SOCIAL INCLUSION
OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

National and International Perspectives

Social inclusion is often used interchangeably with the terms social cohesion, social integration, and social participation, positioning social exclusion as the opposite. The latter is a contested term that refers to a wide range of phenomena and processes related to poverty and deprivation, but it is also used in relation to marginalized people and places. This book consists of two parts: The first aims to review the domestic and international historical roots and conceptual base of disability, as well as the expressions of social exclusion of people with disabilities that interfere in their efforts to exercise their rights in society. It offers a comprehensive review of social and legal approaches to social exclusion and inclusion. The second part introduces and analyzes domestic and international social and legal strategies to promote social inclusion for people with disabilities. The closing chapter highlights the roles of morality, law, science, and media and technology in achieving social inclusion.

Arie Rimmerman is Richard Crossman Professor of Social Welfare and Social Planning and former Dean of Social Welfare and Health Sciences and Head of the School of Social Work at the University of Haifa, Israel. He is an internationally well-known researcher in social policy and disability who has lectured at several universities in the United States and Europe, including the University of Pennsylvania, Syracuse University, and Charles University in Prague. He has published seven books and hundreds of peer-reviewed articles and research reports in Israel, the United States, Europe, and Australia. He has served as an advisor to ministers of labour and welfare in Israel and public committees on disabilities in Israel, Europe, and the United States. He is the recipient of the Lehman Award (1987), the William Trump Award (1998), the International Award of the American Association on Mental Retardation (1999), and the Burton Blatt Leadership Award (2006).
Cambridge Disability Law and Policy Series

The Cambridge Disability Law and Policy series examines these topics in interdisciplinary and comparative terms. The books in the series reflect the diversity of definitions, causes, and consequences of discrimination against persons with disabilities while illuminating fundamental themes that unite countries in their pursuit of human rights laws and policies to improve the social and economic status of persons with disabilities. The series contains historical, contemporary, and comparative scholarship crucial to identifying individual, organizational, cultural, attitudinal, and legal themes necessary for the advancement of disability law and policy.

The book topics covered in the series also are reflective of the new moral and political commitment by countries throughout the world toward equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in such areas as employment, housing, transportation, rehabilitation, and individual human rights. The series will thus play a significant role in informing policy makers, researchers, and citizens of issues central to disability rights and disability antidiscrimination policies. The series grounds the future of disability law and policy as a vehicle for ensuring that those living with disabilities participate as equal citizens of the world.

Books in the Series:
Larry M. Logue and Peter Blanck, *Race, Ethnicity, and Disability: Veterans and Benefits in Post–Civil War America*, 2010
Alicia Ouellette, *Bioethics and Disability: Toward a Disability-Conscious Bioethics*, 2011
Eliza Varney, *Disability and Information Technology: A Comparative Study in Media Regulation*, 2013
Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Arie Rimmerman

University of Haifa
To my wife, Shula Rimmerman, for her love, compassion, and wisdom
CONTENTS

Foreword by Gerard Quinn page xi
Preface xiii
Acknowledgments xvii

1 Introduction ........................................ 1

PART 1: SOCIAL INCLUSION AND DISABILITY

2 Historical Roots and Conceptualising Disability .......... 9
3 Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion ................... 33
4 Media and Disability, Disability Culture, and Digital Divide ..................................... 55

PART 2: STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION

5 Social Strategies to Promote Social Inclusion: Social Protection and Social Capital ......................... 81
6 National Disability Rights: Instruments and Measures to Promote Social Inclusion ........................... 103
7 The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: A Comprehensive Instrument to Promote Social Inclusion .................................................. 126
## Contents

8 Strategies for Changing Media Stereotypes and Bridging Digital Divides ................................................. 149

9 Closing Remarks .................................. 176

Index ...................................................... 183
FOREWORD

It is my great pleasure to write the foreword to this book. It has been remarked that persons with disabilities – especially those with intellectual disabilities – are just emerging from a form of ‘civil death’ throughout the world. Instead of being regarded as ‘objects’ to be managed or cared for, they are finally being acknowledged and treated as autonomous human ‘subjects’ in their own right. Of course we are all agreed about the need to move from ‘object’ to ‘subject’. But that begs the question What does it mean to be a human subject?

It turns out that morality, law, and science intersect positively on this core question. From a moral point of view, we are all agreed that personhood is not something experienced in isolation but is in fact shared and best developed in community. From a legal point of view, we now have an innovative right to live independently and be included in the community under international law – a useful conjunction of two seemingly separate ideals. And contemporary neuroscience emphasises the extent to which the mind is a ‘relational’ idea – an ideal that is best nourished in community. Building bridges between people holds the key to human flourishing in general and particularly in the context of intellectual disability where the ‘mystic cords of memory’ that connect people have been shattered through needless isolation and segregation. For a long time these deep questions about personhood and flourishing could be – and were – ignored. They certainly did not figure prominently in any of the existing UN human rights treaties, which focus more on power and the intersection of the individual and the State. But they simply could not be avoided in the drafting of the landmark UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

