

Introduction

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Inequity in Higher Education and Its determinants

The importance of primary and secondary education as fundamental drivers of empowerment, achievement and inclusion is widely acknowledged. So is the increasing need for higher education (HE) – education that extends beyond secondary school graduation and that delivers academic, technical or professional instruction – as an essential prerequisite for advancement in contemporary, global society. A single data point from the United States provides compelling proof: the gap between the earnings of high school and College graduates doubled between 1980 and 2000 (Kazis, in this volume). Yet access to the benefits of higher education remains particularly skewed in favour of dominant majorities. Little attention has been paid to the impact of this form of educational exclusion on marginalised or otherwise disadvantaged populations, whether they are in the global North or South.

This book makes the case that the systematic lack of access to HE and its benefits for some populations has a serious impact on life prospects and social justice. We are not just concerned with the question of physical access and initial enrolment, critical though those two factors are. We are also concerned with differential completion rates, with the quality of the credentials secured and the skills developed, with the networks built and the employment possibilities secured, and with the disproportionate financial burdens that follow HE for some student populations.

We assemble in this volume a broad range of critical perspectives to examine these manifold challenges. The populations that are the subjects of the ensuing chapters include citizens and non-citizens, residents of the global North and the global South, people who have migrated and people who have never left their homes. They share the experience of stigmatisation and marginalisation, and with it the experience of exclusion from the full benefits of HE.

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Though exclusions are the products of different historical, contingent and other proximal *determinants*, the *vectors* or consequences of exclusion for the very diverse populations we analyse encompass overarching similarities. Education-related commonalities such as inadequate academic preparation, insufficient financial support, geographical inaccessibility, linguistic difference, low-quality teaching and mentorship emerge across constituencies that are as different as Indigenous peoples, refugees, disabled persons, racial or ethnic minorities, and undocumented or irregular migrants. Meticulous analysis of these exclusionary forces and their multifaceted drivers and consequences can, we believe, stimulate greater awareness and promotion of strategies to redress the highly impactful injustices to which they contribute. In the following pages, we identify a number of these determinants of exclusion from HE and their vectors, thereby contributing to an understanding of the many and diverse forms of marginality. The chapters of this book consider sources of discriminatory exclusion based on gender, racialisation, disability, class, ethnic identity, location and citizenship. While not an exhaustive list, these factors are central to many situations of endemic discrimination, including in the context of HE. Often, exclusion from HE is based in an interrelated way on more than one of these phenomena, so-called intersectional discrimination.

A useful framework for understanding intersectional discrimination and its *determinants* is expressed in Fraser's research on three intertwined dimensions – redistribution, recognition and representation – that can result in exclusion from justice (Fraser, 2005; Giles, 2010). In this book we recognise claims for access to HE as claims for justice. Fraser argues that all three dimensions must be addressed in order to achieve justice. Applying this framework to our concerns, we take her dimension of redistribution to pertain to economic or class issues that stall or prevent people from accessing university and thus hinder their ability to participate fully in the development of the profession or livelihood of their choice. Recognition, in our analysis, refers to the ways that the forms of discrimination we have mentioned (and others) are used as reasons for exclusion from HE. Finally, we consider the representation dimension as the space available to any group to voice 'their claims and adjudicate their disputes' (Fraser [2005] in Giles, 2010, 28). In many of the cases described in this book, groups or individuals who have attempted to access HE have experienced all three dimensions of exclusion. They have, for example, encountered exclusion due to economic inequality, the dimension of redistribution. Aspiring students have also experienced the impact of a failure of recognition – stigmatisation by

those who hold the power to exclude them from HE. The representation dimension, too, has obvious relevance to our material. Its results include silencing and various forms of sequestration of the students we are concerned with. Some of the consequences of these intertwined deficits are immediate, as where exclusion denies students the opportunity to advocate in favour of their right to university access; other results are long term, as is the case where the absence of university accreditation vitiates the ability to fully engage in the public sphere, with predictable consequences for further marginalisation.

