1 INTRODUCTION

The term *social inclusion* is often interchangeably used by policy makers and professionals to mean social cohesion, social integration and social participation, or as the opposite term to *social exclusion*. It seems that the latter is a contested term referring to a wide range of phenomena and processes related to poverty, deprivation and hardship but it is also used in relation to a wide range of categories of marginalised people and places. There is no doubt that the term requires refinement and a tighter conceptual base.[1]

A meta-analysis of the use of social inclusion in qualitative disability studies found six common expressions: (1) being accepted and recognised as an individual beyond the disability; (2) having personal relationships with family, friends and acquaintances; (3) being involved in recreation, leisure and other social activities; (4) having appropriate living accommodation; (5) having employment and (6) having appropriate formal and informal support.[2]

The book has two parts; the first part (Chapters 2–4) aims to review the historical roots and conceptual base of disability and the expressions of social exclusion of people with disabilities, which interfere in their efforts to exercise their rights in society. In addition, it offers a comprehensive review of social and legal approaches to social exclusion and inclusion. The second part (Chapters 5–8) introduces and analyses domestic and international social and legal strategies to promote social inclusion for people with disabilities. The core strategies – which include social

---

[1] Robin Peace, 'Social exclusion: A concept in need of definition?' *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* 16 (2001), 17–35.

[2] Sarah A. Hall, 'The social inclusion of people with disabilities: A qualitative meta-analysis', *Journal of Ethnographic and Qualitative Research* 3 (2009), 162–73. Hall provides a rare attempt to define social inclusion from the perspective of persons with a disability.

protection, amending discriminatory laws and national and international campaigns geared toward removal of stigmas and barriers – need public consensus and support. The underlying rationale is that there is interrelation between the in-depth understanding of the exclusion process and adopting effective and evidence-based strategies to remove barriers and promote social inclusion. Chapter 9 provides closing remarks about the roles of biblical, theological and historical perspectives in the analysis of preferred strategies for promoting social inclusion.

Chapter 2 offers an in-depth history of disability with themes that embrace notions of sin, impurity and wholeness, undesirability and weakness, and care and compassion. Surprisingly, substantial stereotypes and prejudice toward people with disabilities today were imported from Ancient Greece and Rome, from demonology and witchcraft of the Middle Ages and from the modern period.

The conceptualisation of disability is based on the early modern period and the rise of the eugenic and medicalisation approaches associated with social welfare policies. The heart of this section is understanding the transition from the medical model to the social functional model of disability, which is also connected with shifting from social welfare to human rights legislation and policies. There is a direct linkage between adopting social and human rights models and the hope that people with disabilities will be better integrated into society.

It is surprising that the terms *social inclusion* and *social exclusion* are used frequently in the field without recognising their conceptual and theoretical bases. The first part of Chapter 3 explores general expressions of social exclusion, its European roots, definitions and multidimensionality, which reflect an overlap with poverty, employment, economic distress and lack of social capital and social participation.[3] There is an interesting debate about the paradigms and whether social inclusion and social exclusion are inseparable sides of the same coin or are separate concepts. There is an interesting discussion about the interrelations between the two terms and social capital, stigma and their standardised measures.

The second part of this book is an effort to demonstrate and discuss how social exclusion and social inclusion are interpreted in the disability

[3] Robert Putnam, 'Who killed civil America?' *Prospect* 7 (1996), 66–72.

scene. There are three illustrations that demonstrate domestic and inter-
national indicators taken from the Kessler Foundation and the National
Organization on Disability Report of 2010;[4] the Leonard Cheshire Disab-
ility report of 2008;[5] and the 2003 cross-country study of social inclusion
in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
countries.[6] There is also an introduction of non-indicator approaches
taken from other countries, including the UK and Israel. It is evident
that there is an interrelationship between historical roots and conceptu-
alisation of disability (Chapter 1), expressions and processes of social
exclusion (Chapter 3), and how the media construct the current images
of disability. Chapter 4 demonstrates the role of the printed, and partic-
ularly the digital, media in shaping public attitudes and impressions of
people with disabilities. Special attention has been given to the paradox-
ical and unintentional impacts of classical literature, Hollywood films and
advertising campaigns on their inclusion in the domestic arena and in
other countries.

