



6.4 Legitimization: Cultural mediation as an instrument for inclusion

Like those calling for art which is financed with tax revenues to be made available to all population strata, the proponents of the inclusion concept are also critical of the exclusion of large swathes of society from institutions of high culture. These excluded groups should, in their view, be introduced to the existing offerings in culture and the arts through cultural mediation and thereby motivated to take part in the culture. This argument is driven less by the aspiration for tax equity than by the ethical principle of equal treatment and related ideas about democratization. The notion of inclusion relates specifically to social groups of people who, due to social inequalities, have little access to education and affluence or who differ in their needs, activities and habits from the majority society in some other way, for instance due to a disability. In this view, cultural mediation is seen as a way of compensating for the inequitable distribution of resources by facilitating cultural participation. See for example, the statement of the German project, → [Tanz in Schulen](#) [Dance in Schools], suggesting that the disadvantages suffered by children and young adults as a result of social inequality which can be combated by active engagement with dance: "Dance is nonverbal and helpful for the integration of children with a variety of backgrounds [...] Dance fosters the formation of the personality and supports the development of identity through the experience of the 'physical-me'. Dance as an artistic form of communication and expression promotes: diversity of motion, quality of motion, body awareness, powers of visualization, physical imagination, design skills and independent creative action, personality formation, social skills, interdisciplinary work."

Problematic aspects of the inclusion rationale include its assumption that culture and institutions are immutable constants into which those formerly excluded ought now be included. The social context which gives rise to discrimination in the first place is seldom a factor considered or included in the transformation work. Moreover, the definition of who should be included is effected unilaterally, as is the definition of what they should be included in. This view can be seen as → *paternalistic*, i.e. as well-meant condescension. There is a risk that people will be defined according to their imputed deficits and then "made equal" (→ [Dannenbeck, Dorrance 2009](#)).

→ [Tanz in Schulen](http://www.bv-tanzschulen.info/fileadmin/user_upload/content-service/pro_Tanz_Argumente.pdf) http://www.bv-tanzschulen.info/fileadmin/user_upload/content-service/pro_Tanz_Argumente.pdf [13.4.2012]; see Resource Pool MFE060401.pdf

→ *paternalistic* see Glossary

→ [Dannenbeck, Dorrance 2009](http://bidok.uibk.ac.at/library/inkl-02-09-dannenbeck-inklusion.html) <http://bidok.uibk.ac.at/library/inkl-02-09-dannenbeck-inklusion.html> [30.4.2012]; see Resource Pool MFE0604.pdf