The contributors to this volume write about the locations of marginalisation and what they mean for the groups they focus upon. While the global South is all too often the site of enduring educational exclusion, many of the exclusionary factors that characterise the global South are evident in wealthier and more educationally endowed settings in the North. The dichotomy is thus useful but of limited applicability. It is useful because demographic trends reveal an asymmetry between educational need and opportunity in ever starker terms. More and more demand for education, including HE, arises in the global South, most especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where birth rates are accelerating as state-funded educational opportunity is shrinking (UNESCO, 2014), compounded or at least partially caused by the low share of education in total humanitarian aid at just 2.1 per cent (UNESCO, 2018a).¹ At the same time, traditional sites of plenty in educational provision and tertiary education excellence, largely in the global North, are home to rapidly ageing populations with shrinking domestic demand for educational services (UNESCO, 2014). And yet educational access continues to be highly skewed, as evidenced by the enduring discrimination against African American and Roma populations. The global North–South dichotomy is also of limited applicability because of the impact of significant refugee and other distress migrant populations on the landscape of educational equality. As Squire and Zaman (in this volume) report, for example, newly arrived and mobile populations in France experience overwhelming challenges to access HE; the same is true for many migrant communities in Germany (Crul & Lelie, in this volume).

¹ This statistic is based on the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (Development Initiatives, 2018). It is noteworthy that more humanitarian aid for post-secondary education is directed to middle-income countries than to low-income countries: 'low income countries received 13% of the total aid to postsecondary education in 2016, and their share has been declining since 2010' (UNESCO, 2018b, 6).

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Our book explores the kind of education that is ‘delivered’, who is doing the delivering and how this is accomplished. It considers higher educational provision in a range of settings – from mainstream state institutions to dedicated facilities in refugee or migrant camps, from free state universities to expensive profit-making Colleges and universities, from provincial contexts to transnational collaborations. Where evidence is available, the contributors also consider the impact of the educational intervention described, on both output and outcome – in other words, the numbers of students enrolled, the courses delivered, the life impacts achieved or not achieved.

Marginalisation and Its Many Forms

The primary constituency of concern in this volume are marginalised populations excluded from the benefits of HE. As already noted, this constituency encompasses populations affected by many vectors of exclusion – economic, social, political, legal. The terms ‘marginality’ and ‘marginalised’ may, themselves, be contested. Margins are socially constructed interpretations of the boundaries of a society (or country or region) and the effects of being inside or outside those boundaries. Solorzano and Villalpando (1998) refer to marginality as a complex and contentious location or process whereby people are subordinated because of their race, gender or class. A recent volume by Danaher, Cook and Coombes (2013) examines the naming and sociological framing of ‘marginalised communities’, particularly in relation to education, and concludes that, at its core, the experience of being marginalised is associated with being located, physically or otherwise, far from centres of cultural and economic power. Many stigmatised populations have this experience despite living in some of the most vibrant contemporary centres of global cultural, intellectual and economic production.

The conception of marginalisation just offered is necessarily broad because sources of marginalisation are ubiquitous in contemporary society. Yet those who are somehow ‘removed’ from the ‘inside’ of the privileged constituency are likely to share characteristics that are cross-cutting, the most common being, perhaps, economic disenfranchisement and female gender. Within such commonalities, however, there are gradations, which generate distinct, even unique individual experiences of stigma and social isolation. Female and/or disabled refugees often face more acute challenges than do their male or non-disabled counterparts (Morrice, 2013), and undocumented migrants face restrictions which their citizen or

documented peers (even if equally economically disadvantaged) may not experience (Ruge & Iza, 2005). Roma populations in Europe and Dalit populations in India face unique forms of denigration, including in societies that pride themselves on their inclusionary human rights records (Matache et al. & Kelly et al., in this volume). By attending to intersectional marginalisation, which generates distinctive forms of discrimination, we hope to illuminate the complexity of the rights challenges ahead.

