

## Editorial

### “Disability in Popular Horror: A New Trend?”

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Since its inception, film has always been fascinated with disability, although we don't usually like to mention it. (I have written [elsewhere](#) how imagining the disabled body and the experience of having a disability has helped shape the medium of film, in ways largely overlooked or disavowed.) As a genre, horror (which might be the most [popular](#) kind of film at the moment) has always been especially interested in disability; the threat of becoming disabled or the threat of being attacked by a character with a visible disability or disfigurement have long been dependable narrative devices. Even when a disabled character is presented as sympathetic, the very experience of having a disability is traditionally imagined as itself a source of terror. For example, in *Wait until Dark* (1967), we are invited to vicariously experience being a young, sightless Audrey Hepburn faced with threats made horrific precisely by her inability to see.

Recently, in just the past year, a very different trend might be emerging in horror films. Although this trend unsettles many years of cultural scripts about disability, it appears to be largely overlooked in the dominant, charged debates about recent horror films. This new trend---if it's safe to call it that based on the two most popular recent horror films (*A Quiet Place* and *Bird Box*)---appears to imagine disability in an entirely new way. Audiences are invited to imagine having a particular disability, not as a source of fear, but instead as offering some advantage in the film's story world. In *A Quiet Place*, a family struggles to survive by staying silent in a post-apocalyptic world inhabited by aliens who viciously attack anything they hear. Similarly, in *Bird Box*, survival is dependent on being sightless in a post-apocalyptic world filled with strange alien creatures, the mere sight of which will cause one to brutally commit suicide. While recent years' horror films have continued the genre's obsession with disabled characters and disability as a central narrative premise (as in for example, *Hush*), this new divergent trend seems to truly begin with the most successful horror film of last year: *A Quiet Place*.

The frame of the wildly popular film invites audiences to rethink what disability means. I'm in no way suggesting these films as models of representations of disability. If anything they comfortably fit into long-standing patterns of concerns about disability being everywhere in a film and no-where. (*A Quiet Place* has though received some praise for featuring an actress [Millicent Simmonds] in a major role with a disability, something still extremely rare in a mainstream, studio film). No one could confuse these films with offering an *authentic* experience of disability, nor do they approach the standard of “nothing about us without us” that many activists including Dominick Evans have been calling for years. At the same time, in these very popular films, considering the history of the genre's relationship with disability, audiences do appear to be invited to think about disability in a different way.

Instead of being presented as the source of fear, being able to skillfully navigate the world with (or as if one has) a disability is presented as a benefit. In *A Quiet Place*, living as if one is deaf offers a distinct survival advantage. Existing without the sense of sound and communicating in sign language are both crucial to staying alive in its narrative in which hungry, horrific alien beings are attracted to any sound.

If this is indeed a trend, the trend finds full expression in the recent phenomenon that is Netflix's *Bird Box*. While very different films, the two most popular recent films of this cultural moment's most popular genre, *A Quiet Place* and *Bird Box*, share a great deal. Besides being the two most popular films of 2018 (as suggested by Netflix's [viewing data](#), largely supported by Nielsen's), most importantly for this discussion, the basic narrative frame of each presents a dystopic vision of family under constant threat from a deadly alien life form. In order to survive, each family must lose a certain ability or refrain from its use. The threat of losing this ability is not a source of horror itself as it frequently has been presented; instead it's presented as offering a benefit to characters. In other words, both films create worlds in which it pays off to have (or act like you have) a particular disability: being deaf in *A Quiet Place* and without sight in *Bird Box*. Recognizing the connection between the films, some fans have called *Bird Box A Blind Place*.

Despite these connections, all the recent debates on *Bird Box* have bristled at any connection between the films. They instead choose to frame discussion about both in terms of 'quality' debates ('good horror' and 'bad horror') that have dominated a great deal of public discourse around popular horror and the elevated genre expectations in our post-Academy-Award-winning *Get Out* era. Compared to the critically acclaimed (and now Oscar-nominated) *A Quiet Place*, popular critical reviews of *Bird Box* have not been so kind. A generally favorable review on [rogerebert.com](#) says of the film, "It's imperfect, but you probably won't be returning it"; it is among the highest praise it receives in popular criticism.

 Netflix Film   
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Took off my blindfold this morning to discover that 45,037,125 Netflix accounts have already watched *Bird Box* — best first 7 days ever for a Netflix film!



1:30 PM - 28 Dec 2018

These dominant reactions have successfully controlled discussion, keeping the focus on arguments of quality, rather than consideration of the films' relationship with disability. This is despite Netflix's own viral ad campaign for *Bird Box* foregrounding its central pleasure: imagining what it would be like to be without sight.

Netflix's first person Twitter feed for its most successful film so far seems to invite viewers to do what the central character of the film is forced to do: wear a blindfold. In the film, an unseen alien life force compels anyone who sees it to gruesomely take their own life. The only way to survive is to live as if one has no sight, wearing a blindfold in any public space. (The film, and this tweet marketing its growing popularity, appear to have unintentionally started a brief, dangerous viral fan campaign #birdboxchallenge in which fans posted videos of themselves completing everyday tasks while wearing a blindfold, including driving!) Moreover, this film inviting audiences to imagine the experience of being without sight is framed as a journey to reach the goal of a sanctuary which we eventually discover is actually a school for the blind.

*Bird Box* continues to be a central part of the way streaming giant Netflix defines itself in social media. In fact, at the time of this writing, Netflix's Twitter page clearly announces the film as part of its identity: its 'personal profile' on the site identifies Netflix as "Proud godparent of Boy and Girl" (two central characters of the film).

Summing up, what are we to make of these films and their relationship with larger questions about disability's changing role in horror? Despite appearing to be central to the ways these narratives are structured, disability goes largely unmentioned in dominant debate about the films and their *quality*. While unacknowledged, disability appears to be a central informing voice of their narratives. Instead of a source of fear, though, disability appears to be increasingly presented as something of value. If anything it certainly points to viewers' (and industry's) continued fascination with disability and how this fascination is difficult to talk about or recognize. If this sounds like praise for these films, it is not. Instead it points to an opportunity the industry does not yet appear to have fully realized. When that happens, I'll be writing about a wildly popular film that does for ableism what *Get Out* did for racism.

*Your thoughts on these films and/or generally on disability and the horror genre?*

*Continue the discussion at: @RevofDisStud or @raphaelspeak .*

## Research Article

**Cultural Discourses About Immigration, Mothering, and Disability in Korea: An Ethnographic Interview Study**

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**Abstract:** This paper investigates ableism in the context of marriage-labor immigration in Korea, as demonstrated in the circulating discourses about mothering, cultural others, and deficits. I use examples from ethnographic interviews to underline the deficit perspective prevalent in Korean society, associating marriage-labor immigrant families with insufficiency, inferiority, and disability.

**Keywords:** Korea; Mothering; Disability Studies in Education; Critical Disability Studies

One windy afternoon in the spring of 2015, I sat down with the director of the Munsung Multicultural Family Support Center<sup>1</sup> in a small city located in the southeast of South Korea (“Korea” hereafter), Daeyang, over a cup of tea. I had just come back from interviewing Taejun, an employee at the center. As the director and I had talked about immigrant families in the Munsung province, of which Daeyang is a part, she had shared the perceived needs of the immigrants in the community, what the center was doing to address emergent problems, and her concerns about the immigrant families. In particular, the director expressed her worries about the well-being of children from immigrant families: “There are a lot of children with immigrant parents who have tic disorder.”

