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The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 44
Issue 1 *March*

Article 5

2017

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Recommended Citation

Lee, JoAnn S. and Patton, Jessie (2017) "The Social Exclusion of Dually-Involved Youth: Toward a Sense of Belonging," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 44 : Iss. 1 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol44/iss1/5>

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The Social Exclusion of Dually-Involved Youth: Toward a Sense of Belonging

Cover Page Footnote

We thank Suzette O'Donnell for her hard work collecting and reviewing articles.

The Social Exclusion of Dually-Involved Youth: Toward a Sense of Belonging

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We use an institutional life course perspective to explore the social exclusion of dually-involved youth, or those who are involved in both the juvenile justice and the child welfare systems. We begin by defining the concept of social exclusion and present one mechanism of social exclusion, the set of institutions operating in the lives of dually-involved youth. We use the social exclusion framework to extend the implications of studies of dually-involved youth, and propose three stages of social-exclusion for dually-involved youth. We conclude by emphasizing the importance of broad investments in families, schools, and communities to ensure that dually-involved youth develop a sense of belonging and the capabilities necessary to live meaningful lives.

Key words: social exclusion, dually-involved youth, child maltreatment, delinquency, life course perspective

Youth involved with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, referred to as dually-involved youth, have received growing attention from scholars and practitioners in recent years (Herz & Ryan, 2008; Huang, Ryan, & Herz, 2012; Maschi, Hatcher, Schwalbe, & Rosato, 2008). Dually-involved youth commonly fall into one or more of several policy areas associated with high risk for social exclusion, such as struggles in the educational system and being from vulnerable families (Buchanan, 2006). For example, dually-involved youth report high rates of truancy, academic deficiencies, and special education needs, as well as high rates of school suspensions (Halemba, Siegel, Lord, & Zawacki, 2004; Herz & Ryan, 2008). These youths are also likely to be from excluded families (Mitchell & Campbell, 2011): in one study, 61% had experienced issues with housing and finances, 78% had experienced

issues with substance abuse, and 70% had experienced domestic violence (Halemba et al., 2004).

Existing literature on dually-involved youth focuses on the needs of the individual youth but fails to provide a full assessment of the social conditions that contribute to the maltreatment and delinquency experiences of the youth, thus problematizing the individual youth. Current theoretical frameworks have drawn from systems of care models (Maschi et al., 2008), social capital and social control theory (Ryan & Testa, 2005), and an ecodevelopmental framework (Jonson-Reid, 2002), which suggest improving public systems by improving the collaboration between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (Herz, Ryan, & Bilchik, 2010; Huang et al., 2012). We introduce a social exclusion perspective, which requires a fundamental shift toward focusing on the comprehensive set of social institutions that fail to support the youth's development, and can inform the development of effective systems of care.

Defining a Social Exclusion Framework

In the simplest of terms, "[s]ocial exclusion operates to prevent people from participating in the mainstream activities of society and accessing the standards of living enjoyed by the rest of society" (Taket, Crisp, Nevill, Lamaro, Graham, & Barter-Godfrey, 2009, p. 10). Social exclusion is compatible with a capabilities-based perspective (Bynner, 2001; Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1999; Taket et al., 2009). As Sen (1999) argues, "the freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities available to us. There is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements" (p. xii). While a social exclusion framework draws attention to the social arrangements that define the opportunity set each individual has, a capabilities approach provides specificity around the development required for an individual to exercise his or her agency. According to Sen (1999), capabilities allow "people to do things—and the freedom to lead lives—that they have reason to value" (Sen, 1999, p. 85). Similarly, Nussbaum (2000) refers to "human capabilities, that is, what people are actually able to do and to be—in a way informed by an intuitive idea of

a life that is worthy of the dignity of the human being" (p. 5). Thus, rather than simply ensuring equal opportunity, the call is to also ensure equal capabilities, since a youth with opportunity but no capability would not be able to take advantage of any available opportunities (Taket et al., 2009). Together, the social exclusion framework and capabilities perspective draw attention to the ways that social arrangements may succeed or fail to cultivate an individual's capabilities.

There are three common elements across various definitions of social exclusion: relativity, agency, and dynamics (Micklewright, 2002). First, there is an element of relativity, since social exclusion can only occur in relation to others (Micklewright, 2002). While poverty refers to a lack of resources, social exclusion refers to a "catastrophic detachment" from others (Axford, 2008, p. 738). In this way, a social exclusion framework "emphasi[z]es damage to relationships with the wider society and even family relationships" (Bynner, 2001, p. 287). Similarly, a capabilities approach characterizes poverty as more than simply low income, but also as a deprivation of elementary capabilities, since individuals in poverty are likely to experience undernourishment, high rates of morbidity, and illiteracy (Sen, 1999). The deprivation of these elementary capabilities also reduces an individual's ability to relate to others and thus live a dignified human life (Nussbaum, 2000).

