Book Review

Ruby Goodley
Ph.D. Student, Centre for Disability Studies, School for Sociology and Social Policy at University of Leeds.
Email: rubygoodley@gmail.com;
ssrhlg@leeds.ac.uk
ORCID: 0009-0003-1776-0786

Social research and disability: Developing inclusive research spaces for disabled researchers by Ciaran Burke and Bronagh Byrne (Eds.) Abingdon, UK: Routledge and CRC Press, 188 pages. ISBN 9781138387652.

My research interests encompass how disabled anthropologists' experiences in their discipline might inform more inclusive research cultures in academia. This attentiveness undoubtedly informed my reading of this excellent book. Burke and Byrne's book seeks to provide the "means of making visible the challenges that disabled academics across the globe are forced to navigate when undertaking research" (1). Such aspirations encompass forces of academic ableism (Dolmage, 2017) rooted in ableist anthropology (Durban, 2022). I read this book as a positive challenge to traditional methods of conducting social science research. Within this book review, I would like to highlight a few of the many strengths of this collection. This book will be significant to sociological and anthropological research by highlighting the academic ableism (Dolmage, 2017) and ableist-normativity (Campbell, 2008) enshrined in conducting research, critiquing, from first-hand perspectives, ableist practices in the field and ableist encounters in the workplace.

A continuous strength that runs through this book is a multiplicity of disciplinary voices, from education, social policy and anthropology to sociology, which serves to create an interdisciplinary approach to contemplating how we can transform social science research across a host of disciplines. Chapter authors encompass different career stages, from Ph.D. students just starting their academic careers to established academics with long-standing experiences of the academy. The mixture of standpoints (or, as Garland-Thompson (2002, 21) calls them, "sitpoints") taken from across the academic career trajectory indicates that academia has perpetuated and continues to perpetuate ableist trends. Pointing out the fact that academia has been designed without the disabled academic in mind and that therefore disabled academics are driven to either hide their impairment or fall short of the assumed non-disabled researcher are just some of the interests of this collection. Whether intentional or unintentional, the decision to include senior lecturers, professors, Ph.D. candidates, and those without a doctorate provides a diverse and unique approach to how the historical trajectory of academia affects and has affected disabled academics. Taking all these chapters together provides fruitful suggestions and

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starting points to imagine the futurity of academia; a future, I would argue, that should be more harmonious and accepting of the diversity of humanity and humans. By starting with disability and disabled people's experiences, this book imagines a productive and generative challenge to enacting academia in a more inclusive manner. By commencing with disability, I contend that an ultimately more queer, post-colonial, and feminist angle (see Chouinard, Chapter 2 and Hansen, Chapter 5) can be attached to conducting social science research. Chapter 2 (Chouinard) and Chapter 5 (Hansen) intertwine disability with intersectional experiences of sexism, applying a feminist angle to permeating ableist and sexist forces evident in academia, offering a different way of enacting and embodying academia. Ultimately, commencing with disability, as this book does, provides a more positive and inclusive academic space that welcomes all different types of researchers.

Furthermore, this book highlights the ableist trends within academia by drawing upon personal accounts. Repeated examples of ableist trends include, but are not limited to, the fast-paced nature of academic research and publication (Chapter 5 by Hansen,), the one-size-fits-all approach to support given by specific universities (Chapter 4, by Read et al.) which requires disabled academics to disclose their disabilities, open themselves up to time-consuming bureaucratic processes to gain reasonable adjustments, and face stigmatising interactions with other academic staff and the academy as a whole – such as the "I am afraid you cannot take it" concept outlined by Mogendorff in Chapter 3. As Burke and Bryne state in their introduction, the chapters stem from "standpoint epistemologies" – the knowledge (how we know what we know) born out of our bodily engagements with the world. In the instance of this book, standpoint epistemologies point to the ways disabled academics are engaging with the higher educational spaces – whether that be conducting research, getting support in university settings, or working to scale the hierarchical nature of job positions in the academy. I would contest the theoretical discourse behind the term "standpoint epistemologies" used within this book as it excludes academics who do not stand, such as wheelchair users. Whilst I appreciate the authors adopting this perspective, it is not enough without integrating disability into this perspective by using more disability inclusive language. Therefore, I prefer to use the more inclusive terminology *sitpoint* epistemologies coined by Garland-Thompson (2002).