With the surge of immigrants, the children from “marriage immigrant families” have become a national concern in Korea (Kang, 2010; Lim, 2010; Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2006). Compared with their Korean counterparts, children from marriage immigrant families have been recognized as a source that generates new challenges for the country in and out of school settings (Kang, 2010; B. S. Kim, 2008; H.-R. Kim, 2009; S. Kim, 2009; Y. Kim, 2012; Lee, 2013; Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2006).

In this paper, I investigate how cultural discourses about mothering contribute to the presumed connection between immigration and disability in contemporary Korea. Examples from the interviews I carried out with different stakeholders of immigration in Korea underline the deficit perspective prevalent in Korean society, associating marriage immigrant families with insufficiency, inferiority, and behavioral and emotional disability. The two key informants whose stories are featured in this paper are: Huong, an immigrant mother from Vietnam, and Taejun, a Korean social worker employed at the Munsung Multicultural Family Support Center.

## The Context of Immigration to Korea: Marriage-Labor Immigration and Ableism

In the shadow of migratory precedents that have characterized Korea as a sending country, Korea in the late 20th and early 21st century has witnessed a large wave of immigrants moving to the country (Bélanger, Lee, & Wang, 2010). This period is one during which a rapidly industrializing Korea needed cheap and flexible laborers and spouses who would sustain family lineages and provide a new generation of workers to compete in the global economy (Kong, Yoon, & Yu, 2010). To address such needs, the Korean government was actively involved in creating a “marriage pipeline” in the beginning of the 21st century by sponsoring international trips to look for spouses in countries such as China, Vietnam, and the Philippines, as well as by easing immigration policy to facilitate marriage immigration (Freeman, 2011). International marriages facilitated through marriage immigration accounted for less than four percent of total marriages in 2000, but surpassed eleven percent within five years (Kong et al., 2010)<sup>2</sup>. The rapidly increasing immigrant population in Korea has caused many concerns about maintaining “Koreanness,” the country’s national cultural identity. Cultural unity through nationalism was emphasized at the cost of dismissing the diversity that already existed in the nation to bring together the Korean people against the “enemy” under imperialist and colonialist regimes (Kang, 2010; Yim, 2002). Such cultural attitudes infiltrated the ways Korean people perceived, experienced, and responded to the “cultural other” (Han, 2003, p. 25).

Unfortunately, Korean culture was not an exception to a pattern that McDermott and Varenne (1996) describe: “Every culture also teaches how to notice, handle, mistreat, and remediate those who fall short” (p. 108). In particular, ethnic homogeneity and normalcy played an important role in defining postcolonial and capitalist Korea in opposition to the threats of communist ideologies and economic poverty, “bracketing off disabled, poor, feminine, perverted, and racialized Others as outsiders” (E. Kim, 2017, p. 21). For example, when “mixed-blooded” children, being born between American soldiers and Korean mothers, were offered for adoption abroad, they were classified in the same category as children with disability (E. Kim, 2010).

In this paper, I use the term “marriage-labor immigrants” hereafter to refer to marriage immigrants who moved from East and Southeast Asia to Korea as a spouse to a Korean national. This is to highlight the connection between “ableism” and the labor that marriage immigrants daily engage in as mothers, wives, and daughters-in-law (Kim-Bossard, 2017). While there are different definitions of ableism and multiple levels on which it could be manifested, ableism commonly idealizes able-bodied, independent, and productive citizens in local and national communities (Goodley, 2014). Immigrant mothers in Korea are valued for their labor and productivity, as they care for family members, continue the family lineage through childbirth, and generate the future workforce for the nation. Marriage-labor immigration in Korea is highly dependent on the availability of able-bodied young women, capable of reproducing a new generation and of caring for Korean family members, to uphold

the normalizing traditional values and practices.

While what immigrants do and produce is critical to Korean society, marriage-labor immigrants are ironically portrayed as inferior to their Korean counterparts. Marriage-labor immigrants are deemed as abnormal in relation to the normalized ideals of Korean society, and as a result, the immigrants are discriminated against and considered to be “lacking.” Discursive representations of marriage-labor immigrants and their children in the media, news coverage, and government reports are rooted in a deficit perspective, blaming immigrant mothers for producing and reproducing deficits in their children (For example, see Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2006). This demonstrates a different way through which ableism manifests itself in marriage-labor immigration; that is, ableism encompasses social biases against those whose bodies and actions do not confirm to the “norms,” along with subsequent beliefs and practices produced in relation to biases (Gabel, 2005).

In this sense, marriage-labor immigrants are under the influence of ableism in two different, yet intertwined ways. The immigrants become wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law and labor to fulfill the preconceived notion of productive, able-bodied members of a community. At the same time, marriage-labor immigrants are seen as deviant, inherently lacking and never capable of achieving the idealized notion of “Koreanness.” Perceived from a deficit perspective, the immigrants are constructed as an anomaly of a society that adulterates the virtue of pure Korean national identity. The immigrants come under the influence of the hegemony of normalized bodies that reproduce, maintain familial and social hierarchy, and define what it means to be “Korean,” thus delineating the “other” (Said, 1979).

### **Disability and Mothering in Korea**

In this section, I contextualize disability in Korean society and briefly discuss the ways in which mothering relates to disability, as marriage-labor immigrants enact the role of traditional mothers in Korean society. The deficit perspective on disability has been dominant in Korea, considering disability as a pathology or disease within an individual (Wu, Ashman, & Kim, 2008). Traditionally, people have believed that disability is caused by supernatural influences, wrongdoings in the past, and misfortune (Yan, Accordino, Boutin, & Wilson, 2014). These “out of control” reasons have led to people with disabilities and their family members to feel a sense of shame, despair, and alienation (Yan et al., 2014).

Moreover, the intersection between disability and mothering makes visible the marginalization of disability in Korean society. While discourses about cure and eugenics have prevailed in classical and modern Korean literature, as well as contemporary cinema and popular media, mothering has functioned as a vehicle to fulfill the societal desire to keep disability in the margins (E. Kim, 2017). The efforts to “engineer nondisability” by “not passing down disability” associated with responsibility, knowledge, and morality, putting an immense amount of pressure on mothers (E. Kim, 2017, p. 80).

Situated in this cultural context, immigrant mothers are tasked with navigating the complex terrain of cultural discourses at the intersection of Koreanness and disability. The

responsibility to reproduce and raise “proper” Korean children, or culturally Korean and able-bodied children, is not an easy one to fulfill, particularly when their language skills, cultural knowledge, and even physical characteristics are already considered to be deficient and/or inferior. The fear of children from marriage-labor immigrant families having similar “deficits” or lacking “Koreanness” resonates with the societal stance towards disability: “[In Korea] reproduction has been framed within the notions of a nondisabled mother, of mothering nondisabled newborns, of family, and of morality in ways that forbid the continued presence of disability” (E. Kim, 2017, p. 79).

Ironically, many marriage-labor immigrant women in Korea fulfill the cultural discourses as mothers, wives, and daughters-in-law in which an increasing number of Korean women are refusing to partake (Hwang, 2009; Lee, 2012). In other words, the very population frequently shunned for threatening the racial, ethnic, and cultural homogeneity of the country, by bringing in cultures of the “other,” arguably support familial, cultural, and economic systems (Kwak & Kim, 2012; Lee, 2008; Lim, 2010). It is in this complex cultural climate about immigration that I examine the prevalence of the discourse of difference, deficit, and disability in contemporary Korean society.

### **Examining Cultural Discourses of Mothering Through Disability Studies**

Examining the discourses that emerged during a series of interviews, I take the position that a discourse cannot be separated from the contexts in which it is located, reflecting “a view of the world” (Morris, 1995, p. 97). Cultural discourses circulating in Korea display the society’s values, traditions, and beliefs. In other words, as an “ideologically saturated” means people utilize to communicate with one another, discourses are always socially and contextually constructed (Morris, 1995, p. 74).