Second is the element of agency, whereby someone has been prevented from participating in society (Axford, 2008; Micklewright, 2002). Thus, social exclusion refers to individuals who have not developed the necessary capabilities to participate as full members of society. While weaker versions of social exclusion lack attention to power dynamics, and thus prescribe changing individuals to address their social exclusion, stronger versions of social exclusion focus on "the role of those perpetuating the exclusion and aim to reduce their power" (Taket et al., 2009, p. 10). Those who perpetuate social exclusion can include parents, schools (through exclusionary disciplinary policies), employers, and governments (by failing to provide adequate services) (Micklewright, 2002).

Third, there is a dynamic element in that social exclusion refers to a process that unfolds over time (Micklewright, 2002). Individuals are not simply excluded or included, but rather,

there is a continuum of exclusion along multiple dimensions which are dynamic, so that a "particular individual at a particular time in a particular context can be characterized as a multiple combination of inclusion and exclusion" (Taket et al., 2009, p. 13). In this way, social exclusion is not limited to current circumstances, but also considers "dim future prospects" (Micklewright, 2002, p. 9).

Social exclusion can result from direct action, but also may come about through a lack of action (Taket et al., 2009). For example, a detained youth may be prevented from accessing normative educational opportunities, thus falling behind in school. Another youth may attend a school that may be lacking updated or otherwise sufficient educational materials. In both cases, the youth would have experienced social exclusion, since he or she has not developed the capabilities necessary to participate fully in society.

There is some disagreement as to whether self-exclusion constitutes a form of social exclusion (Micklewright, 2002). Some do not consider self-exclusion social exclusion, since there is perceived agency in the situation, such as a youth who chooses to skip school (Micklewright, 2002). However, the youth may skip school as a result of a lack of culturally relevant curriculum, whereby the youth does not see himself or herself meaningfully represented in the curriculum. Similarly, self-regulated exclusion may arise in response to stigma, which can operate powerfully so that individuals who may be included within communities, employment, or other social institutions may begin to restrict themselves from participating in those social spaces (Taket et al., 2009). The lack of culturally relevant curriculum and stigma both reflect psychological exclusion. The psychological dimension of exclusion highlights the ways in which institutional experiences and messaging impact the thoughts and feelings of youth, and shape how they see themselves in relation to the world around them. The individual's capabilities have not been fully developed due to his or her self-regulated social exclusion, a result of psychological exclusion in these critical institutions.

Taket et al. (2009) argue that the opposite of social exclusion is not social inclusion, but rather, social connectedness. In the case of inclusion, agency does not rest with the

individual. On the other hand, connectedness not only affirms the individual's positive relationships, but positions the individual to exercise agency that is crucial to countering social exclusion (Taket et al., 2009). Even so, the concept of belonging more fully addresses the three dimensions of social exclusion—relativity, agency, and dynamics—while also fitting within the capabilities-based perspective. Belonging is "feeling valued and having the opportunity to add value" (Frenk, 2016, para. 15). Involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice system may send the message that the youth are not valued in their families, schools, and communities if they are removed. Furthermore, a youth's removal likely interrupts the development of his capabilities, and thus his ability to add value (Nussbaum, 2000).

The Social Exclusion of Children and Youth

It is important to attend to the mechanisms of social exclusion that begin in childhood, since those who are vulnerable early in life are more likely to become socially marginalized adults (Taket et al., 2009). Disrupting this process of social exclusion early is important to the development of capabilities. Nussbaum (2000) describes three types of capabilities: basic, internal, and combined. Basic capabilities refer to the potential of individuals, internal capabilities refer to the "mature conditions of readiness" (p. 84), and combined capabilities refer to an individual with internal capabilities who is able to express those capabilities.

The individual's social context plays an important role in both the development of internal capabilities and the expression of those capabilities (i.e., combined capabilities). If parents or families experience social exclusion for any reason, such as through the victim blaming that may arise from receiving cash assistance, these parents may become alienated from the wider community, which can be transferred to their child(ren) (Taket et al., 2009). The limited familial relationships that arise from the family's social exclusion may also contribute to the child's detachment from her schools, communities, and peers, which poses challenges not only to the training of her internal capabilities, but to her combined capabilities as well.