While not minimising the pervasive disenfranchisement of many residents in the global North, we have sought to direct substantial attention towards the experience of students and scholars in or from the global South, cognisant of the conspicuous absence of HE research in this domain. In so doing, we align ourselves with those scholars and activists, many of them quoted in the following chapters, who challenge the centrality of the global North as the repository of pedagogic excellence, curricular primacy or institutional innovation. Concepts such as the ‘pluriversity’ are usefully provocative in this regard (Mbembe, 2016). Debates about decolonisation of university curricula, restructuring of HE funding structures and levelling of infrastructural inequalities – all featured in this volume – are critical for the broad and cross-cutting analysis of educational marginalisation that we seek to promote.

No population illustrates the pervasive, global impact of intersectional discrimination more vividly than refugees. Geographic displacement, economic deprivation, racial stigmatisation, religious and ethnic marginalisation and enduring institutional and colonial bias generate educational environments that vigorously militate against the inclusion of this growing and highly diverse population into the HE constituency. The population affected is substantial: 25.9 million people globally, the highest number ever recorded, according to recent data from Amnesty International (2019). In addition to refugees, other populations, including the internally displaced, the recipients of humanitarian status, the undocumented, the stateless and those who fall in between these arbitrary categorical divides but have also moved because they lack fundamental security at home, compound the size of those now termed ‘distress migrants’ (Bhabha, 2018). Together they constitute close to 70 million people (UNHCR, 2018), more than the population of large countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia or Kenya.

Eighty per cent of the current refugee population are hosted in poor countries, a percentage that has not changed for decades. Germany is the only global North country among the world’s top ten refugee-hosting countries (Amnesty International, 2019). Meanwhile, countries long

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riven by conflict and economic distress – such as Lebanon, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Uganda – continue to provide humanitarian reception on a massive scale. This assistance is often offered in exchange for desperately needed development aid from wealthier countries that engage in this quid pro quo as a convenient way of externalising their humanitarian responsibilities. In 2018, less than 7 per cent of those who wished to be officially resettled (amounting to a paltry 92,400 persons out of over 20 million recognised refugees) were accepted from their location in zones neighbouring their home to countries of the global North (Amnesty International, 2019). Meanwhile, the majority remain trapped, sometimes for decades, in long-term refugee camps and other situations, such as detention centres and temporary border camps, zones of de facto social exclusion that generate a debilitating sense of temporary permanence.

Until recently, states and international agencies have evidenced little interest in offering HE programmes to refugees and other distress migrants. Their apparent impermanence on the host territory has provided a rationale for limiting educational investment to primary and some secondary schooling, often with little attention to the quality of the education offered. Almost a decade ago, with a focus on the global South context, Dryden-Peterson pointed to an imbalance between the humanitarian rhetoric in United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) policy, which highlighted the importance of education at all levels for refugees, and the financial commitment underpinning that rhetoric: ‘Education receives only 2% of humanitarian aid, the lowest of all [UNHCR] sectors’ (2011, 9).² She called for a serious reconceptualisation of the education policies and programmes directed towards refugees, away from a ‘humanitarian approach’ predicated on short-term, emergency provision to one focused on a ‘human-rights’ and a ‘developmental approach’ that would be enduring and rooted in local government structures (UNHCR, 2011).

This book asks why only 1 per cent of those who define themselves or are defined as refugees are able to access accredited HE programmes (UNHCR, 2001, 2019b).³ It also questions the gross gender inequities

² Dryden-Peterson attributes this lack of financial commitment to the fact that the UNHCR, at least in 2011, was not recognised by other international agencies as an ‘actor in education’ (see UNHCR, 2011, 9–10).

³ According to the UNHCR, ‘The 1% estimate was compiled in consideration of the following: 1) estimated tertiary enrolment rates of Syrian refugees in the five main hosting countries in the Middle East and North Africa region (Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt and Jordan); 2) global DAFI

evidenced by refugee enrolment in HE. As the chapter in this volume by Kimari and Giles on the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya notes, only a fraction of refugee girls who would benefit get access to HE of any sort, a dramatic form of gender discrimination that compounds the other gendered obstacles to female empowerment, such as early marriage, premature child-bearing responsibilities and many other sexual and reproductive health norms. As scholars have noted, in humanitarian crises, gender is routinely put on the back burner while the ‘emergency’ is addressed (Hyndman & de Alwis, 2003).

