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Inclusion Around the Globe

Gertz, S. K., Huang, B. & Cyr. L. (Eds.) (2018): Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education and Societal Contexts, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education and Societal Contexts was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2018. The volume aims to highlight international and interdisciplinary approaches to the current challenges in connection with diversity and inclusion. Three scholars at different levels of their scientific careers were engaged in the editorial process. *Sun-Hee Kim Gertz* is a Professor Emerita, *Betsy Huang* is an Associate Professor, whereas *Lauren Cyr* is a PhD student at Clark University, USA.

The book comprises of fifteen chapters with various genres, including scientific studies, reports, and interviews. The editors intended to scrutinize various areas; thus, the volume encompasses fields of higher education, science, business, law, health care, social services culture and arts. It may seem an eclectic and arbitrary collection, but the diverse parts are underpinned by the same agendas of ensuring inclusion and providing civilized spaces for everyone.

In terms of the geographical scope, the editors intended to include current issues from most continents. Nevertheless, Europe and North America are overrepresented, whereas other continents receive less attention. It should be emphasized, however, that the presence of several issues related to Africa, Asia and Latin-America enhance the value of the publication. The selection of the contributing authors may reflect personal connections with the Clark University or the editors' special interests in the fields, but the broad range of professions represented offers a multifaceted overview of diversity and inclusion around the globe in the past decade. Among the contributors there are senior government officials, scholars, artists, legal advisors, and health care professionals.

The theoretical background of the studies relies heavily on the notions of structural violence, structural frailty, and structural competency (a term used specifically in connection with issues related to health care). Social, economic, and political systems may expose particular populations to risks and vulnerability or may restrict their access to certain goods and opportunities in various ways. In this framework, particular pressing issues of income inequality, lack of access, racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia should be addressed. The various studies presented in the book also highlight the crucial importance of participation, the 'lifeblood' of inclusive democracy. Eliminating inequities in education receives special attention based on the theories and policies outlined by studies of Bauman and his colleagues in 2005 (BAUMAN et.al., 2005).

One of the most important assets of this valuable publication is that several authors tackle the most widespread fallacies and misconceptions about inclusion. It is a common approach that with certain projects and interventions inclusion is achievable, goals can be set and met, resulting in a new type of co-existence that functions perfectly and automatically. This 'project-based' way of thinking is not a fruitful approach and may prove to be particularly risky and counterproductive. As *Cardemill* defines it in one of the chapters, the

way forward is to realize that inclusion is not an outcome, but a process. This conclusion is strikingly similar to the interpretation of inclusivity by the processed-based model of Varga from the University of Pécs (Varga & Arató, 2015) and the conceptual framework elaborated by Milem and his colleagues (Milem et.al., 2005). Inclusion should not be deemed as a zero-sum game, but a win-win situation. This affirmation is also in parallel with the concepts outlined by researchers from Pécs (Varga & Arató, 2015). As pointed out by Hurtado in 1994, diversity and inclusion are beneficial for all students in the educational context, whereas exclusion means that the social and cultural experiences of students are severely restricted (Hurtado et al., 1994). Inclusion requires commitment (Milem et al., 2005) and active involvement and innovation at organizational levels (Williams et al., 2005). It may happen that in a certain country continuously maintained inclusive policies are more like an exception than the norm if there is a lack of commitment to the principles of inclusion and particularly, insight into how inclusive policies should be sustained.

The essential take-home message of the surveys presented in the book is that inclusion needs constant oversight. Inclusion should never be considered as a completed achievement. The same observation was pointed out by Aranka Varga in 2015: inclusion is a continuous process that has no beginning or end, it is not a campaign, but a constant effort that must be maintained over the course of time (Varga, 2015). The various chapters of the volume present a fragmentary, yet many-sided and exciting global picture about the most pressing points and dilemmas concerning the constant provision and oversight of diversity and inclusion.

