

International Workshop
**Impact of Poverty and Social Exclusion on Children's Lives
and their Well-being**
8th – 9th September 2008 (til noon), Bratislava, Slovakia

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Abstract

Title: Understanding agency in counteracting social exclusion in spite of situational constraints

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Theoretical approaches to child poverty and social exclusion: how children and young people negotiate transition processes, adversity and turning points when their life situation puts them at risk for social exclusion. There is a need for theoretical development in ways that combine a structural understanding with a social and an individual one, or how children and young people act in order to try and create a life they can construct for themselves as coherent and also dignified, and how their strategies engage with and relate to situational constraints. Whereas we know a lot about who are at risk for experiencing poverty, and what the adverse effects of particularly long-term poverty are, we still are not able to explain well enough why the outcomes for the children and young people vary with regard to mental health, school achievement, and later successful transitions to adult life. I think further studies of the variations and patterns in the negotiated processes of the children and young people themselves is one way to go to learn more about this variation. I would like to discuss a combination of theories of social exclusion, of social networks and social capital, and of resilience, coping, empowerment and capabilities in Sen's terms, which I am working at presently in relation to young people leaving public care.

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