Gendered exclusions are not confined to refugee populations or humanitarian crises. As the chapter by Kelly, Bhabha and Krishna on ‘low’ caste, first-generation Indian girls attending College highlights, the obstacles to gender equity in this peacetime context are also persistent. They are the result of a complex intersection of deficient state policies and oppressive social norms common to disenfranchised populations across the globe. Askouni and Dragonas, in their investigation of HE engagement by the Turkish minority in Greece, also address what they call ‘the intricate interplay of economic and gender constraints’ that affect young minority women who take advantage of new affirmative action measures that facilitate College attendance. The excitement of a more open and expansive social and intellectual setting abuts against the economic and emotional stressors generated by the distance from home and family expectations of young women.

Methodologies

The methodological approach adopted in this book is syncretic. Acknowledging the complexity of exclusion and its multifactorial nature, and committed as we are to a holistic perspective that stimulates cross-cutting dialogue and intersectoral collaboration, we have gathered together experts drawn from several scholarly disciplines to illuminate our topic of interest. One approach to HE for forcibly displaced persons, a large subset of our population, draws on the framework of ‘critical humanitarianism’. For some time now, anthropologists, geographers and others have used this framework to interrogate the priorities and preconceptions of those intervening in emergency situations. While some point to the importance of those aspects of humanitarianism that relate to ‘safeguarding human life’

enrollment; 3) global Connected Learning enrollment; and 4) a grouping of other known enrollment’ (UNHCR, 2001–2019a).

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(Hyndman, 2000; Malkki, 1996), many of these same scholars and others point to humanitarianism as a ‘political concept’ (Nyers, 2006), which is also gendered and racialised, ‘contraposing the needs of displaced peoples against the more powerful interests of states’ (Hyndman [2000] in Giles, 2012, 210). Refugee camps have been described as ‘the hidden flagships’ of humanitarianism, an oxymoron, but one that helps to expose the invisible and unmonitored, yet hugely costly, nature of this type of protection. By making the connection between humanitarianism and so-called emergencies, that is ‘humanitarian emergencies’, Duffield draws our attention to the power relations inherent in current neoliberal forms of intervention, where strategies deployed are, in his view dangerously, defined as ‘above politics’ by Western states (Duffield, 2007, 71). This characterisation limits collective opportunities to engage with and challenge the forms of intervention or aid introduced by international actors, including the forms of educational provision offered. Outdated and contextually inappropriate syllabi, authoritarian teaching methods and gender-insensitive physical arrangements exemplify the results of this approach.

Sites are defined as humanitarian emergencies (sometimes for decades), and people in these sites are defined as refugees, whether in the global South or North, in effect (whether or not by intention) to facilitate their control and management by the states that host them. Their situation is thus quite different from the millions of asylum seekers who make their protection claims individually and, where successful, achieve a status that can facilitate social membership in the medium to long term. In these sites of humanitarian emergency, states responsible for ensuring the protection of fundamental rights of the resident populations pay scant attention to promoting access to higher forms of knowledge. A troubling recent example of how some neo-liberal humanitarians are sidestepping access to the right to education, including HE, for refugees is the promotion of the right to work for displaced people in ‘special economic zones (SEZs)’ or ‘industrial incubator zones’ (Betts & Collier, 2015, 2–3), where large corporations stand to profit from the vulnerable status (and exploitability) of refugee workers.⁴

The laudable goal of supporting refugee self-sufficiency is, in these contexts, subordinated to the profit-driven incentives given to private

⁴ Scholars (e.g. Mitter, 1986; Nash & Patricia Fernández-Kelly, 1983; Wright, 2006; Cohen, 2011, among others) have documented, from the 1970s onwards, the deleterious impact of export processing zones (EPZs), similar to the special economic zones (SEZs) advocated by Betts and Collier, on the health, well-being, livelihoods and futures of refugee, displaced and marginalised workers, many of them women.