Taking personhood seriously is the leitmotiv of the UN CRPD. That is why it seeks to restore power to people with disabilities over their own
Foreword

lives through reform of legal incapacity laws throughout the world. And that is why the convention is now emblazoned with a headline provision on the right to live independently and be included in the community – something that requires a revolution in how services are imagined and delivered. Indeed, it is probably fair to say that we really do need to break away from the language of ‘needs’ and ‘services’ and begin reflecting more intensively on how services can truly subserve the higher goal of enabling people to live the life they want and become much more directly accountable to these people. None of this will happen unless a way can be found to unlock resources currently tied up in institutions to better serve people in the community and through generally accessible community services. But maybe the biggest challenge of all – the one that can pay most dividends if handled correctly – will be to reconnect people to the naturally occurring social capital in their own communities. And this won’t happen unless popularly portrayed images of people with disabilities change. The need to do so is both a moral imperative and also a precondition for successful inclusion. Indeed, the CRPD also requires States to ‘nurture receptiveness to the rights of persons with disabilities’.

The value of this book is that it probes the problematic nature of social exclusion experienced by persons with disabilities; it explores what living independently and living in the community actually mean and it takes analysis to the next level of examining strategies and means for the achievement of inclusion. In its own way it contributes to the worldwide debate and process of ending ‘civil death’ and finding innovative ways of ensuring the human flourishing of the individual in community regardless of disability. This book has global significance as all countries take the next step to implement the right to live independently and be included in the community. It continues the great humanitarian tradition of Stanley Herr and keeps his memory alive in the best possible way – by pointing to new ways of extending the blessings of freedom to all.

Gerard Quinn
Galway, Ireland
PREFACE

This book is my conceptual review and search for national and international perspectives of social inclusion and disability. Social inclusion has numerous interpretations with respect to people with disabilities. Most of the researchers define social inclusion in relation to social exclusion and believe that they are actually two sides of the same coin. However, there are also other interpretations that do not see the two on the same continuum and prefer to see them separately. Social scientists have the tendency to express social inclusion in terms of social or economic measures, arguing that it is actually dependent on availability of adequate resources or conditions. If there is lack of such resources, there is a need to provide them. Legal scholars see social inclusion as a human rights issue and call for antidiscrimination policies or equal opportunity legislation. This book offers my interpretation as an international researcher who has been involved in the disability area for more than three decades.

My interest in writing this book began in the early 2000s after completing with Stanley Herr research of the disability strike in Israel in 2000. Our article, which analysed portrayals of the first major disability strike as it appeared in the printed media, pointed out that the public held traditional stereotypes of people with disabilities despite their growing awareness of the new disability rights legislation of 1998.1

In 2005, I initiated the first Israeli study on social and civic participation of people with disabilities as compared to those without disabilities using international comparable instrumentation. The results confirmed my earlier impression that compared to people without disabilities, people with disabilities experienced significantly lower social and civic participation rates and felt that the primary obstacles were social exclusion and the lack of economic resources. This national research encouraged me to explore social and legal strategies to promote social inclusion of people with disabilities.

Two years later, I was fortunate to be involved in the Digital Freedom Project in Norway with other international experts including Rune Halvorsen, Bjorn Hvinden, Gerard Quinn, and Peter Blanck. The project addressed the importance of international policies geared towards e-Accessibility and e-Inclusion of people with disabilities. It demonstrated not only the potential of information and communications technology (ICT) to citizens in Europe and the United States but also the concerns of whether the available technological facilities, products, and services are usable by all people and whether ICT could provide the necessary and appropriate adjustments of the social environment to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

I began writing the book proposal after being invited by the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications to teach a graduate course on ‘Mass Media and Disability’. This course provides an overview of the literature and research on mass media and disabilities with a focus on analysis of images of people with disabilities as reflected in television, radio, newspapers, and films, and the changes that have occurred in disability imagery over the years. The course provided an insightful look at the sources of social exclusion as they appeared in images and stereotypes of people with disabilities in the United States.

This book explores the historical roots of social exclusion of people with disabilities, conceptualisation of social inclusion, expressions of

---


3 The project was funded by the Research Council of Norway, The Welfare Research Program (Grant No. 172472/S20).
Preface

images and stereotypes, and appearance in the print and digital media. Furthermore, it provides a critical analysis of domestic and global social and legal strategies used to increase social inclusion of people with disabilities.

Arie Rimmerman
Haifa, Israel
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book was made possible by generous support from my research staff at the Richard Crossman Chair of Social Welfare and Social Planning at the University of Haifa. I am grateful to two scholars who passed away a decade ago – Professors Gunnar Dybwad and Stanley S. Herr – for their legacy. Gunnar taught me during my doctoral studies in the late 1970s and early 1980s that we must better understand our own history in order to make an impact on the present. I follow Gunnar’s recommendation by exploring the historical roots of social exclusion of people with disabilities and their relevance to current strategies for promoting social inclusion. Stan was a great believer in human rights and disability rights and thought that Americans could not only contribute but could also learn a lot from their exposure to different international legislation and policies. I have been inspired by his views by offering domestic and international strategies for promoting social inclusion.

I would like to thank my colleagues with whom I informally discussed some of the ideas examined in the book. Finally, I am grateful to my family for facilitating this important project; they have been of tremendous support to me.