One of the chief merits of the volume is the reflection on recent courses of events that have required adequate responses to promote diversity and inclusion. The crisis of mass migration in 2015 tested the commitment and the logistic capacities of various European nations. *Dominique Faber,* senior government official from Luxembourg reports on his country's response to the mass influx of refugees in 2015 and the steps taken to promote the inclusion of the newcomers to Luxembourgian society. The *Diversity Charter* approved by the country's legislation in 2012 is a salient example of the crucially important part that legislative and executive powers may play in the efforts to establish the legal framework for inclusion. It should also be noted, however, that based on Faber's report one of the most apparent reasons for the remarkable achievements of handling this challenging situation was the concept that inclusion happens most efficiently at levels of the local communities.

Political changes may open new horizons or decrease the opportunities for strengthening inclusive processes. The summary assessing the situation of inclusion in Turkey in the past decade is a spectacular example of the decisive influence that political will or reluctance may have on the prevalence of inclusion. PhD student, *Sayouglu* presents how The Democratization Package proposed by the Turkish government and approved by Turkish legislation in 2013 aimed to end longstanding policies of assimilation towards certain minorities. The fragility of the process is also hinted at, taking into consideration that after the coup attempt and the hardening of government positions the fate of inclusive policies remains uncertain.

Even in countries that are deemed pioneers and forerunners of inclusion, new ideas and approaches are needed to maintain a culture of inclusivity. The studies of *Henry F. Fradella* and *Alfred Hornung* survey the opportunities of providing conditions for inclusively diverse learning and various supporting strategies at different stages of education. Offering diversity-themed lecture series, offering different perspectives, visiting professorships, forming multicultural teaching staff, reorganizing systems of grants may require appropriate allocation of resources and a dedicated organization.

Judging from the context of inclusion, providing equal access is paramount. A study on the access to health care services in the US surveys this field. *Esther L. Jones* compares the

situation of structural frailty and structural competencies in the health care systems of the United States and sub-Saharan countries in Africa. Jones argues that there are 'promising examples of community-based health practices in African countries that the health care system of the US could learn from to provide a more equitable health care service. Therefore, structural frailty may stimulate strategies of structural competency.

Barriers may be reproduced on a daily basis. The inclusion of differently abled, handicapped people is still on the agenda even in countries that have long-standing traditions of developing theories and practices of inclusion. A case study at Luxembourg International University highlights how barriers may be reproduced. This inspection carried out by *Powell* and *Pfahl* detect 'glaring failures' in the provision of equal access and opportunities for differently abled people at Luxembourg's flagship university and call for a barrier removal philosophy. These shortcomings range from tactile pavements ending at university entrance points to restricted wheelchair accessibility of certain areas of lecture halls.

A special treat of the book is the involvement of artistic viewpoints. An interview with artist, *Natasha Marin* brings into focus the often-forgotten situation of Native Americans as well. For Marin, art is a form of resistance. Born in Trinidad and with experience of living in various countries and continents, Marin contributed considerably to raising awareness in connection with diversity-related issues with her unique ways of artistic expression. The account of her commitment to defy racist internet trolling is particularly worth getting acquainted with.

Several questions raised by the authors of the book may spark debates and discussions in professional circles and may be taken on by public interest groups as well. *Betsy Huang* discusses the backlash towards inclusive policies. She draws attention to an alarming tendency, especially observable in the United States, that diversity-based initiatives and diversity-themed trainings at companies often encounter aversion, unwillingness, resentment, even hostility. Analyzing the reasons may call for further research and open discussions. It remains unclear whether this phenomenon is due to a general reluctance towards trainings, or it may be concluded that it happens owing to a cultural insensitivity that still characterizes many societies despite all the efforts made to make inclusion prevail. Counterproductive legislative tendencies should also be noted, such as the recent ban of the misinterpreted and stigmatized 'LMBTQ-propaganda' in several states of the USA, or in Hungary.

In conclusion, this book is highly recommended for professionals of various disciplines and the greater public as well. Its studies may provide excellent course materials and recommended readings for different areas of university studies. Its potentials in connection with raising awareness about diverse aspects of issues of inequalities and topics related to diversity and inclusion cannot be underestimated. On the other hand, conclusions of the different studies may persuade professionals of different fields to initiate further research concerning the themes brought to the agenda. Last but not least, it should be appreciated that the volume contains hundreds of references and works cited, which is a real treasury for further immersion in the related fields.

Literature

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