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BOOK REVIEW

Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities: National and International Perspectives by Arie Rimmerman

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013

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Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities: National and International Perspectives proposes a multifaceted approach to the topic of disability rights. Arie Rimmerman avoids the sole reliance on qualitative methods to analyse the social inclusion and exclusion of people with disabilities, differing from many existing studies that frequently relate only to access to adequate resources or conditions. This book also differs from the usual legal analysis of social inclusion and exclusion as a human rights issue, combined with the study of anti-discrimination or equal opportunity policies and legislation. Rimmerman not only uses both approaches, but also proposes an interpretation of historical and cultural roots of social exclusion of people with disabilities. This approach includes considering an in-depth view of expressions of stereotypes that are obstacles to implementation of the domestic and international policies and law.

The central thesis of this book is that the traditional stereotypes of people with disabilities are still important for understanding the context of social inclusion, even if there is growing awareness of the new disability rights. The book provides a timely discussion about implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 December 2006. As of July 2015, it has 159 signatories and 157 parties, which makes it one of the most ratified treaties in the human rights system. This book is one of the first publications that attempts to comprehensively assess early impressions of the CRPD's impact. This book should be particularly interesting for students, scholars, and practitioners related to disability rights organizations, social policy, and social work.

Rimmerman's work offers a clear framework of the relationship between the origin of negative stereotypes and their influence, including how they serve as obstacles to the

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implementation of strategies for social inclusion. The book is organized into nine chapters and divided into two parts. Each chapter contains a brief description of the topics and a summary of the most important conclusions. These two parts are like inseparable sides of the same coin; the first is more theoretical and based on historical analysis, social theory, and cultural studies. The second part shows another side of the topic by focusing on empirical cases and providing a literature review of policies and legislation. In general, the first part of the book contains basic explanations of social inclusion and disability concepts. It includes a brief history of disability, discussion about terms related to social inclusion and exclusion, and a comprehensive analysis of stereotypes of disabled people that were widely popularized by the media. The second part of the book provides a critical analysis of domestic and global social and legal strategies used to increase social inclusion of people with disabilities.

One of the advantages of this book is its relatively easy and accessible language, making it a useful introduction to international social policy on disability rights issues. For instance, it outlines transitions from the moral/ religious model and the medical model to the social functional model of disability, as well as the shift from social welfare to human rights legislation and policies. (Notably, however, this book contains a brief analysis of the historical roots of disability that is based mainly on the Eurocentric perspective; an intercultural approach would greatly enhance this discussion.) The book also contains a concise presentation of paradigms and dimensions of social exclusion and an analysis of its interrelations with social capital, as well as standardized measures of social inclusion and exclusion of people with disabilities using illustrative cases from the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. This was supplemented by the thought-provoking presentation of the possibilities of the qualitative, non-indicator approach, which is used in the labour market and mental health studies on disability. Interestingly, Chapter 4 also contains an extensive list of examples of how classical literature, television, print media, advertisement campaigns, and Hollywood film roles influence the persistence of stereotypes.

The second part of a book shows not only domestic and international indicators of social inclusion, but also new directions in research and practice. This section divides strategies of social integration of people with disabilities into: social protection policy (including labor market interventions and social insurance schemes) and social capital policy (including families and communities of people with disabilities). Further barriers to translating the CRPD into practical gains in employment and social and civic participation are described by analyzing and comparing the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, the United Kingdom's Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 and the Equality Act of 2010, and Israel's Equal Rights for Persons with Disability Law of 1998. In addition, an examination of the CRPD in the context of social inclusion includes principles of the CRPD, application to domestic law, policy and courts, and examples of the gaps in consistency with the CRPD. Obstacles include, for instance, the need for more detailed domestic legislation, the lack of awareness of the rights of people with disabilities, the lack of accessibility, the old and current public policies, the current national budget systems. Finally, the book contains useful categorization of strategies for changing stereotypes of people with disabilities, which include macro-interventions (such as guidelines for adequately portraying people with disabilities in

the media) and micro-strategies (that address particular issues such as progressive advertising and evidence-based practices on a local level).

Another interesting feature of this book – which could use further attention – is the proposition of fostering the social capital of people with disabilities, which may be significant in the search for employment and overcome difficulties in interpersonal relationships. However, this concept could have been presented in more detail, for example, by providing an analysis of social movements – including the activism of individuals with disabilities, non-governmental organizations, and the social economy entities that often provide employment, social services, and advocacy for disability rights. Also, a brief mention of online communities could have been expanded with more examples of innovative projects from the field of bridging digital divides.