Attention is also given to two issues that may play an important role
in social inclusion of people with disabilities – *disability culture* and *digital
divide*. The discussion of *disability culture* demonstrates that the efforts of
people with disabilities to strengthen and keep their unique identities may
hamper their ability to integrate into non-disabled society. An interesting
example presented in the chapter is of the deaf culture and the threat of
cochlear implants to their identity. *Digital divide* is another example of
how lack of accessibility in design, development and production of tele-
communication services and products and digital literacy can prevent a
substantial number of people with disabilities from achieving social inclu-
sion. Chapter 5 is based on social exclusion conceptualisation (Chapter 3)
and offers overall economic and social strategies that have been proven
to combat poverty for people with disabilities. These strategies are dis-
cussed with respect to their relevance and merit to people with disab-
ilities. There is a critical discussion about social protection provisions,
which trade self-sufficiency for a tendency to strengthen dependency and

[4] Kessler Foundation and National Organization on Disability/NOD, *The ADA, 20 years later:
Survey of Americans with disabilities* (New York: Harris Interactive, 2010).
[5] Leonard Cheshire, *Disability poverty in the UK* (London: Leonard Cheshire, 2008).
[6] OECD, *Transforming disability into ability: Policies to promote work and income security for
disabled people* (Paris: OECD, 2003).

segregation. Another strategy that is discussed is social capital, with a reservation regarding whether it is relevant for certain subpopulations. Chapter 6 discusses whether disability rights legislation can promote social exclusion and replace discrimination practices. It examines this question by reviewing and testing three national legislations[7] and studies their impact on social inclusion practice. The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was the milestone for other foreign disability rights legislation. The chapter therefore analyses in depth the required changes needed in this human rights legislation, which may lead to comparable changes in other countries.

Chapter 7 is an examination of the international legal strategy that introduces and analyses the first human rights treaty of the twenty-first century: the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).[8] The central question discussed is whether an international legal instrument based on the social model of disability can enhance social inclusion of people with disabilities domestically and globally. Specifically, the CRPD has gone beyond the ADA and similar disability rights legislation and calls for protection of basic rights and adequate standards of living. The chapter examines the potential of such a maximalist international law to be transferred to domestic policy, legislation and domestic courts by presenting two illustrations from Europe and Israel regarding Article 19. Chapter 8 introduces and discusses national and international strategies to promote positive images of people with disabilities in the media and whether narrowing the digital divide can enhance their social inclusion in society. The strategies discussed in terms of their merits and shortcomings include macro interventions such as guidelines for adequately portraying people with disabilities in the media and Web accessibility, implementation of Article 8 of the UN CRPD and media campaigns taken from Europe and Australia that aim to improve images of people with disabilities. There are also micro-strategies that address special issues, such as the United States'

---

[7] See the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990/2008, the UK Disability Discrimination Act of 1995/2010 and Israel's 1998 Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law.
[8] The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 13, 2006, and came into force on May 3, 2008.

The Kids on the Block[9] educational TV programme, progressive advertising and recognising successful media practices that are discussed with respect to their positive impact on children and the public. Finally, the chapter provides an overview and discussion of the United States and Europe, documenting solutions of bridging the digital divide for people with disabilities. In addition, it offers evidence-based practices with recommendations to increase access to and use for vulnerable targeted groups.

Chapter 9 provides closing remarks and insights regarding social exclusion and strategies to promote social inclusion. The author tries to highlight and respond briefly to core questions related to social inclusion of people with disabilities nationally and internationally. He asks: What is the impact of biblical, theological and historical perspectives on current views of inclusion of people with disabilities? Which strategy is more effective in promoting social inclusion of people with disabilities: social or legal? Can the media change portrayals of people with disabilities? Is it possible to narrow the digital divide? The answers reflect the importance of developing interdisciplinary knowledge and collaboration among people and nations in challenging social exclusion and promoting social inclusion for people with disabilities.