In this paper, I extend the Disability Studies in Education (DSE) and Critical Disability Studies (CDS) literature by investigating how the national cultural identity in Korea functions as a dominant cultural discourse that disenfranchises immigrant mothers and their children as “cultural others” (Han, 2003, p. 25). As a theoretical perspective, DSE helps problematize taken-for-granted cultural assumptions about immigration, mothering, and disability in Korean society. The DSE scholarship has actively challenged underlying beliefs about underrepresented groups in society, rooted in a deficit perspective, and how such assumptions have contributed to the overrepresentation of minorities in special education (Artiles, Kozleski, Waitoller, & Luckinbeal, 2011; Baglieri & Moses, 2010).

While disability, deficit, and difference are often thought to be located within individuals, the DSE scholarship highlights the roles that the cultural contexts play in perceiving, experiencing, and negotiating disparities between “the normal” and “the abnormal” (Ware, 2004). Sleeter (1987) points out how the deficit lens on minority children has persisted, even though learning disability has replaced the rhetoric of the children being “retarded, emotionally disturbed, or slow” (pp. 231–232). Similarly to a number of DSE scholars, including Baglieri and Moses (2010), and Ferri and Connor (2005), who are troubled by the fact that children of certain races, socioeconomic standing, and gender are

overrepresented in special education classroom in the contemporary United States, I find it worrisome and even disturbing to see a similar rhetoric emerging in Korea with the surge in the immigrant population.

This paper is also informed by the literature in Critical Disability Studies (CDS), which actively engages issues of “race, racism, nationalism, and globalization” in contemporary society (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009, p. 64). As Goodley (2013) articulates, CDS conceptualizes disability as the contentious site where “a host of political, theoretical and practical issues that are relevant to all” intersect and manifest (p. 632). The CDS lens is highly relevant to the recent demographic shifts in Korea because emergent discourses about deficit and disability, including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and autism, reflect values and points of contention in the larger society, rather than within individuals themselves. By examining the tension between who counts as “normal” and “abnormal,” I investigate ableism in the context of marriage-labor immigration in Korea, as demonstrated in circulating discourses about mothering, cultural others, and deficits.

### **Methodological and Analytical Framework**

This paper examines accounts from two key informants collected through an ethnographic interview study carried out in Korea between 2013 and 2015. The duration of my yearly trips to Korea varied, lasting two to four weeks, and the length of my interviews steadily increased over the years, going from 45 minutes for the first interview in 2013 to several hours for the last interview in 2015. The ethnographic interviews that I carried out engaged and re-engaged informants over a period of time, and this approach allowed me to build on the interviews conducted earlier and analyze the informant accounts from a different perspective (Tobin & Hayashi, 2017). This paper focuses on my ethnographic interviews with Huong and Taejun, two of the key informants who I interviewed all three years, in the city of Daeyang.

For the ethnographic interviews conducted in 2013 and 2014, I visited Huong and Taejun at their workplace and/or met with them at places of their choosing in their neighborhoods, such as a local coffee shop. Carrying out ethnographic interviews, I asked a series of semi-structured interview questions to engage informants in the process of constructing the data, and to remain sensitive to their culture (Heyl, 2001; Spradley, 1979). I conducted the final follow up interviews in 2015 using a version of the “go-along” method to address the limitations of a sit-down interview that stemmed from the rigidity of the interview settings (Kusenbach, 2003). By accompanying the key informants at their work, walking along in their neighborhood, and sharing a meal together, I was able to engage them in emergent conversations about their memories, routines, and challenges to situated in familiar places. The interviews were conducted in Korean, and I translated the interview transcripts to English.

In the sections below, I analyze excerpts from ethnographic interviews to make ableism visible, illustrating “Koreanness” as the norm. While neither informant in Daeyang is



a representative of all marriage-labor immigrant mothers or Korean social workers in Korea, my interviews with them function as a discursive space of contention, where cultural discourses about immigration, mothering, and disability intersect with one another. As I carried out a close reading of the interviews, I used the ideas of DSE and CDS scholars articulated in the previous section to organize, interpret, and guide my analysis of ableism, thriving under the disguise of normalcy and traditions.

## Results and Discussion

### Huong as a “Lacking” Mother: Set up for Failure

Huong, currently a naturalized Korean citizen, is one of many immigrants who have moved to Korea through international marriage with a Korean man. Born and raised in a small rural town in Vietnam, she first considered getting married and moving to Korea because of her parents’ suggestion: “My mom asked me whether I would consider [marrying a Korean man].” During our first interview in 2013, Huong explained that there are many reasons why immigrants like her come to Korea. Korea was an attractive option for Huong because she thought there were many cultural similarities between Korea and Vietnam, and for that reason she thought she could transition more smoothly.

As a mother of two young children, Huong was sensitive to the challenges her children might experience at school and local communities. Being aware of how children from marriage-labor immigrant families were often marginalized, she had fears and concerns about sending her children to schools with which she was not familiar. During the interview carried out in 2014, she shared about her children’s transitions from home to school:

“But because I need to send children to school—there were no [children from marriage-labor immigrant] families in school before—but there are more nowadays. There are maybe five kids? Less than 10 kids per school ... Honestly, when it comes to children [from marriage-labor immigrant families], the moms are rather lacking, in terms of the language and the social relationships. Then I wish that people shared information so that the other side [marriage-labor immigrants] can do things [by themselves].”

As a mother, she was concerned that her children would be a “minority” at school and how this might influence their school experiences. Identifying her children as different from their peers and calling immigrant mothers like herself “lacking,” Huong positioned her children and herself within the deficit perspective prevalent in Korean society. While she adhered to the cultural discourse that put her and her children in a vulnerable position, she aspired to become more independent by avoiding relying on available help from various resources. Still, her words implied that immigrants could not easily do things on their own without the help of Korean people, regardless of how much the immigrants’ labor is valued in households, local communities, and society.

As Huong partook in the deficit perspective to explain herself as a mother and the ways she related to her children, Huong as an immigrant mother was fully aware of how she

was being perceived as a “lacking” mother, not as competent as a Korean mother in the local and national communities (Kim, N. H.-J., 2009). In the cultural context within which she was situated, what she brought with her as an immigrant was not acknowledged as valuable.

Here, it is important to clarify that Koreanness is not necessarily a static set of qualities people possess. Rather, it is a relational tool that positions people through normalcy rooted in customary practices. This is demonstrated in how Korean people are not guaranteed to be fully “Korean.” For instance, Korean women who refuse to accept the traditional values that ask them to embody the ideals of mothers, wives, and daughters-in-law are labeled as too liberal and progressive, making them inadequate vessels to continue Korean traditions and values on familial and national levels (Hwang, 2009; Lee, 2012). Yet, in the context of marriage-labor immigrant families, Koreanness is used as a means to degrade them into an inferior position.

The lack of “Koreanness” of immigrant mothers was constructed as an obstacle that keeps them from becoming competent mothers, regardless of the significance and the intensity of the labor they perform. The 2006 report by the Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources, *Educational Support for Children from Multicultural Backgrounds*, provides one reason why children with immigrant mothers may not speak Korean fluently: their mothers “lack in these abilities” (p. 6). As this example demonstrates, immigrant mothers in Korea are put in the difficult position of being held responsible for their children’s language education, specifically for the Korean language. This task is undeniably challenging because immigrant mothers are expected to teach their children Korean, which for them is a foreign language. Consequently, this expectation within a Korean cultural context positions immigrant parents as “insufficient mothers” and leads them to “prove themselves” as inadequate.

