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Lessons in Social Equity: A Case Study Book, Edited by Richard Gregory Johnson III and Seth J. Meyer

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Lessons in Social Equity: A Case Study Book is guided by the premise that “if the world is to be more equitable...administrators in all sectors must be competent in how to promote fairness for all” (Johnson & Meyer, p. vii). This text is a formative pedagogical resource for undergraduate and graduate educators and learners to address issues of inequities and foster social equity throughout the public and nonprofit sectors in ways that connect public affairs research and practice and contributes to developing culturally competent public service social equity champions. The use of case studies remains one of the better ways to expose future public servants to, and train them in, “the complex dynamics involved in diagnosing, understanding, and resolving inequities” (Johnson & Meyer, p. vii).

This curated volume by Johnson and Meyer (2022) informs readers and stimulates additional critical thinking, analysis, and the development of cutting-edge solutions to wicked social problems. Many important social equity issues are addressed with impacts on various identity groups (i.e., Indigenous people, Asian Americans, Black/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, women/gender, disabilities/ableism), industries and sectors (i.e., nonprofits, higher education, martial arts/sports, neighborhood development, local governments, human services), within the United States as well as in other countries (i.e., India, United Kingdom, Zambia). Chapters address a variety of public service social equity topics (i.e., civic engagement, nonprofit leadership, fundraising, building networks and coalitions, ethics, succession planning), and a multitude of intersectional relationships between and among various identities, locations, perspectives, and topics. Most chapters end with discussion questions that are great ways to start discussions and apply case and relevant course concepts.

This book consists of 14 chapters, each reflecting a unique case study relevant to the study of social equity in the public sector. In chapter 1, readers are presented with exposure to the Native American nonprofit sector and the role and impact of that sector in advancing social equity for indigenous identities and native communities throughout the United States. This chapter addresses gaps in the public and nonprofit literature that inadequately address Native nations generally, and more specifically, the Native American nonprofit sector, its emergence and significance in modern Indigenous existence in the United States. This chapter pertinently

ties these social equity issues together with an explication of the role of knowledge and misunderstanding about Native nations and Indigenous people and the perpetuation of bias and stereotypes (building on similar topics recently addressed in this journal, see Jackson & Fashant, 2021).

Chapter 2 addresses community philanthropy in India and how it was used to foster social equity and inclusion through the role of inspirational leadership, community organizing, volunteering, and giving. This chapter aptly integrates and illustrates many public service values including equity, ethics, identity, inclusion, and belonging in real world contexts that foster reflection and comparative analysis of multiple topics especially relevant to public and nonprofit affairs.

Chapter 3 focuses on an African American HIV/AIDS human services organization in the United States. This case highlights many of the challenges faced by nonprofit organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic such as shifting political and social norms, values, and goals. It addresses issues such as capacity building, human resource, leadership, communication strategies for diverse stakeholders, and the role of stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. Lessons from this chapter may be applicable to the management of other public and nonprofit organizations that must contend with stigmas associated with other identity groups (i.e., LGBT+).

Chapter 4 elucidates the work of a group of people to foster social equity in sports, in particular Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, by joining together to create a nonprofit organization in the United Kingdom. Issues of social equity pertaining to associating with like-minded individuals, advocating for solutions, and the venues in which this takes place are addressed with the example of a UK Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Facebook Group and its impact on the fight for social equity. International and comparative examinations of the nonprofit sector are facilitated with this chapter as readers are introduced to some of the nuances of the distinctions between a nonprofit organization and a charity in the UK and what flexibility and legal abilities and limitations each organizational form would provide to this social equity effort. Decisions about management, communications, leadership, program, and activity development are addressed along with ethical fundraising and resource development.

Chapter 5 presents readers with the moral dilemmas facing public servants and the need to listen to constituents and balance popular demands for representation with professional and institutional responsibilities, or principled leadership and popular sovereignty. This chapter presents the case of the 2006 protests by students demanding representation on the Board of Trustees and in presidential appointments at Gallaudet University—the only global liberal arts university for members of the Deaf community and those hard of hearing. This case presents issues that transcend this specific event and involves leadership, ethics, politics, protests, civic engagement, ideal types of democratic representation, and the role and significance of institutions beyond its geographic borders to representing and fostering social equity.

Chapter 6 addresses the cities of the future and urban renewal efforts since the 1950s. This case highlights the inequitable impacts of urban renewal construction on minoritized people and communities. It focuses on urban renewal developments in Durham, North Carolina and the disinvestment of this community for more than three decades. Equitable neighborhood projects are presented as a way to address past injustices suffered by minority communities due to earlier urban renewal efforts.

Chapter 7 examines the role of Chikumbuso women—a group of widows—and their work towards gender equity in Zambia. These women used the process of nonprofit social enterprise to provide for themselves and their children. Through these self-empowerment efforts, readers learn about how such efforts also led to community empowerment. This case study introduces

readers to the Zambian context in the fight for gender inclusion and social equity in an international context pertaining to the use of social enterprises.

Chapter 8 introduces the concepts of Foreigntern and Foreignternships to describe the quasi-volunteering internships. Students and professionals from First Nations are placed as interns in for-profit companies overseas in exchange for grants in-kind support instead of monetary compensation to help local communities. This case may challenge notions of what it means to be a volunteer intern, for who, and where, especially for readers only familiar with volunteering in an American context, largely through the nonprofit sector.

Chapter 9 presents a look at the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable populations, how it disproportionately victimized and took the lives of minoritized community members, and the roles of various stakeholders such as local governments and the media. Readers interested in public health, public policy, and social equity will find this case insightful and informative when addressing a variety of issues including discrimination, healthcare access, occupational segregation, gaps in education and wages, and housing.

