

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

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Abstract: The process of social exclusion influences social conditions in various – often multiply connected – ways. In the case of social groups endangered by exclusion relations with society, with actors of economic life, with institutions or individuals can be degraded by the effect of numerous factors. Processes leading to exclusion are essentially influenced by the attributes and operation of social or welfare systems and the characteristics of economic structures. Besides, social and economic “shocks” like times of crisis might also have a significant impact on risks of social exclusion. Several aspects of the influence of current economic crisis on social processes can directly be revealed by various changes affecting labour market and social service systems. Nevertheless, many indirect effects on wider social conditions might appear only in a long run, and the course and outcome of these processes is still unclear now.

The paper focuses on presenting spatial patterns of social exclusion in Europe related to various domains of the phenomenon (e.g. earning a living, access to basic services, social environment and political participation) by considering the spatial aspects of peripherality at different geographical scales or rurality. Besides, it has an especial regard to socio-spatial changes of the past years in order to investigate the relationship between changing spatial patterns of exclusion and the potential impact of economic crisis. In addition to the identification of current crisis effects, the paper aims to illustrate what are those vulnerabilities which might be critical factors of social exclusion in a longer run.