The child welfare and juvenile justice systems are

positioned to disrupt the processes of social exclusion deriving from the damaged relationships in the child and her families' social spaces, potentially enhancing her development of capabilities. At the same time, services may contribute, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to social exclusion (Axford, 2010).

What is the Usefulness of a Social Exclusion Perspective?

A social exclusion perspective draws attention to "the role of structural forces in producing disadvantage" (Axford, 2010, p. 743). Thus, this perspective can help reveal ways in which systems are effectively addressing the needs of this population of dually-involved youth, or how these institutional structures are contributing to the accumulating disadvantage. While we do not dismiss the agency that individuals have in making choices about their lives, our concern is with improving social structures to increase the likelihood that dually-involved youth will be equipped with the capabilities they need to become fully-connected, participatory adults (i.e., belong).

A social exclusion framework can be used in conjunction with other theoretical explanations, since social exclusion includes a combination of economic, social, political, psychological, and spatial dimensions (Axford, 2010; Taket et al., 2009). Social exclusion is dynamic and multidimensional, and can be experienced in a variety of ways (Taket et al., 2009). For example, Ryan and Testa's (2005) social ecology of maltreatment framework focuses on the lack of social capital that results from child maltreatment, which results in weakened attachments and relationships between the child and both family and society at large. This approach highlights processes of social exclusion that operate through the social (weakened relationships) dimension.

In another example, Lee, Courtney, Harachi and Tajima (2015) identify a process of social exclusion where foster youth aging out of care with legal system involvement are less likely to attain a high school diploma. For these youth, dual system involvement results in reduced acquisition of human capital, which limits their ability to participate in the labor market, thus operating in the economic dimension. Furthermore, removal from the home and placement in the foster care and/or

juvenile justice system reflect spatial exclusion. A social exclusion framework thus draws attention to the systemic factors that may limit an individual's developmental capacity.

A social exclusion perspective combined with a capabilities approach can highlight how groups of people may be systematically marginalized, and thus inform institutional structures that are more socially just. For example, females comprise about a third of dually-involved youth in studies with co-ed samples (Culhane et al., 2011; Halemba et al., 2004; Herz & Ryan, 2008). Attention to potential gender socialization differences is important to ensure the development of equal capabilities for females. Toward that end, Nussbaum (2000) explores the gendered nature of capabilities, focusing on the tangible ways in which women "lack support for fundamental functions of human life" (p. 1), pointing to deficits in the areas of nutrition, well-being, and cognitive functioning; vulnerabilities related to violence, abuse, discrimination, intimidation, and harassment; and inadequate opportunities for education, employment, legal recourse, and civic engagement. A capabilities "approach makes each person a bearer of value, and an end" (p. 73) rather than a "supporter of the ends of others" (pp. 5-6) as is often the case for women (Nussbaum, 2000). Understanding how institutional processes may operate differentially by marginalized identities such as gender, race, and class, as well as the intersections of multiple identities, is important to ensuring the development of equal capabilities across groups, but such an explicit examination is beyond the scope of this article.

One Mechanism of Social Exclusion

An institutional life course perspective is useful for identifying patterns of exclusion and belonging. Since individuals respond to the opportunities and constraints provided by institutions (Breen & Buchmann, 2002; Taket et al., 2009), examining aggregate patterns of behavior will reveal institutional structures. The concepts of institutional constellation, institutional alignment, and institutional integrity (Lee, 2014) are useful to understand how the institutional life course and social exclusion perspectives are compatible.

The institutional constellation refers to "the specific set

of institutions operating in an individuals' life, and also emphasizes the importance of their lived experience" (Lee, 2014, p. 716). For example, the family, school, neighborhood, and possibly religious institutions play an important role in the socialization of children and adolescents, and thus comprise an individual's institutional constellation. The institutional constellation of a dually-involved youth includes the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, which have intervened "in an attempt to redirect the socialization of a young person" who has been maltreated or delinquent (Lee, 2014, p. 723).

Institutional alignment is "the degree to which an institutional constellation is aligned to dominant values and norms," (Lee, 2014, p. 719). System intervention that detains youth risks contributing to accumulating disadvantage, since the youth is being separated from mainstream society and exposed to peers who may hold antisocial values (Axford, 2010). These institutions risk reducing the youth's sense of belonging when they prevent youth from fostering relationships with family, school, and community institutions, normative institutions which are more likely to align with dominant cultural values and social norms (Axford, 2010; Lee, 2014).

