



Diversity and Epistemic Marginalisation: The Case of Inclusive Education

Introduction:

Frequent conflation –
inclusion of **diverse people** (people in all their diversity)
↔ inclusion of **diverse world views**
↔ inclusion of **diverse epistemologies**.

Which of these, if any, is plausible?

Do all world views merit inclusion? And: are **world views** identical with **epistemologies**?

Does the idea of diverse epistemologies make any sense?

What about associated ideas like 'legitimation of knowledge' and 'epistemic marginalisation'?

What is the meaning of inclusion?

In what ways, if any, is **inclusion** different from **integration**? Inclusion is commonly understood as a reform programme for the deep-seated and far-reaching transformation of society as a whole and, in particular, of the school system as such, whereas integration refers to the incorporation or absorption of certain groups of people into society and, in particular, of certain groups of learners into the existing school system, which remains essentially untransformed.

Should (those who hold) flat-earth or geocentric world views, and beliefs in sexual, ethnic and/or racial inferiority/superiority be

- included?
- tolerated?
- respected?

Everyone has a **world view** – but does everyone have an **epistemology**?

Normative theories of knowledge – concerned with what ought (not) to be called 'knowledge'.

So-called 'multicultural epistemologies' – all considered equally valid. Is this plausible?

'Legitimation of knowledge' – *who claims* the knowledge, as opposed to *what* the knowledge *is*.

Does this raise questions of **epistemology** – or of **social justice**?

Formal and epistemological access:

Access to schools and other institutions of learning is not the same as access to knowledge. In addition, opportunities for learning and the imparting and acquisition of knowledge differ from person to person. Nobody can be included everywhere or demand unqualified access. But does this mean that one has to be able to determine where and how one is included? This would be desirable, but it is not always possible.

In cases of limited autonomy there has to be a kind of **selection** and **control of knowledge**. This means the young and the cognitively impaired do not have unconstrained access to knowledge. Educators and parents (or guardians) are responsible for selecting and controlling access to knowledge and information for the young and the cognitively impaired.

→ **Epistemic paternalism**

- should be distinguished from **epistemic marginalisation**, which (unlike epistemic paternalism)
- refers not only to unequal provision of knowledge and of epistemic goods generally (like hermeneutical tools – in order to make sense of one's situation), but also to the failure to acknowledge knowers and their legitimate claims to knowledge.

But:

Is there no difference between criticising/sidelining someone's views on the grounds that she is black and/or a woman – and criticising/sidelining the view(s) expressed by someone who happens to be black and/or a woman on the grounds of faulty or fallacious reasoning, or because the view in question is either unjustified or false, or both?

Epistemic exclusion and criticism/critical engagement:

Is the exclusion of creationism or intelligent design theory from science classes a matter of *epistemic* exclusion?

What kind of exclusion is involved in the exclusion of evolutionary theory from RI (religion instruction) classes?

Conclusion:

The **limits of inclusion**

→ **Context-sensitive realism**

How ought one to deal with the knowledge claims and the epistemic and cognitive abilities of those with relevant deficiencies?

Under what circumstances can one speak of knowledge here?

And, finally, what would be the basis for inclusion within a knowledge community?

