Social Inclusion: Its Significance for Development Theory, Research and Policy

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Overview

• Why social inclusion matters
  – Opening examples
• Why social inclusion (and not something else)?
  – Social concepts: a brief overview
• What key issues should social inclusion inform?
  – Social bases of collective action
  – Management of risks, shocks, opportunities
  – Legitimacy of change processes
  – Taking context seriously
  – Inequality (in its various forms) and exclusion
• Implications for policy and practice
Why social inclusion matters

• Collective response to challenges and change; inclusion of all, equally and without discrimination
  – Australia
    • E.g., response to floods in January 2011
    • 25% of its population not native-born (next is Canada, 12%)
  – Canada (most of the time)
Why social inclusion matters

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    • E.g., response to floods in January 2011
    • 25% of its population not native-born (next is Canada, 12%)
  – Canada (most of the time)
  – Indonesia (post 1998)
    • Management of ‘triple transition’
      • (Unlikely demographic, historical conditions)
  – Estonia, Latvia (last year)
    • Largely peaceful response to falling wages, rising unemployment (“internal devaluation”)
Measuring OECD gender equality, 2013
Social ‘something’...

...clearly matters, has always mattered
– How/why has interest in it waxed and waned?
– But what to call it? How to distinguish it? How to ‘measure’ it? What to do about it? By whom?
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• **Social capability**

• **Social capital**
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• **Social capability**

• **Social capital**
  – ... Hanifan (1916), Bourdieu (1972), Coleman (1986), Putnam (1993, 2000) ...

• **Social cohesion**
  – Albert (1953), Jensen (2010)
  – Same as ‘harmonious society’? (China)
  – The liberal democratic democratic state by another name?

• **Social inclusion/exclusion; ‘Collective efficacy’**
Citation counts, 1985 - 2009
Social inclusion

• **Core idea**
  – Capacity of societies (not just groups, networks) to peacefully manage collective action problems
  – All included, treated equally, non-discrimination

• **Central claim**
  – Expanded sense of ‘we’ + pro-social norms + inclusive social structure = foundations of effective institutions = ...
  – Strong intrinsic concern: cohesion valuable in its own right
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• **Empirical referents**
  – Inequality, ethnic/religious diversity, norms of reciprocity, civic participation, employment, citizenship, crime, SWB
  – Societal responses to adversity (case studies)

• **Implications, applications**
  – Reduce inequalities, enhance opportunities, promote mechanisms for enhanced (meaningful) participation
Applying social inclusion to public policy

1. Social bases of collective action
   - Beyond interests, incentives, ‘values’, group size...
   - ... to *mechanisms* that enable/constrain capacity to work together
     • Who or what determines ‘us’ / ‘them’ boundaries, and their sense of permeability?
   - Forging of ‘intersubjective meaning’ (Taylor), citizenship and pluralism (Kymlicka)
Applying social inclusion to public policy

2. Management of risks, shocks, opportunities
   – Key to sustained growth (Rodrik 1999)
   – Both development success and failure alters how groups interact, who has more/less power
     • Huge potential for conflict
   – Important role for ‘leadership’
Applying social inclusion to public policy

3. Legitimacy of change process

– Whether driven by endogenous or exogenous factors

– *Indigenous debate* (‘good struggles’) central to shaping the content and legitimacy of institutions for engaging social/political change

– Externally introduced institutions (‘best practices’) often fail on this score (Scott 1998)

– Means don’t justify the ends
  - Unity via suppression/repression of dissent is not unity
Applying social inclusion to public policy

4. Taking context seriously
   – Beyond “One size doesn’t fit all”, etc to...
   – History
     • Hugely important in shaping the narrative of who ‘we’ are, what we stand for, how ‘they’ have treated us, etc
     • ‘Legal pluralism’, ‘Rule of law’ (Tamanaha et al 2012)
       – To what extent has an overarching set of rules emerged?
       – What is the ultimate source of authority?

   – Anthropology
     • Esp. micro political economy
     • Much of which is statistically ‘unobservable’
       – So adequate knowledge may take years to acquire
       – Policy responses may take decades to bear fruit
Applying social inclusion to public policy

5. Inequality and its discontents
   – Increasing evidence of its pernicious effects
     • World Development Report 2006
     • Wilkinson on health; Milanovic on growth, etc
   – Perceived and actual injustice, unfairness
     • Expanding experimental evidence
     • Salience of difference (Hoff et al on cognitive tests)
Virtues, limits of ‘measurement’

• More, better data, yes. Identification, of course.
• But...
  – Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted (Einstein)
  – It’s better to be vaguely right than precisely wrong (Einstein)
  – If you ever could figure everything out, if you could have a social science that really is a science, then we would be the first ones to be disappointed. We would be dismayed because if man becomes like that, he could be figured out. And that means that he is not worth as much as we think... Were we ever to succeed, then mankind would have failed! (Hirschman)
Going forward

• Learning from the rise, fall (?) of other social ‘somethings’
  – Need coherent story, theory, evidence, practice (STEP)
  – Don’t carry a bigger burden than you can bear
  – Keep the ‘social’ in social science
  – Most social concepts are “essentially contested” (Gallie 1956)

• Help solve problems, don’t sell ‘solutions’
  – Social cohesion often needed to determine
    • what the key (‘binding constraint’) problems actually are
    • what responses are politically supportable
    • what responses should be prioritized
    • how ‘losers’ will be compensated (if at all)
Selected references / Source material

• Barron, Patrick, Rachael Diprose and Michael Woolcock (2011) *Contesting Development: Participatory Projects and Local Conflict Dynamics in Indonesia* New Haven: Yale University Press