While Huong was specific in pointing out how immigrant mothers are lacking in “language and social relationship,” it is also questionable whether “lacking” immigrant mothers are ever capable of becoming “good enough” through their own efforts. Should or can Huong embrace Korean ways to the extent that she is perceived as “Korean enough”? As an immigrant mother who falls short of expectations and was in need of “improving herself,” Huong was set up to pursue a difficult path to fulfill familial and cultural needs.

### **The Responsibility of Korean Mothers: Educational Opportunities and Language Skills**

The interviews with Taejun, a Korean social worker working for the Munsung Multicultural Family Support Center in Daeyang, Korea, highlighted some of the conflicting discourses in Korean society that link “lacking” immigrant mothers (and their mothering) with the various levels of deficits in their children. In particular, the perceived cycle of immigrant “others” passing on and/or producing deficit through inadequate mothering was demonstrated in Taejun’s discussion of the Korean government’s recent interest in promoting bilingualism in marriage-labor immigrant families during the 2015 interview.

According to Taejun, raising children from marriage-labor immigrant families in a bilingual home environment was being increasingly recognized as a necessity in Korea.

Nevertheless, circulating cultural discourses that positioned immigrant mothers as the source of the inadequate “Koreanness” of their children made it challenging for the mothers to teach their children the language(s) of their home country. For instance, the wife of Taejun’s cousin, an immigrant woman from Vietnam, was encouraged by Taejun, with some reluctance, to teach the child Vietnamese at home, but she was hesitant to do so. Taejun thought that this was the case because the blame would be placed on her if the child was not fluent in Korean:

“My nephew [the child of Taejun’s cousin] is Vietnamese. [The mother] is an immigrant woman. So I told my cousin’s wife in passing, ‘I think it would be okay if kids use Vietnamese starting when they are young,’ without being convinced about it myself. ... If the child does not speak Korean well enough, my cousin’s wife would take the responsibility since the mother is Vietnamese. So [immigrant parents] have a tendency to mother using their broken Korean.”

Taejun shared that his cousin’s wife and other immigrant mothers were sensitive to the pressure that was put on them by Korean society regarding their children’s language skills. As a Korean man, Taejun also implied that he was fully aware of this pressure by pointing out how he could not strongly encourage his cousin’s wife and how he was not so sure about what he was recommending. While Taejun first identified his cousin’s child as Vietnamese, because the mother is from Vietnam, he ultimately confirmed that the child needed to speak good Korean in order for the Vietnamese mother to be recognized as a “good enough” mother.

Here, I would like to emphasize that it is neither my purpose nor intention to criticize Taejun for partaking in a discourse that points to challenges and difficulties immigrant mothers face as they navigate their lifeworlds in Korea. Rather, under the assumption that cultural discourses are constantly recycled and recirculated (Morris, 1995; Tobin, 2000), my goal is to articulate the multiplicities of discourses that complicate and contradict one another in the context of rapidly transforming demographics in Korea. Taejun’s words, coming from the perspective of a Korean man, a father, and one of the few male employees at the center, are valuable because they help materialize a cultural discourse about what is expected of mothers in Korea. I interpret Taejun to be denoting the significance that Korean culture places on the role of mothers in facilitating their children’s educational opportunities, as well as the subsequent expectations that immigrant mothers do the same.

In the case of Taejun’s cousin’s family, the cultural discourse that privileged “Koreanness” is not only a hindrance for their child becoming bi or multi-lingual, but it also functions as a mechanism to blame the mother. It is important to take into consideration how a child’s performance is used to measure how “good” a mother is in Korean culture (You & McGraw, 2011), and language competency is a part of the performance. What immigrant mothers are navigating is the ableist power dynamics that emphasize the societal need for the productive labor of immigrant mothers.

### **ADHD, Autism, Behavioral and Emotional Disability as a Label**

During a series of interviews with Taejun, a number of cultural discourses about work and mothering were brought up that endorsed a deficit perspective on immigrant parents and their children in Korean society. Going beyond exploring the contended space between “Korean” and “multicultural,” these emergent discourses attributed the children’s deficit to their immigrant mothers. Specifically, the discourses pointed to working immigrant mothers.

As an experienced social worker, Taejun understood the struggles many immigrants were facing, acknowledging that immigrant parents were under pressure to work and provide for not only their immediate family, but also their parents back at home. He added that the immigrants were also concerned about saving up enough for the future because many of their spouses were older than them and would retire when their children were still young. Still, it was difficult for Taejun to understand how some immigrant mothers would prioritize work over their children. He interpreted the situations of immigrant mothers working and not being able to spend enough time with their children using diagnostic language:

“During this time when children are sensitive and need love, the mothers work over time until late at night, because the money is big ... Then there is no mother’s care, even though mothers are the primary caregivers. Then children are disturbed emotionally, and there are children who are autistic, even though they don’t have autism. What is it called? ADHD? There are children who can’t concentrate. My nephew [whose mother is Vietnamese] has some tendency toward that. So, I don’t think that’s a normal environment for raising children...”

While it is debatable what he meant by a “normal environment,” Taejun was clear in saying that mothers play a key role as primary caregivers. As Taejun described what he had observed in children from immigrant families using various diagnoses, including autism and ADHD, he implied a strong causal relationship between the deficits found in children and immigrant mothers’ time away from home. Taejun’s words suggested that emotionally disturbed children and children with learning disabilities were produced by working immigrant mothers. In particular, I interpreted his comment about “autistic children who don’t have autism” as reflecting how he grappled with the gap between what he observed and the circulating label of autism to describe children’s behaviors. While contemplating various factors that could contribute to the reasons why the children act in certain ways, I sensed that something was amiss when certainty about the “diagnosis” or “what the children have” is problematized.

In this example, the discourse of mothering that promotes traditional beliefs and practices in Korean society resurfaced as a point of contention, in relation to how the immigrant mothers pursue work opportunities. The tension that came from discourses about working immigrant mothers were based on patriarchal and hierarchical values embedded in Confucian beliefs, advocating for a traditional view on mothers and wives (Kim, Chang, & Kim, 2008; Yoo, 2006). In other words, the traditional Korean discourse about a particular type of mothering was being forced on immigrant women, even though more and more Korean women were refusing to conform to them (Constable, 2009; Hwang, 2009; S. Kim,

2009; Lee, 2012).

Positioned as “interfering” or “competing” with raising children, the economic activity of immigrant parents, particularly mothers, is seen as dangerous and even detrimental to a child’s upbringing. Framed as a dichotomous choice, working immigrant mothers are positioned as “bad” mothers who are not making wise decisions for their children. Taejun’s words led me to consider what it could mean if all children with working mothers suffer from or obtain deficits or disabilities.

Unfortunately, putting the blame on immigrant mothers for their children’s acquired “learning disabilities” was a disturbingly familiar discourse. For instance, the Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources (2006), as well as Cho (2006) and Kang (2010), correlate immigrant parents’ lack of Korean language skills with their children’s slow and below-average language development, as I discussed briefly in an earlier section. In particular, *Educational Support for Children from Multicultural Backgrounds*, a 2006 document from the Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources, associated low academic performance, emotional disturbance and learning disabilities with language development:

“Children from women immigrants tend to have a disadvantage in Korean language development and adaptation, as their early years are spent with mothers who also lack in these abilities. Naturally many students experience difficulties in keeping up with school studies, suffer from excessive emotional negativism, and even show signs of violence and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)” (Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2006, p. 6).