[9] *The Kids on the Block*, a U.S. programme that spreads awareness about disabilities, was started in 1977 by a special education teacher; the show features puppets that have cerebral palsy, epilepsy, spina bifida, autism, muscular dystrophy and more. The curricula cover a variety of topics related to disabilities such as medical and social concerns.

Part 1   **SOCIAL INCLUSION AND
DISABILITY**

2 HISTORICAL ROOTS AND CONCEPTUALISING DISABILITY

We cannot understand disability today without knowing the way that humanity treated people with physical and mental impairments through-out history.[1] Henri-Jacques Stiker, the director of research and member of the department of the History and Civilization of Western Societies, University of Paris VII, believes that the clues are hidden in Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman roots – particularly, in the Bible and ancient, medieval and modern times. A historical perspective can provide in-depth analysis as to how society accommodates and handles people with disabilities, thus providing an insightful look at ourselves and whether we have learned lessons from our past. This chapter provides a brief and thought-provoking review of the status of people with disabilities and the changes that have occurred in the conceptualisation of disability from the eugenic movement to modern times.

LEARNING FROM HISTORY: THE BIBLE, THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE QUR'AN

Persons with disabilities have always been *in* but not *part of* society. Their vague and unclear social standing in ancient society is reflected in the Bible, the New Testament and the Qur'an. Leviticus,[2] the third book of the Torah,[3] protects the well-being of the deaf and the blind by commanding: 'Thou shalt not curse the deaf nor put a stumbling block before the blind, nor maketh the blind to wander out of [his] path'.[4]

[1] Henri-Jacques Stiker, *History of disability* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 1–5.
[2] In Hebrew, Vayikra.
[3] The Five Books of Moses in the Bible.
[4] Lev., 19:4.

9

However, in the same book it is written that:

> The Lord spoke further to Moses: Speak to Aaron and say: No man of
> your offspring throughout the ages who has a defect shall be qualified
> to offer the food of his God. No one at all who has a defect shall be
> qualified: no man who is blind, or lame, or has a limb too short or
> too long; no man who has a broken leg or a broken arm; or who is a
> hunchback, or a dwarf, or who has a growth in his eye, or who has a
> boil-scar, or scurvy, or crushed testes. No man among the offspring of
> Aaron the priest who has a defect shall be qualified to offer the Lord's
> offering by fire; having a defect, he shall not be qualified to offer the
> food of his God. He may eat of the food of his God, of the most holy
> as well as of the holy; but he shall not enter behind the curtain or come
> near the altar, for he has a defect. He shall not profane these places
> sacred to Me, for I the Lord have sanctified them.[5]

Is it possible that the Bible presents such an ambivalent approach, recog-
nising the obligation to remove barriers from blind people but by the same
token prevents them from serving the Lord? It appears that the Bible
reflects the common approach that was prevalent at that time regarding
the code of purity and holiness – namely, that every *kohen* (priest) who
suffered a physical blemish was disqualified by virtue of his disability
from performing the sacrificial ritual. Although the text does not explain
the rationale behind this exclusion, it is clear that a blemished priest was
regarded as unholy, because he was forbidden to eat from the holy food in
the holy portions. This distinguished persons with disabilities from their
colleagues, treating them as totally unfit to carry out the priestly tasks or
share in the priestly emoluments.

   Although the text reflects exclusion of people with disabilities, the
Bible's approach seems relatively more progressive than the common
voices in the Greco-Roman world, which advocated infanticide and
euthanasia for people with disabilities.

   A similar interpretation about the biblical approach toward disability
was offered by Rabbi Judith Abrams in her book *Judaism and Disability*.[6]
She argued that the Temple was a place of liminality, where heaven and

---

[5] Lev., 21:16–23.
[6] Judith Z. Abrams, *Judaism and disability: Portrayals in ancient texts from the Tanach through the
     Bavli* (Washington, D.C.: Galludet University Press, 1998), pp. 104–12.