the Revolution.

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