Book review

Research Handbook of International and Comparative Perspectives on Diversity Management
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In each of its 11 chapters, which span many countries, this research handbook offers a comparative approach to the study of diversity management, primarily in employment. Dimensions of diversity examined include ethnicity and race (Chapters 3 and 4), gender (Chapters 3, 8 and 10), indigenous identity (Chapters 5 and 8), age (youth and older workers) (Chapter 9), disability (Chapter 4), tribal identity (Chapter 11), sexual orientation and identity (Chapters 6 and 7) and intersections among multiple marginalized identities (Chapter 3).

The book is edited by senior scholars from France, Canada, the USA, South Africa, Denmark, Norway and the UK, all of whom contribute chapters. In addition, chapter contributors add perspectives and findings from Brazil, Spain, Turkey, Australia, Mexico, Columbia, New Zealand, Polynesia, New Caledonia and 18 countries in Africa. Several contributors have published prolifically on the subjects of workplace inequality and policies to address it, and approaches to diversity management in organizations. Each chapter is comparative in scope rather than focusing on a single country, and nine of the 11 chapters are written by cross-national teams whose participants are experts on diversity issues in their own countries. The international reach of the project is unusual and represents much value to the reader. The breadth of the book's coverage offers a challenge to US-centric and Euro-centric assumptions about the nature and location of inequality and the measures available to address it. The comparative approach of the *Research Handbook of International and Comparative Perspectives on Diversity Management* is a model of the kind of interdisciplinary and international collaboration that should occur more frequently among scholars seeking to elucidate these complex issues. It suggests the benefits of learning by systematically examining similarities and differences among countries. The editors are to be commended for their commitment to bringing an international and comparative lens to questions of diversity and inequality.

While each chapter offers a specialized focus on a subset of countries, there are some general themes that the reader of the entire book can discern. For example, every location represented in the book struggles with issues of inequality based on more than one of the dimensions of diversity, and while some progress is identified, each chapter documents entrenched patterns of inequality and discrimination. Countries differ as to their specific cultural and structural framing of what diversity is, why it matters and what responses are appropriate. For example, settler societies such as Australia, the USA, South Africa, Canada and New Zealand continue to bear the marks of their colonial history in the marked and persistent exclusion and inequality of indigenous people as compared with non-indigenous populations (Chapters 4, 5 and 8).

There is a range of policy responses to these social, economic and political realities across this spectrum of countries. Some of these approaches are voluntary initiatives undertaken by organizations largely for business purposes, such as most "diversity management" programs, while other approaches are mandated by governments that have adopted legislation or regulations to require employers to address inequality, discrimination or underrepresentation of various identity groups (Chapter 2). A third approach, discussed in Chapter 1 on Europe, suggests the potential of social dialogue between unions, management and government to negotiate more transformative collectivist approaches to diversity in workplace settings where unions are strong.

Chapter 5 compares five countries populated by immigrants as to how they have used policy to address issues of multiculturalism from the perspective of Berry's typology of modes of acculturation, including integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. Chapters 6 and 7 on advances and setbacks in LGBT rights in the USA, South Africa, the UK and Turkey call attention to the importance of changes in societal norms and values, together with legislation, as the drivers of progress. This discussion points to the difficulties of translating legal rights into substantive outcomes in the form of improvements in the lives of minority group members in the absence of social support, but also points out the fundamental role of legislation in driving change, and the limited effectiveness of legislation that is not underwritten by monitoring and serious sanctions for non-compliance. Chapter 10 compares five European countries with respect to their approaches to promoting the representation of women in corporate leadership, noting that legislated quotas, first introduced by Norway, have resulted in marked progress for women, especially when quota legislation includes significant sanctions for non-compliance and a mid-point evaluation of progress toward goals. Women's presence in leadership roles, in turn, is expected to prompt more progressive human resource management policies on work-family balance that will benefit women throughout the organization. Considering these various approaches side-by-side permits the reader to develop an informed opinion about their relative efficacy and promise in addressing inequality and discrimination at national and organizational levels.

A concluding chapter exploring some of the similarities and differences among the issues faced and the policy approaches adopted in the various countries covered in the book would have been a valuable contribution to the book. The introduction contains a step in this direction in its précis of the chapters and its appendix summarizing their contents for easy cross-reference.

The intended audience for the *Research Handbook of International and Comparative Perspectives on Diversity Management* includes academic scholars and graduate students – the most likely to benefit – as well as policy makers, and practitioners and managers in organizations interested in diversity management. It may be of particular interest to readers seeking to broaden their interest in workplace diversity beyond their own country or region. Certainly the book should be available in university and public libraries and in the collections of government, legal and other organizations concerned with human rights and equality policy.

The book does not suggest a specific agenda for comparative research on diversity and policy responses to it, but the reader readily sees the potential and value of this approach. For example, Chapter 11, an analysis of data on diversity on the ground of tribal identity as a social force in African countries, raises intriguing questions about the impact of this reality in employment settings. Chapter 2 uses a case study approach to compare two manufacturing companies in Denmark and France as to how managers view diversity management and translate their values into human resource management practices. They find that the French company leaders see diversity management as a corporate social responsibility and a question of compliance with legal requirements, while for the Danish managers it is a business strategy that will improve competence and performance.

Both French and Danish companies have robust diversity approaches, but for different reasons related primarily to the way the issue of diversity is framed at the national level. This is an intriguing finding that calls for comparative research on how national discourses influence organization-level responses to social issues. It also suggests the fruitfulness of case studies for such comparative research. Chapter 10 suggests the hypothesis that achieving a critical mass of women on boards of corporations should be followed by the increased adoption of family-friendly human resource management policies in these organizations. This calls for research on the knock-on impacts of improved representation of women in leadership positions, using a strategy that allows for sufficient time for the effect to be demonstrated.

The remaining chapters provide analyses based primarily on the reviews and discussions of published scholarship and reports by international organizations or government agencies. They raise a number of issues that invite investigation through the collection of comparative data and in-country case studies. One such question centers on the sources and dynamics of discrimination that turns differences among people into inequality and oppression, and how these may be different and similar across national and cultural settings and across marginalized groups. Another question arises in considering whether and how various societies deal with the reality of intersectionality, or multiple marginalized identities, an issue that is particularly salient for women in relation to employment (Chapter 3). Another is, what forms of discrimination, and what settings, are most susceptible to regulatory interventions? How can we gain a better understanding of the efficacy of various policy tools that may be available to address discrimination and exclusion that creates inequality for various identity groups?

The publication of the *Research Handbook of International and Comparative Perspectives on Diversity Management* has opened the door to further research by showing the need for a greater understanding of the complexities of diversity and policy responses to it within and among contemporary societies.

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