Institutional integrity refers to the coherence between institutions within an individual's institutional constellation (Clemens & Cook, 1999; Lee, 2014). The institutions of child welfare and juvenile justice reflect low institutional integrity. For example, the juvenile justice system itself faces competing mandates of child welfare and child punishment (Feld, 1999). Similarly, the child welfare system promotes the safety, permanency and well-being of children, which can be contradictory, such as when a child's safety is at direct odds with permanency (Pecora & Harrison-Jackson, 2016). The contradictory messages of these systems illustrate low institutional integrity. The addition of the juvenile justice and/or child welfare system to the dually-involved youth's institutional constellation increases the likelihood of poor institutional integrity. Consequently, the worsened state of the individual's institutional constellation can exacerbate developmental challenges and may hinder the acquisition of capabilities necessary for a successful transition into adulthood, thus representing a process of social exclusion (Lee, 2014).

System interventions often focus on the youth and do not

address poor institutional alignment and institutional integrity throughout the rest of the youth's institutional constellation. For example, caregiver factors that contribute to high risk for child welfare involvement include mental health, substance use, domestic violence, and a history of child abuse and maltreatment (Marcenko, Lyons, & Courtney, 2011; Staudt & Cherry, 2009). Many of these families are defined by their lack of resources, and thus are forced to focus on short-term survival, with serious implications for their children (Mitchell & Campbell, 2011). Children from excluded families may be socialized into a short-term survival mentality, but these skills can make it difficult to participate in the long-term (i.e., primary) labor market. Ultimately, a focus on the well-being of the youth involves a comprehensive assessment of and investment in the youth's institutional constellation.

Applying a Social Exclusion Framework to the Literature

The social exclusion framework draws attention to the processes operating within socializing institutions to exclude a youth (i.e., prevent the development of capabilities), the ways those institutions are also excluded (i.e., are disconnected and lack agency), and the ways the youth at the center of the institutional constellation is impacted by these dynamics.

Family Contexts

Dually-involved youth are commonly from disadvantaged families who may have common experiences of social exclusion, and may not have the agency to change their situation nor the capability to fully participate in society as a result of poverty and government policies. For example, a single mother working a minimum wage job may want to move to a larger apartment to provide enough space for her children, but if she works more hours in order to afford it, she may lose her eligibility for food stamps and Medicaid. The child welfare and juvenile justice systems are ill-equipped to provide sufficient support to the family system (Halemba et al., 2004; Howell, Kelly, Palmer, & Mangum, 2004; Krinsky & Liebmann, 2011; Mitchell & Campbell, 2011). Two studies provide examples of how the social exclusion framework extends study implications.

First, using data from assessment reports for dually-involved youth in Los Angeles County, Herz and Ryan (2008) sought to understand the relationship between certain factors (e.g., demographics, placement status, educational status, mental health problems, substance use issues, and juvenile justice involvement) and the outcomes of the 241.1 hearings. At the time of the study, the Los Angeles County law—Section 241.1(a) of the California Welfare and Institutions Code—required that youth who come into contact with the child welfare and juvenile justice system be placed in only one system. According to the study, "the following risk factors significantly increased the likelihood of becoming a delinquency ward: living with a relative or in a group home (versus living in a foster-care placement); having a history of running away from a placement; having previous 241.1 referrals; being detained at juvenile hall after arrest; and having a substance abuse problem" (Herz & Ryan, 2008, p. 6). The authors recommend changes to the juvenile court system, including more attention on the family to address long histories of problem behavior and damaged relationships.

Second, Ryan, Williams and Courtney (2013) hypothesized that youths with a juvenile offense and maltreatment history would have higher recidivism rates than youths without a maltreatment history. The authors analyzed administrative data and found that dually-involved youth (those with an active child welfare case) had a higher risk of delinquency recidivism than crossover youth (those with a closed child welfare case). The authors also proposed that the type of neglect adolescents experience is fundamentally different from the neglect that children experience; for older youth, parental neglect is often about outright conflict in the parent-child relationship (an act of commission) rather than inadequate supervision (an act of omission) for younger youth. The child welfare system is designed to address acts of omission on behalf of the parents rather than the acts of commission such as a parent-child relational issues that can be a byproduct of the neglect. Thus, if neglect is a parent-child relational issue for adolescents, this would imply a need for interventions that address family dynamics, rather than those that focus on individual behaviors.