The benefit of auto-ethnography and reflexive standpoints is that they help the researcher question their own micro-history and encourage a different conceptualisation of the "normal" way of conducting research. As the disabled anthropologist Mogendorff highlights in Chapter 3, "anthropology – the home discipline of ethnography – has the stereotypical image of toughness and daring that does not sit well with disability" (50). Therefore, within anthropology,s disabled anthropologists are spearheading a push towards challenging traditional anthropological methods. For example, disability as rupture (Wolf-Meyer and Friedner, 2022), a collection of papers written by disabled anthropologists that aims to disrupt the taken for granted traditional way of conducting anthropological research. This traditional research method was shaped by the work of Bronisław Malinowski (1935), which typically involves twelve months of ethnography – living and observing a group of people's way of life – in order to question your own specific social context and micro/social history. Ethnography is anointed and praised in anthropology, and as an anthropology student, I too have conducted short bouts of ethnography in some of my undergraduate modules. But when you delve closer into conducting ethnography, to enact this method *successfully*, anthropology assumes a non-disabled researcher. The consequence of this assumption creates a space where disabled anthropologists do not feel welcomed, an attitude, this book highlights, that is found across the whole of academia. Therefore, the book's strength in using disabled academics' reflexive ethnography and personal accounts means it becomes hard to dispute the inherent disablism and ableism embroiled in academia. These situated accounts of ableism within the academy highlight academia's enactment of "anonymous care", a concept defined by Stevenson (2014: 84) as "to care anonymously requires being able to care intransitively, to be able to say, 'I care' without specifying for whom". The academy enacts care through, for example, reasonable adjustments to prove that they value their disabled staff and students. However, the reflexive accounts within this book highlight that the academy's care falls short of the disabled academic's needs and desires, thereby creating a situation where disabled researchers are "being set up to fail" (Chapter 2 by Chouinard). Anonymous care is also explored in Chapter 9, when Bruce outlines her doctoral research on the ways in which disabled students grapple with the reasonable accommodation and disability services teams at universities in Canada. Disabled students experience having their accommodations rejected or refused by lecturers as well as having to provide "proof" of their disability.

Following on from the ableism found in anthropological research methods (Durban, 2022), a particular strength within this book can be found in Chapter 3,where Mogendorff demonstrates that there is a sparsity of disabled anthropologists and puts forward a challenge to anthropological methods with "wheelchair ethnography", which she defines as "reflexive ethnography conducted by disabled anthropologists and sociologists who may or may not use a wheelchair" (60). To provide background, one reason for the lack of disabled anthropologists can be found in Kasnitz and Shuttleworth's paper (1999, 13), where they argue that disabled anthropologists were dissuaded from conducting research on disability due to not being able to experience a big enough "culture shock experience". But what Mogendorff powerfully outlines is that disabled anthropologists and people may continually feel out of place and an outsider in their own contexts due to the ableist and disablist trends they face in their everyday lives. Thus, Mogendorff's call for "wheelchair ethnography" is a concept and a research method that hopefully will gain more traction in anthropology and continually challenge the taken-for-granted assumption of the non-disabled, cis-gender, white, male anthropologist enshrined in the discipline. Again, a continual tenacious element of this book is that it brings the embodied experiences of disabled academics to the forefront, providing a powerful discursive space where ableism in academia can be challenged and changed.

Other examples throughout the book that align with "wheelchair ethnography" can be found in Chapter 9 (Byrne and Schwartz) with their examples of "deaf methodologies" that provide more accepting and less anxiety-inducing moments of conducting qualitative research as deaf scholars. For example, Byrne and Schwartz suggest more utilisation of "online forums and social media" can minimise "the need for oral communication and creating a more level playing field" (148). In Chapter 8, Bruce explains her approach to establishing blind methodologies and dissects how she approached doctoral research with her visual impairment. One example was the use of Kurzweil 1000, which was a screen reading package that allowed her "to use the book-marking feature to write text that would link directly to specific places in the recording" (134). Throughout this book, there are multiple moments where disabled researchers' disability bears weight and changes the ways in which traditional sociological and anthropological methods are adopted and carried out. These examples will undoubtedly help other disabled researchers in the social sciences who are finding ways to shift the "ableist demands on researchers" (Chapter 10 by Burke).

In conclusion, Burke and Byrne's book could not come at a more epochal moment. With the rise in right-wing populism, increased precarity in employment within academia globally (Bothwell, 2018), and a growing presence of a feeling that disabled people should somehow not exist (Grue, 2021), we need the voices and experiences of disabled academics more than ever. Disability represents a vital starting point to creating a more interdependent, caring, and harmonious academia that strives to look after its students and academics. Without disability, we risk falling victim to an independent, competitive, fast-paced academic space that is perpetuated by the insidious forces of neoliberalism. This book provides an encompassing starting point for a better future for academia.

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