Chapter 10 addresses student success in higher education, particularly pertaining to creating and fostering inclusive learning environments for all. This case highlights the experiences of an individual with generalized anxiety disorder and the social equity issues faculty have to address within classroom settings. Similar to Chapter 3, this case highlights the role that stigma plays, and exposes why certain learners are reluctant to report disabilities for fear of backlash. Readers of this case are exposed to empowerment, empathy, inclusion, and social equity in real world ways that go beyond the limits of existing formalized rules and procedures. A key contribution of this case study is an examination of how faculty may foster social equity in the classroom learning environment beyond the traditional accommodations generally afforded students (i.e., extra time during exams, taking examinations in a distraction free environment).

Chapter 11 presents readers with a case of how universities and community partners use Critical Race Theory in Baltimore to develop and implement initiatives to address a long history of violence, trauma, and inequities. This case shows how stakeholders came together to pursue policy changes and host events, as well as how social workers can foster social equity among students from micro, mezzo, and macro perspectives. Public affairs students familiar with NASPAA standards, NACC standards, and codes of ethics from associations like ASPA, and ARNOVA will find NASW mission, standards, and codes of ethics equally aim to foster social equity, justice, and ethical practice by helping professionals to protect and serve the vulnerable and oppressed. Recent scholarship examines how accreditation standards and professional codes of conduct foster social equity and are transferred to new generations of public service leaders (see Evans et al., 2023). Finally, case authors presented a model founded on Critical Race Theory, multi-level practice, and antiracist pedagogy that can significantly enrich learning in the classroom by helping to facilitate difficult dialogues in our learning spaces (see Love et al., 2016).

Chapter 12 shows readers how a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) responded to the increasing prevalence of racial injustice and the rise of anti-racist social movements like Black Lives Matter. The development and implementation of the Equity Action Initiative is elucidated for readers along with its impetus, challenges, stakeholders, and recommendations for change at the university and in society through efforts to foster and advocate for social equity. This case introduces students to the role of universities in society in the front lines of social change, the social equity challenges and historical legacies of such institutions, and the type of ethical and collaborative leadership and planning needed to collaborate with diverse groups of stakeholders to effect positive change.

Chapter 13 recounts the disparate impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic on the lives of Blacks and Latinos globally and then focuses on the special needs of the Asian American population in the U.S. with limited English proficiency (LEP). This case highlights the inequities in health and social services for Asian Americans and articulates the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS). Emphasis is placed on the inequitable and discriminative impact of COVID–19 on older individuals, as well as their families who care for them. A major contribution of this case is the introduction of Asian Critical Theory conceptualized as an expansion of Critical Race Theory.

Chapter 14 addresses the long history in higher education with a legacy of limiting the educational pursuits of nonwhite individuals in the US. This case applies Critical Race Theory to examine and analyze the legacy of racial and systemic inequities endured by the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that brought the suit against the State of Maryland. While focused primarily on social work programs in the four HBCUs in Maryland, this case more broadly illuminates the role of systemic inequities in higher education that also happen to disproportionately impact certain segments of society more than others, the role and magnanimous contributions of HBCUs in particular to students from all parts of society, and the pivotal challenges faced by HBCUs including those related to community development and engagement, financial sustainability, and public policy.

Lessons in Social Equity is an excellent primary textbook in social equity and public administration and policy courses and its affordability (approximately \$40) makes it a viable choice as a supplemental text for a variety of public administration, public policy, public health, human service, social work, and nonprofit courses. This text is also suitable for adoption across public and nonprofit curricula as a formative pedagogical resource exemplifying social equity across public affairs curricula. Each case presented highlights and fosters various high-impact pedagogical (HIP) practices that have been shown to help learners develop a deeper understanding of the content, issues, and their applications, consistent with many innovative, experiential, reflexive, mindfulness-based pedagogical approaches that simultaneously foster democratically minded public service leaders more inclined to actively participate in civic engagement activities that foster social equity (Dabek, 2022; Irizarry, 2022). Pre-service learners and experienced public servants alike will find the cases in this text informative, eye-opening, and helpful in learning about and fostering social equity in practice today.

While a benefit of this text is that the cases vary in structure and approach and thus improve the ability of faculty to adopt various cases in numerous courses, future editions of *Lessons in Social Equity* may want to consider organizing the cases by theme (i.e., related to nonprofits, higher education, public health, international, and/or specific policy domains). A description of the cases can be provided in the introduction to help readers make sense of and begin to think about how the cases collectively contribute to and provide lessons in social equity, beyond the specifics of the individual cases presented. Future editions may expand on some of the critical social equity issues that were not included in the current volume (i.e., LGBT+, religion, foster care). Finally, a short instructor manual (or chapter in future editions) could be helpful to faculty unfamiliar in the use of case study pedagogy and how to do it well, as well as for faculty working in turbulent political environments where social equity pedagogy is increasingly attacked and outright prohibited.

I applaud the editors' attempt to combine innovative pedagogical tools with the social equity subject matter. The structure of the book can be seen as a form of 'social equity in action' in the selection of authors, topics, and presentation of cases. This book pulls in a diverse range of authors representative of multiple intersectional identities, academics and practitioners, junior and senior scholars, students, multiple disciplines (i.e., public administration, social work, nonprofits, interdisciplinary studies, sociology) and walks of practice (i.e., government, higher education, nonprofits). *Lessons in Social Equity* successfully answers the call of faculty

to address the gap in the literature pertaining to the actual ‘how to’ teach about and foster social equity in the classroom—how to bridge the theory and practice gap. Accordingly, this volume effectively responds to the call to address the social equity grand challenges for public administration in education, training, and research (Gerton & Mitchell, 2019), and toward moving the field forward with empathy, engagement, equity, and ethics (Meyer et al., 2022).

Disclosure Statement

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest that relate to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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