This example illustrates cultural assumptions and attitudes in Korean society towards mothers, especially immigrant mothers. By specifically referring to the influence of immigrant mothers on their children’s language skills, socialization, academic achievements, emotional and behavioral tendencies, the example assumes that mothers have a stronger impact on their children than other family members, the local community, and the media. This means that it is easy for immigrant mothers to be criticized and targeted for their children’s perceived shortcomings. The immigrant mothers, whose family’s financial needs require them to work, are particularly in a contentious space on the verge of being “bad” mothers as they struggle with their childcare responsibilities.

At the same time, immigrant mothers who spend time with their children at home are ironically blamed for passing their deficits onto the children. The earlier excerpt from *Educational Support for Children from Multicultural Backgrounds* (2006) points out how children from marriage-labor immigrant families are in a disadvantaged position “as their early years are spent with mothers who also lack in these abilities” (p. 6). This logic overgeneralizes the influence of immigrant parents on children and the ways children respond to external influences. Being seen as inadequate and negligent mothers, marriage-labor immigrants negotiate their position on a daily basis.

## Conclusion and Reflection

I opened this paper with a short account of my encounter with a director of an immigrant family support center who expressed deep concerns about the well-being of children from marriage-labor immigrant families in Korea, specifically in regards to assumed deficits in the children. The cultural discourse that associates deficits with marriage-labor immigration and mothering practices prevails not only among social workers who work closely with immigrant families but also in media, government reports, and scholarly literature about the demographic transformation in contemporary Korea (for example, see Cho, 2011; Y. Kim, 2012; Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2006). This discourse, exemplified by what emerged in my interviews with Huong and Taejun, blames immigrant mothers for failing to fulfill “Korean” beliefs and practices in mothering through a sense of hierarchy between Korean people and newcomers. In this context, even Huong, as a marriage-labor immigrant parent, participated in the discourse, ascribing a version of a deficit perspective onto herself and her children.

In this paper, I propose alternative ways of perceiving, relating to, and interacting with immigrant parents and their children in Korea by examining complexities and contradictions made visible at the intersections of immigration, disability, and mothering. By analyzing emergent accounts through the lens informed by DSE and CDS scholars, I investigate the role an ableist perspective plays in both facilitating immigration and marginalizing the immigrant population in Korea, bringing attention to the power dynamics between the “Korean” and the “others.” I further argue that such a perspective does not take into consideration the role played by cultural values and customs, disregarding assumptions ingrained in a discursive landscape of local and national communities.

The findings from this study suggest tentative, but significant implications that make visible the tension between what counts as successful mothering in Korea and the cultural discourse that blames immigrant mothers for their own and their children’s deficits. As a starting point, more attention needs to be paid to the role immigrant mothers play in local and national communities, recognizing the ways in which ableism manifests itself through marriage-labor immigration. Immigration to Korea functions as a site where many taken-for-granted beliefs and practices are contested in the midst of the nation’s rapidly transforming demographics. As a result, immigrant mothers are caught in the middle of efforts to maintain a Korean cultural identity, which pressures them to assimilate to and perform the “Korean” way at the expense of their own experience and knowledge in mothering (Bélanger et al., 2010; Kang, 2010). What immigrant mothers are actually expected to do, then, is not simply accept and fulfill the role of “a good mother,” but confirm and fulfill pre-existing cultural norms that meet the needs of Korean society.

Moreover, the findings can be interpreted as a basis for challenging the prevalent causal logic between immigrant mothering and deficit. As demonstrated in the earlier sections, immigrant mothers are, ironically, held responsible for both not spending enough time with their children and for passing down their deficits to their children by spending time

with them. This contradiction reveals not only the complexities of circulating cultural discourses of mothering, with which immigrant mothers grapple on a daily basis, but also how they are positioned to carry out a task in which they cannot be successful. If challenges that immigrant mothers face in raising their children are recognized and contextualized further, the simple assumption of immigrant mothering as a cause of their children's deficit could be overcome through a consideration of multiple factors that influence the children from marriage-labor immigrant families.

The demographic landscape in Korea is transforming rapidly, yet prevalent preconceptions about immigration, cultural values, and mothering practices continue to marginalize marriage-labor immigrants and their families in Korea as cultural "others." In an attempt to articulate an emergent issue in Korean society, this paper is a call to further examine the intersection of immigration and disability through cultural discourses on mothering.

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### Endnotes

1. To ensure confidentiality, I use pseudonyms for all the names of people, institutions, and demographic regions in this paper.
2. In addition to marriage immigration, a number of immigrants moved to Korea to find employment. The low birth rate in the country, as well as the shortage of labor for low-end jobs in the manufacturing, construction, fishery, and service industries, produced a need for low-wage immigrant laborers who were in search of better paying jobs (Kong et al., 2010). As a result, in 2007, 60% of the entire foreign population in Korea consisted of labor immigrants (Kong et al., 2010).

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## Research Article

# Disability and Educators in Mathematics Schooling Research: A Critical Exploratory Review

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**Abstract:** In this exploratory review, we use a disability studies lens to analyze the focus and outcomes of 15 recently published research articles that spotlight the role of educators in the mathematics schooling of students with disabilities. The results of our review not only point to continuation of problematic positioning and paradigms in research, but also underscore the value in supporting special educators' mathematics understandings. Moreover, we note advancements in socio-contextual and socio-political research approaches that afford better understanding of the re/construction of disabled students, spaces, and pedagogy phenomena. We assert that outcomes of this review can inform more just research and practices for students with disabilities in mathematics education.

**Keywords:** Mathematics Education; Education; Disability Studies in Education

This exploratory review uses a Disability Studies in Mathematics Education (DSME) lens to analyze the focus and findings of recently published research that focuses on educators in disability mathematics education, and to recommend directions for future research and practice. Because mathematics is a human endeavor filled with creativity, all students should be afforded opportunities to engage in meaningful mathematical sense making connected to their lives. Such opportunities must also leverage their unique ways of thinking rather than experiencing only procedural instruction in which they must replicate the thinking of others (Gutiérrez, 2017). Opportunities that support the development and connections of mathematical reasoning and understanding as a human endeavor often do not exist for mathematics learners labeled with disabilities. Although evidence suggests that students with disabilities can engage in rigorous and sophisticated forms of mathematics (e.g., Peltenburg, van den Heuvel-Panhuizen, & Robitzsch, 2013; Lambert, 2015; Tan, 2017), this group of students typically are only offered low rigor mathematics (Jackson & Neel, 2006; Tan, 2016). Thus, we examine the literature for insights into the role of educators in fostering or limiting students with disabilities' opportunities in mathematics education.

Understanding the role of educators is crucial to advancing just practices (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013), yet such understanding has received very limited range when it comes to mathematics education involving students with disabilities. In a related study, we found that articles on mathematics education that did not include students with disabilities were far more likely to focus on educators as a unit of analysis compared to those that did include disability (Lambert & Tan, 2016). Related to problem solving, Lambert and Tan (2017) reported that teachers of students with disabilities were most often conceptualized as technicians following a predetermined, scripted curriculum, rather than as agentic. The concept of teachers of students with disabilities as technicians in educational research and practice mirrors the positivist paradigm within traditional special education which values replication of practices

in research (Cochran-Smith & Dudley-Marling, 2012; Skrtic, 1991). Special education research has traditionally centered on "... evaluating the effectiveness of instructional practices on children's learning but have focused less on the influence of teachers' understandings of the content they teach and the instructional practices they choose..." (Griffin, Jitendra, & League, 2009, p. 320). While mathematics education is grounded in constructivist and social-constructivist traditions, special education mathematics is rooted in behaviorism and cognitivist perspectives (van Garderen, Scheuermann, Jackson, & Hampton, 2009; Woodward, 2004). For this study, we employ an analytic framework, Disability Studies in Mathematics Education DSME0, that integrates disability studies with critical approaches to mathematics education to explore the role of educators in constructing disability and in affording or limiting opportunities.