Both studies highlight the lack of institutional integrity

for dually-involved youth, as reflected in the conflicting messaging that these youth receive as both a dependent and a delinquent. Services depend on whether a youth is a dependent or delinquent, so that dually-involved youth are likely to receive fractured services. This lack of integrated services will complicate the development of capabilities necessary to succeed in adulthood. Thus, the Los Angeles County 241.1 law, in ensuring that the youth retains status in one system, may be useful in eliminating the conflicting messages, thereby increasing coherence of services and institutional integrity. Yet, the law prevents dually-involved youth assigned to the juvenile justice system from retaining their status as dependents, therefore sublimating needs associated with the youth's past abuse or neglect. This policy raises questions about the youth's ability to build trusting and meaningful connections to other positive adult figures without addressing prior trauma. In other words, these roles of dependent and delinquent, and the way the system responds to a youth with these dual roles, may negatively impact the youth's development of capabilities and ultimately, sense of belonging.

Both studies usefully draw attention to the family context. Herz and Ryan (2008) highlight the failure to account for the family context when assigning youth to the jurisdiction of either the child welfare or the juvenile justice system, as well as when prescribing the interventions they receive. Ryan et al. (2013) use social capital and social control theory to hypothesize that consistent investments from parents and other key socializing agents are critical to healthy development, and thus for preventing delinquency. This perspective highlights the role these investments play in "instill[ing] a sense of attachment and commitment that tie children to family members and conventional role models" (Ryan et al., 2013, p. 4553). In other words, these investments develop important social connections for these youths and help instill a sense of belonging.

While drawing attention to the family highlights the importance of those relationships in developing a youth's capabilities, a social exclusion perspective situates the family within the larger institutional context. Many of these families experience multiple forms of social exclusion, including economic and spatial exclusion (Bynner, 2001; Marcenko, Hook,

Romich, & Lee, 2012; Mitchell & Campbell, 2011). A social exclusion framework identifies the structural forces that prevent families from accessing the requisite services, information, and time to nurture their child(ren). Thus, a social exclusion framework indicates the need to work with the family to increase their capabilities so that they can adequately care for and socialize their children.

School Contexts

Dually-involved youth require increased academic and behavioral support to meet school expectations (Gonsoulin, Darwin, & Read, 2012). One study that draws attention to the youth's school context is Ryan, Testa and Zhai's (2008) study, which examined the risk for delinquency among 287 African American male foster youth between the ages of 11 and 16 in Cook County, Illinois using measures of attachment, commitment, and permanency. The authors accessed administrative data from both the child welfare and juvenile justice system, including demographics, maltreatment reports, child welfare services, and information pertaining to delinquency petitions. They also conducted surveys, interviews, and computer-assisted self-interviews with both youth and their caregivers. The authors identified foster parent-foster child attachment and commitment to socializing institutions such as church and school as the most important protective factors. On the other hand, the authors indicated that lack of commitment to school and church as well as school suspensions were the primary risk factors associated with an increased likelihood that foster youth engage in delinquency.

A more recent study conducted by Lee and Villagrana (2015) also focused on risk and protective factors, but compared them for dually-involved and non-dually-involved youth in a large urban county. Using administrative records, the authors concluded that dually-involved youth had higher risk and lower protective factors than non-dually-involved youth, and that dually-involved youth engaged in delinquency at an earlier age than non-dually-involved youth. Lee and Villagrana (2015) also found that "poor academic achievement, patterns of truancy and suspension, disruption in school, and an absence of an educational program increased the risk of recidivism for both groups of youth" (p. 25). Thus, the authors

suggest the importance of collaboration between the education system and the dependency system in order to "interrupt the pathways into juvenile offending" (Lee & Villagrana, 2015, p. 26).

Both studies highlight the importance of the school system in preventing delinquency among dually-involved youth. Indicators of broken connections with the schools, such as a lack of commitment, suspensions, truancy, and poor academic achievement, were key factors related to delinquency. Thus, the authors recommend that child welfare professionals "facilitate and maintain youth involvement" with schools (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 136). A social exclusion framework, however, would draw attention to the dynamic ways the school environment may contribute to the youth's lack of success in school and eventual disconnection. If there were institutional integrity in the youth's institutional constellation, her experiences at school would reinforce her experiences with her families and neighborhoods, as well as the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. A lack of institutional integrity would occur if the school is aligned to pro-social norms and values but families and/or neighborhoods are not. Moreover, if the youth feels she must hide her experiences with the child welfare and juvenile justice system at school, the school can become a structural force that contributes to feelings of alienation—psychological exclusion—among dually-involved youth.

Similarly, Lee and Villagrana (2015) acknowledge the connection between the challenges that dually-involved youth face in school and their subsequent delinquent behavior. However, when youth are suspended from school, they are prevented from developing internal capabilities necessary to transition to adulthood. This may be a key, early step in the youth's eventual "catastrophic detachment from society" (Axford, 2010, p. 738). Moreover, the school's exercise of control diminishes the agency of dually-involved youth, and are often one aspect of a larger process of excluding problematic children—regardless of what has happened to them—out of the very institutions that are critical to the development of their capabilities. This process is the opposite of cultivating a sense of belonging.

