



Why should a business school bother itself with inequality?

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USB



USB

Your knowledge partner in Africa



Scale 1:51,400,000
Azimuthal Equal-Area Projection
0 800 Kilometers
0 800 Miles
Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

What are the core functions of a public business school?

- Academic research
- Teaching and learning
- Broader societal engagement
- Profit-oriented executive education

The preliminary task...

- Construction of a typology of inequalities referring to their origin, measurement, moral qualities, and policy implications based on an overt philosophy which guides perceptions of justice & establishment of more equality

A typology of inequalities...

- Natural or hereditary inequalities (“talents”, “gifts”)

“If you let the greyhound off the leash at the same time as the dachshund, the result is unlikely to be a dead heat.”

- Cultural inequalities

Socially approved awarding of unequal respect/status based on factors like age, gender, rites of passage, familial relation, role designation and religious conviction

Typology...

- Constitutional/political/legal inequalities
 - *Award unequal rights to people (for whatever reason) wrt voting, citizenship, legal status, participation in public structures
 - *NB: provision of equal opportunities and rule of law
- Ascribed social inequalities

Stemming from socio-e power related to race, gender, age, origin or any other “accidental” factor

Typology...

- Economic inequalities

- *Difficult question of relation between inequality and economic growth

- *Difference between wealth and income inequalities

- *Basis of comparisons: local, national, global

- *Question of distributive and restorative justices

- Competitive/meritorious inequalities of outcomes

Depend on hereditary, geographical and economic factors and correlate with equality of opportunity and procedural equality/fairness

Typology...

- Ecological inequalities

A-symmetrical power relation between human and other species based on anthropocentric world-view and leading to excluding “nature” as externality in economic pricing

Competitive

Ecological

Natural

Economic

IN-EQUALITY

Cultural

Social

Political

What role can business schools play?

- **Primary question of ideological position/philosophy that a school takes wrt society in which it operates/global realities**
- Per definition (SCHOOL FOR BUSINESS!) expected to support and enhance “free market capitalism” and ability of students to increase private good and of clients to increase market share and profits
- This might have pre-defined limiting impact on academic freedom and ideological choice

Two broad options...

- OPTION ONE

Can maintain and enhance existing inequalities by merely reinforcing/mirroring ethically questionable forms of inequalities

(May be lauded by business as a “good school” with high reputation)

- OPTION TWO

Can play an educative, critical, exemplary role to expose and reduce different forms of inequalities within its powers via research, teaching , engagement and activism
(Might find resistance and might loose reputation in business environment)

USBs philosophy...

Whilst aware of our specific SA history and context:

- Full commitment to democracy and equal human rights (@ social & political inequalities)
- Qualified and critical commitment to a free market business approach (@ econ & ecological inequalities)

The USB's educational strategy...

- Technical competencies
- Critical mind-set: question and construct world-views
- Curriculum renewal (business & society, holistic sustainability including social & economic inequalities)
- Shape executive education needs
- Empower via education those excluded from knowledge
- Embody in own staff and practices an inclusive and ethical culture
- Participate in public discourse to raise consciousness and influence policy
- **THUS: A limited but focused contribution with slow progress...**

Inequalities and a sustainable future?

- As part of civil society, business schools have a stake in a relatively stable socio-economic-ecological environment (extended self-interest)
- Stark inequalities on a wide scale - and in combination - can only be sustained in a authoritarian-type state
- Ecological inequality knows no ideological or geographical boundaries...

Inequalities? A complex issue!

Thank you very much

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