### **Disability Studies in Mathematics Education**

DSME (Tan & Kastberg, 2017) is grounded in sociocultural traditions, synthesizing elements of disability studies (Gabel, 2005) and equity in mathematics education (Gutiérrez, 2013) scholarship. Disability studies scholars examine disability as a social construction that results in exclusion and oppression (e.g., Linton, 1998). They are also critical of special education and its groundings in positivist traditions that locate deficits within individuals and perpetuate ableism (Valle & Connor, 2011; Ware, 2005). Similarly, equity in mathematics education scholars problematize social forces that marginalize students and offer four interdependent equity domains: access, achievement, identity, and power (Gutiérrez, 2013). We draw on these domains and integrate disability studies concepts to ground our analytic framework.

The first domain, access, involves opportunities to engage meaningfully in a rigorous curriculum. This includes full access to and meaningful participation in mathematics educational programs with non-disabled peers, as well as access to teachers with strong mathematical and pedagogical content knowledge. In turn, achievement in these programs consists of students constructing knowledge alongside a full range of peers and making connections to their lived experiences outside of school, as well as other measures of achievement. According to Gutiérrez (2013), identity and power are interconnected concepts, each one shaping the other. Students with disabilities have been positioned through deficit constructions such as having gaps in mathematics knowledge (Tan & Thorius, 2018). In turn, they are not perceived as mathematics doers and thinkers, but as a collection of deficits (Tan, Lambert, Padilla, & Wieman, 2018). DSME scholars center on the role of power in mathematics education. Those without disabilities typically both construct and identify disabilities, determining "appropriate" forms of mathematics instruction and the spaces in which students with disabilities are allowed to learn (Tan & Kastberg, 2017), using unproductive concepts such as remediation (Tan & Thorius, 2018).

In sum, employing a DSME lens affords us a critical dimension that examines taken-for-granted assumptions and marginalizing practices in mathematics education involving individuals with disabilities. As such, it strives for more productive and liberating forms of

educational research in mathematics for and with this group of individuals. Indeed, a DSME lens can inform future research and practice, locating mathematics disabilities more broadly across multiple dimensions (e.g., student, teacher, classroom, curriculum) of teaching and learning, rather than a singular focus on individuals. It helps us imagine new possibilities in inclusive mathematics curriculum and spaces (Greenstein & Baglieri, 2018). Thus, we turn to the literature for progress on this front and to recommend future work with the following interrelated guiding questions:

1. What is the focus and outcomes of studies published from 2013–2015 that examined the role of educators in mathematics education and disability?
2. How were students with disabilities in mathematics framed in these studies?

## Method

The articles for this study were drawn from a larger dataset (Lambert & Tan, 2016) that included 1,463 empirical studies in mathematics education between 2013–2015. These articles focused on K–12 educators, students, and families but excludes research that focus' exclusively on mathematics at the undergraduate level unless the participants were prospective teachers. Also, this larger dataset involved educational database searches (i.e., ERIC, JSTOR, and PsychINFO) looking for descriptors and keywords of mathematics, math, and numeracy. For this review we examined these articles to determine whether they met the following criteria: the articles had to (a) be published in English or translated into English in peer-reviewed journals, (b) focus on mathematics educators (e.g., prospective and practicing K–12 teachers, teacher educators, mathematics educational researchers) and mathematics as central units of analysis, (c) include issues of disability as a focal topic (e.g., students with disabilities, special education, inclusive education), and (d) be original, empirical studies. Thus, we excluded review or synthesis of research, conceptual and theoretical articles, opinion pieces, and examples of and reports on practices or programs. The result of this process yielded 15 empirical research articles for examination.

For our analysis of the first research question, we utilized a conceptual review (Kennedy, 2007) to organize the articles into specific categories and to analyze each article within these groups. The back-and-forth process of analyzing and organizing the articles was central to refining the categories and themes. We identified the following categories a priori: (a) social-context (SC) aspects of mathematics education (Martin, Gholson, & Leonard, 2010) such as teacher's beliefs, perspectives, and attitudes related to mathematics and disability, (b) pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which includes mathematics teaching practices (e.g., standards-based curriculum alignment, co-teaching), and (c) mathematics content knowledge (MCK), or developing or assessing educators' mathematics content knowledge or teacher perceptions of mathematics. All studies centralized at least one of these three categories, while several studies examined two or three. The categorization process involved each author individually reading and sorting the 15 articles into the three categories. After this process, we held a meeting to discuss how each of us categorized the articles, exploring any discrepancies in sorting. Our disagreements were mostly around how each of us interpreted the socio-

context category differently. In turn, we refined the description of the socio-context category to reconcile our different interpretations and to then agree on the categorization of articles that should or should not be in this category.

Next, we developed themes within each of the three categories. The first author examined the articles within each of the three categories and derived codes which were based on the central focus of each study. During this process, the first author recategorized several articles as they seemed to better fit into another category. The first and second author met to discuss this recategorization and agreed. The first author then collapsed the codes into the two or three themes for each of the categories. As themes emerged, the first author continued to shift some articles to other categories or themes as those articles fit better elsewhere. Once all of the themes for the first research question were complete, the first and second author held a meeting to deliberate and reconcile any differences. For analysis of our second research question, we employed the DSME lens to formulate themes based on each study's focus and outcomes. This involved interpreting the study's positioning and phenomena. For positioning, we looked at how each study situated students with disabilities (and when applicable, their families), or educators regarding access, identity, and power. We derived such positioning from either the authors or the participants in the study (e.g., perception data). Examples of questions that guided this positioning analysis included: (a) To what extent are students with disabilities seen as capable mathematics learners and doers? (b) Where is the locus of power in decision-making regarding the mathematics education of students with disabilities and what are the basis for those decisions? (c) How is the "problem" constructed and addressed (e.g., deficits within and/or beyond students)? For phenomena, we examined each study's findings and global takeaways about how disability construction impacted mathematics education equity components such as access, achievement, identity, and power (Gutiérrez, 2013).

## Results

Table 1 presents a summary of the 15 studies including how we categorized each and the outcomes of our interpretation of their positioning and phenomena. Figure 1 illustrates the results of our analysis encompassing two interrelated major themes: (1) addressing teachers' mathematics understanding as valuable and (2) re/construction of disabled students, spaces, and pedagogy.

**Table 1***Summary of Reviewed Empirical Studies*

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Teacher Participants</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Positioning</b>	<b>Phenomena</b>
Afamasaga-Fuata'i & Sooaemalelagi (2014)	Prospective teachers majoring in early childhood or special education.	MCK	Prospective special educators' mathematics pedagogy can benefit from developing deeper mathematical understandings.	Participants developed a deeper understanding and appreciation of mathematics content, and stated that they were excited to apply more innovative approaches in their classrooms.
Bailey, Nomanbhoy, & Tubpun (2015)	Practicing elementary teachers involved in remedial mathematics and literacy education.	SC	Participating teachers constructed students with disabilities and their families as burdens.	Participants constructed separate special education classrooms as appropriate spaces for students with disabilities.
Clark et al. (2014)	Novice elementary teachers including those certified in special education.	MCK PCK SC	Special educators beliefs about students with disabilities can be positively influenced from professional development.	Special educators belief that mathematics education should include periods of struggle depended on the number of professional development hours they had received.
Faulkner & Cain (2013)	Practicing teachers including those certified in special education.	MCK	Educators can benefit from mathematics content knowledge development.	Both general and special educators made significant gains in content knowledge for teaching mathematics as a result of the intervention.
Faulkner, Crossland, & Stiff (2013)	Dataset of teacher recommendations for 3,055 students (281 students receiving special education services).	SC	Teachers have the power to make placement decisions and made those decisions based on stereotypes related to students with disabilities in mathematics.	Students with disabilities were less likely to be placed into algebra courses by the time they entered eighth grade compared to students not receiving special education services, despite having high mathematics achievement scores.
Griffin, C.C., League, Griffin, V.L., & Bae (2013)	Practicing elementary teachers.	PCK	The authors positioned students with disabilities as benefiting from stereotypical mathematics pedagogy but not with	Participants' adherence to mathematics discourse practices varied to a great degree in inclusive mathematics classrooms.

learning with peers.