investors eager to take advantage of a captive (often highly skilled) population through highly regulated and restrictive labour conditions. A better approach is to provide access to quality HE, since it is indisputable that refugees and migrants who are educated, like their counterparts in the majority population as a whole, have substantial relative advantages compared to their uneducated peers. They are more likely than those who do not have educational opportunities to be resilient throughout the trials and tribulations of refugeehood (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003; Tapscott, 1994). What is more, from a broader, geo-political, perspective, there is evidence of ‘a direct link between a refugee programme focused on higher education and national reconstruction’ of a homeland, with significant contributions by university-educated former refugees filling key positions in building a new government (Morlang & Stolte, 2008, 63, in Dryden-Peterson, 2011, 52). In addition, refugees and migrants who have access to HE are more likely than those without such access to regain protection through their own agency and efforts, seeking out productive employment and living opportunities. Regrettably, despite persuasive claims that education, and specifically HE, is a crucial ‘tool to . . . reverse this narrative [of the passive refugee] by making people into their own ‘agents’, empowered from within, rather than by emergency aid imposed from without (Zeus, 2011), most education in long- and shorter-term encampments and border zones is of very sub-standard quality, inferior to that offered to the majority, host population.

While these entrenched governance failures persist, there is also growing acknowledgement of the urgency of redressing refugees’ de facto higher educational apartheid. Thanks to the pioneering work of some scholar/advocate groups, a few represented in this volume, innovative work is underway to rectify the legacy of past and enduring educational exclusion. In part, this overdue correction has been stimulated by the insistent demand of the affected constituencies themselves for a better deal. Triggers include mass movements such as the ‘Rhodes must fall’ and ‘Fees must fall’ campaigns (Ahmed, in this volume) and the mobilisation of DACA youth (see Gonzalez et al., in this volume), the careful advocacy promoting universities geared to native or minority constituencies (for native peoples in the United States, see Garland, and for Turkish-speaking minorities in Greece, see Askouni & Dragonas in this volume), creative programmatic innovations – in Europe, Africa and elsewhere – enabling access through fee forgiveness or scholarship support, by improving access, credential equivalence schemes and intensive preparatory tutoring (see chapters in this volume by Smith and Stein, Unangst, Rajaram and

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Kimari and Giles). But the legacy of past exclusion and stigma is enduring, and much work remains to be done. As chapters on the persistent educational disadvantage of historically marginalised populations such as African Americans, Indigenous communities, people with disabilities and Roma demonstrate, legislative reforms alone do not achieve parity, nor do they erase the multiple drivers of long-standing discrimination.

Summary of Chapters

This volume is divided into three parts. The first part, entitled 'Encountering Marginalisation: Disparities in Higher Education and the Broader Society', articulates the numerous challenges faced by marginalised groups in various contexts, pointing to significant sources of disadvantage and the material and intellectual deprivations that arise out of marginality. A common observation that emerges from this part is that HE marginalisation is a product of multiple intersecting factors of exclusion and inequity, what Askouni and Dragonas call 'overlapping disadvantages'. Borgonovi and Marconi demonstrate this pointedly by shedding light on the way in which migrant origin affects access to, and completion of, HE across the countries within the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). They show that, contrary to widely held stereotypes, immigrant background students are not less but more motivated to achieve educational success and to hold ambitious expectations, and that their lack of commensurate educational achievement is a product of states' failures to capitalise on this motivation and to ensure access to the necessary foundational skills. As a result of these institutional shortcomings, immigrants are under-represented in the more academic HE programmes and, because of prior linguistic and educational disadvantages, are more likely to drop out than their non-immigrant background peers. Crul and Lelie make a similar point in the context of HE in the Netherlands through their 'integration context theory'. They show how institutional arrangements, starting before primary school, block pathways to HE by compromising dominant language acquisition, exposure to quality academic education in school and opportunities to select competitive academic higher educational pathways as opposed to more technical, less prestigious ones. The broad relevance of these arguments is clearly highlighted by their relevance to other contexts discussed in the book. Matache, Jovanovic, Barbu and Bhabha point to the compromised early pathways that militate against higher educational success for Roma communities across Europe. With a careful case study of Serbia, they illustrate