Neighborhood Contexts

While the child welfare and juvenile justice systems

influence the lives of dually-involved youth during their childhoods, their neighborhoods and communities are salient institutional structures both before and after system involvement. The institutional constellations of many dually-involved youth include neighborhoods that contribute to poor institutional alignment. Two studies that highlight the neighborhood context illustrate the application and usefulness of our proposed social exclusion framework.

First, Abrams, Shannon, and Sangalang (2008) sought to understand the impact of a transitional living program as well as past child protective services involvement on recidivism rates among felony-level juvenile offenders who have reentered an urban community in the upper Midwest. The six-week program focused on promoting independent living skills through case management while the youth transitioned back to work and school environments. The authors found that the transitional living program did not make a significant difference on recidivism rates at one year post-release, but rather, program participants were slightly more likely to recidivate than non-participants. Moreover, dually-involved youth were more likely to recidivate than their corrections-only peers. The authors concluded that skills learned in the absence of critical relationships and contexts appeared to be ineffective (Abrams et al., 2008), reflecting the harm of the spatial exclusion youth experience when removed from their families and communities.

Second, a later theoretical article by Abrams and Snyder (2010) argues that patterns of juvenile crime are shaped by neighborhood disadvantages, such as lack of affordable housing and employment, incidence of community violence, and availability of alcohol and drugs. The authors emphasize neighborhood effects—the results of living in one neighborhood that those living in another neighborhood would not experience—to understand youth delinquency in general, and the poor outcomes of dually-involved youth, in particular. The authors suggest that family interventions alone might be insufficient because they fail to "target the larger neighborhood institutions and structures that affect youth and family well-being" (Abrams & Snyder, 2010, p. 1789). Rather, the authors posit that ecologically-driven juvenile reentry interventions

are needed to substantially reduce repeat offending.

Both articles recognize that the community environment powerfully influences the opportunities, or lack thereof, that dually-involved youth are able to access long before and long after their system involvement. Thus, the authors suggest that excluded communities contribute to the exclusion of youth by preventing their development of capabilities. Moreover, both studies acknowledge the unique challenges faced by dually-involved youth who experience placement instability, which contributes to their social, psychological, and spatial exclusion, and a growing lack of a sense of belonging. Thus, even the best-designed transition services that target individuals will be ineffective as long as youth return to contexts and systems that are disempowered and disempowering.

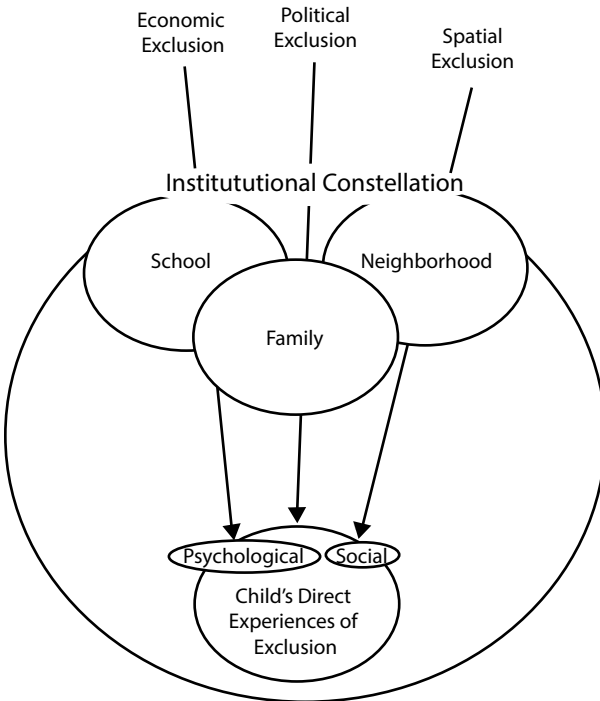
To improve the effectiveness of transitional living services for dually-involved youth Abrams et al. (2008) suggest closing the "practical and logistical gaps in reentry plans" (2008, p. 533). The authors believe the gaps result from youth returning to a largely unchanged community where they may associate with peers and influences that prevent them from reaching the goals set forth in their reentry plans (Abrams et al., 2008). Thus, prescribing reentry plans that assume the individual youth has the agency to either change their environment or abandon their community altogether may not be effective. These communities may provide the youth with a familiar source of belonging—potentially a stronger sense of belonging than other, pro-social institutions. Even if time away from the community has enabled the youth to develop internal capabilities, without a community context that allows the youth to express those capabilities, the youth has not acquired the combined capability. Therefore, instead of focusing solely on equipping dually-involved youth with internal capabilities, more needs to be done to improve opportunities in their excluded communities.