Harris, Pollingue, Herrington, & Holmes (2014)	Prospective Special education teachers.	PCK	The authors positioned students with disabilities as lacking mathematics vocabulary understanding.	The authors reported that participants felt more confident in teaching mathematics vocabulary to students after the intervention.
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Authors	Teacher Participants	Categories	Positioning	Phenomena
Heyd-Metzuyanim (2013)	Researcher serving as the teacher.	SC	The author viewed student's mathematics disability as socially constructed.	The teacher had a major role in contributing to the student's disabled identity construction, and interactional routines in the classroom are co-constructed by students and teachers.
Hinton, Flores, Burton, & Curtis (2015)	Prospective special educators.	MCK PCK SC	Improving special educators' mathematics content knowledge can positively influence their pedagogy.	Participants who categorized their teaching methods as dominated by procedural strategies held lower expectations of their students and had lower scores on content knowledge measures, compared to participants who incorporated conceptually-based pedagogy.
Hostins & Jordão (2015)	Practicing teachers including those who were special education certified.	PCK SC	The authors positioned students with disabilities as capable mathematics doers and thinkers.	Although teachers constructed special education classrooms as a place devoid of specific content learning, the participating student with a disability displayed sophisticated forms of mathematics meaning-making.
Kurz, Elliott, Lemons, Zigmond, Kloo, & Kettler (2014)	Practicing general and special educators.	SC	Participants positioned students with disabilities as not being capable of a higher order of thinking in mathematics.	Students with disabilities in the general education classrooms had less instructional time with state-specific standards as well as less content coverage when compared to students without disabilities.
Malone & Fuchs (2014)	Fourth-grade practicing teachers; research assistants (tutors).	SC	Participating teachers positioned "at-risk" students as problematic, while tutors perceived the same students as more attentive. Students with disabilities benefit	Tutors rated the students as more attentive than the classroom teachers. Also, tutor ratings had more predictive power than teacher ratings on student fraction concepts



			from stereotypical mathematics pedagogy.	performance.
Murphy & Marshall (2015)	General and special education professors; prospective teachers.	MCK PCK	The authors positioned special education professors and prospective teachers as lacking confidence in affording opportunities for Common Core State Standards (CCSS) preparation.	Differences in confidence levels and professional development opportunities exist between general and special education professors. Prospective special educators expressed concern for CCSS mathematics content and pedagogy knowledge.
Authors	Teacher Participants	Categories	Positioning	Phenomena
Murzyn & Hughes (2015)	Practicing general and special educators; school administrators.	SC	Special educators suppressed students with disabilities and their families' voices.	Students with disabilities, their families, and mathematics teachers lacked a voice in decision-making.
Pape, Prosser, Griffin, Dana, Algina, & Bae (2015)	Practicing elementary teachers, including those who were special education certified.	MCK PCK SC	The authors positioned students with disabilities as benefiting from stereotypical mathematics pedagogy.	Participants developed mathematics and pedagogical knowledge to support their students' conceptual understanding and increased mathematics knowledge of their students.

*Note.* MCK = mathematics content knowledge; SC = social context; PCK=pedagogical content knowledge.

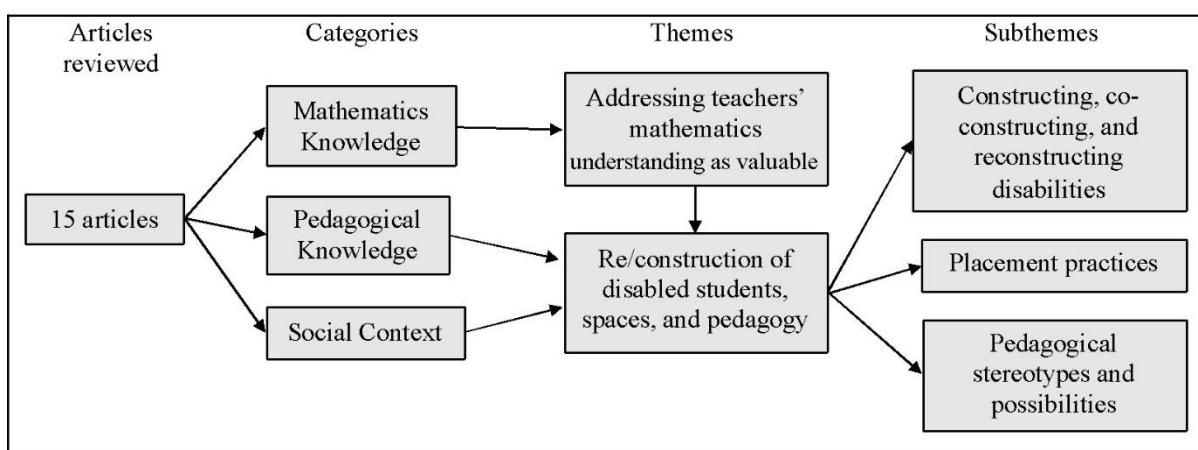


Figure 1. Outcomes of the exploratory review with progression of themes development from left to right.

Image description: Figure 1 illustrates the process and results of our analysis, starting with the 15 articles, then progressing into the three categories, namely: mathematics knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and social context. From the first category, the figure shows a direct line to the first of two interrelated major themes: addressing teachers' mathematics understanding as valuable. From the second and third categories, the figure shows them converging to the second major theme: re/construction of disabled students, spaces, and pedagogy. From the second theme, there are three sub-themes: (a) constructing, co-constructing, and reconstructing disabilities, (b) placement practices, and (c) pedagogical stereotypes and possibilities.

Next, we describe features of each theme, related subthemes, and, as necessary, a short description of the studies.

### Addressing Teachers' Mathematics Understanding

Five articles in our review address teacher's mathematics content knowledge (Afamasaga-Fuata'i & Sooaemalelagi, 2014; Clark et al., 2014; Faulkner & Cain, 2013; Hinton et al., 2015; Pape et al., 2015) and in general point to the advantages of pursuing this line of research. Afamasaga-Fuata'i and Sooaemalelagi's (2014) study and Faulkner and Cain's (2013) are two that solely focused on mathematics content knowledge, while the remaining three also included pedagogical components. Special educators represented either all of the participants in these studies or at least a notable portion.