The Stages of Social Exclusion for Dually-Involved Youth

We propose three stages of social exclusion for dually-involved youth, which reflect a process of accumulating disadvantage. We propose these stages as a heuristic for

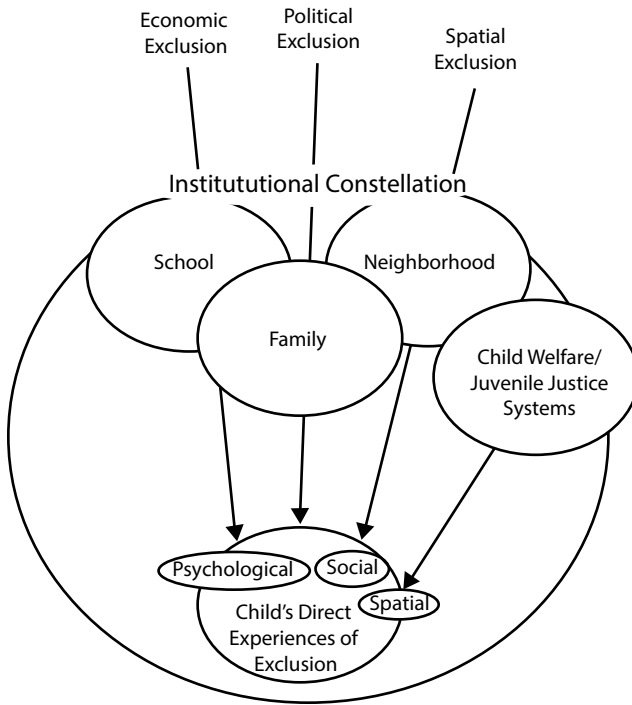
critically examining the social exclusion of youth rather than as a prescriptive or predictive set of experiences that all dually-involved youth will experience.

Figure 1. First Stage of Social Exclusion.



The three stages, depicted in figures 1-3, are defined by a combination of the type of exclusion (psychological, social, spatial, economic, and political) and proximity of exclusion (proximal versus distal). As an individual moves from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood, accumulating disadvantage contributes to exclusion in additional domains, reflecting the interconnected nature of developing (or failing to develop) capabilities across various domains (Sen, 1999). For example, a child who is deprived of elementary capabilities, such as malnourishment from poverty, may struggle to pay attention in school and thus fail to become literate, which may then limit her ability to read news analyses and engage in the political process with thoughtful confidence.

Figure 2. Second Stage of Social Exclusion: Public System Intervention

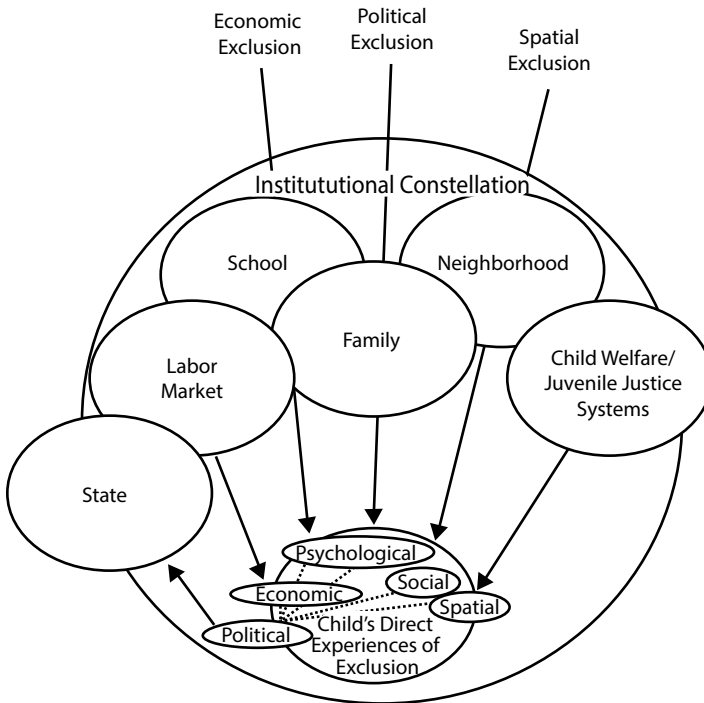


In stage one, depicted in figure 1, the youth primarily experiences psychological and social exclusion, while being affected by the spatial, economic, and/or political exclusion of his most proximal socializing institutions, the family, school and neighborhood. The development of "internal capability usually requires favorable external conditions; indeed it very often requires practicing the actual function" (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 85). Thus, the excluded family, school, and/or neighborhood are contexts that are unlikely to facilitate the development of the child's capabilities. For example, a child will experience the deprivation of elementary capabilities that accompany poverty through a family that is economically disconnected. Or, an adolescent will experience a lack of job opportunities through his neighborhood that is spatially excluded.

The second stage, depicted in figure 2, reflects the intervention of the child welfare and/or juvenile justice

systems, and may bring the direct experience of spatial exclusion to the child if she is removed from the home, school, and community. Spatial exclusion is especially likely for juvenile justice youth, especially those with a child welfare history, since they are more likely to be placed in detention than other youth (Ryan, Herz, Hernandez, & Marshall, 2007). This unstable context results in disrupted relationships and weakened attachments to normative institutions, and is not likely to facilitate the development of internal capabilities.

Figure 3. Third Stage of Social Exclusion: The Transition to Adulthood



In the third stage, depicted in figure 3, the youth begins to directly experience economic and political exclusion as he is making the transition to adulthood. In particular, youth who age out of these systems are expected to be economically independent between the ages of 18-21 (before their peers will have graduated from postsecondary school). However, their prior experiences of exclusion may have prevented them from

developing the capabilities (e.g., acquiring the necessary human capital such as high school diploma, postsecondary degree, or internships) necessary to participate in the long-term job market. Furthermore, they may experience political exclusion if they are working on the secondary labor market and may not have work schedules conducive to voting or may not have a driver's license. Additionally, these young adults may experience political exclusion as a result of their other experiences of exclusion. For example, welfare participants have been characterized as a group with low political participation, and evidence suggests that this is related to their belief that they "will not be heard because, as welfare recipients, they occupy a degraded status" (Soss, 1999, p. 371). Thus, welfare participants neither feel valued nor believe that they can make a contribution, and thus are deprived of the capability to exercise their political rights.

While young children may initially experience exclusion through their families, schools, and neighborhoods, these social contexts contribute to the prevention of their ability to develop capabilities. These youths experience accumulating disadvantage as they begin to directly experience additional types of exclusion, ultimately resulting in their own social exclusion through underdeveloped capabilities as they transition to adulthood.

Implications for Practice and Future Directions

This social exclusion framework for dually-involved youth encourages a holistic approach by focusing on the institutional constellations that are operating for each youth. By focusing interventions and services on the individual, current approaches may inadvertently employ "victim blaming" (Taket et al., 2009, p. 191). Rather, to ensure the youth's development of capabilities and a sense of belonging, the social institutions operating in the youth's life must receive broad investments and be calibrated to ensure both institutional alignment and institutional integrity. Research has found that children at high risk for social exclusion benefitted the most from in-community services rather than specialty services (Buchanan, 2006). Therefore, investments in families, schools, and neighborhoods will send

messages of value to young people at risk of becoming involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, while also creating opportunities for them to develop the combined capabilities needed to thrive as adults. Such a broad approach of investments will foster belonging, which is "a consequential motivator of human behavior" (Prilleltensky, 2014, p. 152). For example, policies that create universal preschool and after-school programs represent investments in children and youth that cultivate their sense of worth and capabilities, which can replace mechanisms of social exclusion with mechanisms of social belonging (Heymann & Earle, 2011).

Future research can test this proposed framework by focusing on "the dynamic experiences of moving into and out of exclusion and connectedness, to better understand how to foster connectedness and reduce exclusion" (Taket et al., 2009, p. 192). Such studies might include efforts to operationalize the three elements of social exclusion by examining how a youth's social networks, capabilities, and sense of belonging evolve over time. Next, studies might conduct measurement work to create a measure of social exclusion, likely measured through latent constructs. Finally, studies would examine whether social exclusion is related to participatory adult outcomes. Additionally, future work should consider an intersectional lens when examining institutional processes.

A social exclusion framework is necessary to create structural transformation for both social work practice and research (Gil, 1998). It contextualizes an individual within their structural environment while acknowledging the fluidity of time. Most importantly, it provides a critical analysis of power dynamics that need to be disrupted in order to create a more socially inclusive society that cultivates equal capabilities for each youth, and convinces each youth that they belong.

Acknowledgement: We thank Suzette O'Donnell for her hard work collecting and reviewing articles.

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