Afamasaga-Fuata'i and Sooaemalelagi (2014), for example, noted that prospective special educators expressed excitement about their new understanding from a mathematics methods course and planned to implement these approaches in their own classrooms. The authors examined the development of 84 Samoan prospective teachers' mathematical understandings and mathematics attitudes during participants' engagement in mathematics content learning—problem-solving strategies, metacognitive tools, mental computations, and mathematical processes. These same forms of engagements reflected a new mathematics curriculum that was being implemented in primary schools. Because the participants did not successfully pass a mathematics methods course on their first attempt, they were considered to have struggled with the development of mathematics knowledge. Participants included those who were interested in obtaining credentials in general education, early childhood, or special education. They were enrolled in a 14-week course involving face-to-face meetings twice per week that included lectures and workshops, followed by a teaching practicum. The focus of the course was to learn the different ways to use tools to display mathematical ideas and to develop conceptual understanding. The authors examined relationships between pre- and post-tests, participants' attitude towards mathematics, and post-semester interviews to understand attitudinal changes. The authors reported that in working on mathematical processes, mental computations, multiple problem-solving strategies, and concept maps and diagrams, participants learned to “strategically identify and meaningfully understand and appreciate mathematical ideas, their interconnections and various applications in selecting appropriate methods in solving mathematical tasks or conducting investigations” (p. 357).

Pape and colleagues' (2015) study examined the effects of an online professional development program—aimed to build conceptual mathematics knowledge and pedagogical knowledge—on 23 elementary school teachers (17 general educators, and six special educators). The researchers approached supporting teachers to make deep meaning of mathematics through building conceptual understanding. The study also engaged participants in examining students' thinking within clinical interviews, and participants learned ways to elicit students' mathematical thinking during mathematics activities. Participants were then challenged to implement knowledge gained from the professional development in their classrooms. The authors reported that participants developed pedagogical knowledge to support their students' conceptual understanding and increased mathematics knowledge of their students.

Faulkner and Cain's (2013) study also aimed to support educators' mathematics

content knowledge by examining the effects of a professional development course. The course centered on practical experiences that would better translate into stronger classroom practices for students with disabilities in mathematics. Participants in the study included 199 K–12 general mathematics educators and 93 special education teachers certified at the K–12 levels. The authors examined special educators' mathematical knowledge, speculating that it would be lower when compared to their general education peers. Yet, the authors reported that both general and special educators made significant gains in content knowledge for teaching mathematics as a result of the professional development course.

Hinton and colleagues's (2015) study underscores the importance of supporting special educators in developing strong mathematics knowledge and their connections to practice. In their study, 33 prospective special educators were assessed on K–6 mathematics computation and problem-solving content skills. Overall, higher scores on these assessments correlated to teachers' identification of their teaching practices as conceptual, while lower scores related to procedural types of practices. The authors suggested that "participants' lack of focus on conceptual knowledge may be due to their own lack of mathematics understanding and skill" (p. 9). Thus, building understanding in how to support special educators' mathematics content development is a crucial, particularly at the pre-service level. Indeed, Murphy and Marshall (2015) argues such work is important to better prepare special educators to implement more rigorous mathematics standards as mandated by states. Yet, this sense of urgency is not reflected in research. Besides the Afamasaga-Fuata'i and Sooaemalelagi (2014) study, we did not find any other published studies from 2013–2015 focused solely on developing prospective special educators' mathematics knowledge.

### **Re/Construction of Disabled Students, Spaces, and Pedagogy**

The second major theme focused on how learners with disabilities are re/constructed in mathematics education and consequences of such constructions in terms of designated spaces and types of opportunities afforded. The studies within this theme mostly point to inequities in terms of access, achievement, identity, and power (Gutiérrez, 2013). We organize this section into three sub-themes to support the major theme: (a) constructing, co-constructing, and reconstructing disabilities (Bailey et al., 2015; Heyd-Metzuyanim, 2013; Hinton et al., 2015; Hostins & Jordão, 2015), (b) placement practices (Faulkner et al., 2013; Murzyn & Hughes, 2015), and (c) pedagogical stereotypes and possibilities (Clark et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2014; Hinton et al., 2015; Griffin et al., 2013; Pape et al., 2015).

#### **Constructing, Co-Constructing, and Reconstructing Disabilities**

Bailey, Nomanbhoy, and Tubpun (2015) reported that while teachers held positive attitudes towards the principle of inclusion, they constructed students with disabilities as burdens. The authors conducted a survey involving 300 Malaysian primary school teachers who taught remedial literacy and mathematics. The teachers participated in professional development that aimed to support their knowledge of students with disabilities. Participants also noted that students with disabilities required more teacher attention, lacked persistence, detracted the learning of other students, and required more specialized technical skills (similar sentiments were reported by Malone and Fuchs (2014)). As such, participants expressed that

special education classrooms were optimum learning environments for students with disabilities. Moreover, participants constructed families of students with disabilities as burdens, perceiving that these families presented more challenges compared to families of students without disabilities.

The ways students with disabilities are constructed also relates to how teachers categorize their mathematics teaching approaches. Hinton, Flores, Burton, and Curtis (2015) examined prospective special education teachers' mathematics content knowledge, self-efficacy measures on mathematics content, and how the participants described their mathematics teaching methods. The participants ( $n=33$ ), who were part of an undergraduate teacher preparation program in elementary special education, completed the surveys during the final university course before graduation. The authors reported that participants who categorized their teaching methods as dominated by procedural strategies held lower expectations of their students compared to participants who incorporated conceptual knowledge strategies.

Whereas Bailey et al. (2015) and Hinton et al. (2015) focused on how teachers perceive students with disabilities as a stereotyped group thereby constructing them accordingly, Heyd-Metzuyanim's (2013) focused on the teacher's role in co-constructing disability during mathematics interactions. Heyd-Metzuyanim attributed both student and teacher factors that contributed to a disability identity. In particular, Heyd-Metzuyanim examined teaching-learning interactions in mathematics involving a seventh-grade female student, Dana, and her teacher, the researcher of that study. These interactions are in line with the teacher "making sense of student work/thinking to respond" (Kastberg, Tyminski, & Sanchez, 2017, p. 12). Heyd-Metzuyanim's five-month study involved pre- and post-student interviews, and assessments of mathematical skills. Despite intensive individualized mathematics interventions, the author reported that Dana showed no improvement in her mathematical skills. Results also indicated that Dana felt less competent in mathematics between the first and last interview. Rather than categorize such instances as Dana's failure to respond to evidence-based mathematics interventions, Heyd-Metzuyanim posited that she (the teacher) had a major role shaping Dana's identity construction as disabled. For example, the author identified how Dana was excluded from meaning-making mathematics practices such as participating in classroom discourse. Thus, Dana ascribed to an identity based on what others, including her teacher, perceived about her lack of mathematics abilities.

Unlike Bailey et al. (2015), Hinton et al. (2015), and Heyd-Metzuyanim's (2013) focus on co- or constructing students with disabilities in terms of limitations, Hostins and Jordão (2015) instead analyzed the potential of a student with a disability as a mathematical doer and thinker. This is a way to deconstruct long held assumptions about disability and mathematics. Hostins and Jordão's (2015) analyzed a mathematics teaching episode and the qualities of the mathematics interaction in effect deconstructed disability as deficit. Guided by elements of social constructivism, the authors examine how the participants (one teacher and one student referred to as JF who carried an intellectual disability label) interacted during a Base Three Game. The game is accessible yet involves complex forms of mathematical

thinking. The analysis of observations and artifacts from the games indicated that JF used symbols to differentiate his results and those of the teacher, worked interchangeably between quantities and game pieces, and differentiated based on form. The teacher then guided advancement of JF's intellectual engagement by introducing psychological instruments such as mathematical tools to explore ("+" symbol). The authors posited that additional tools could be introduced to continue the advancement of "superior psychological functions...exposing the understanding of the potential possibilities" (Hostins & Jordão, 2015, p. 14).

Hostins and Jordão (2015) contrasted these possibilities within a larger context devoid of opportunities in these types of mathematics interactions. In this context, despite a national inclusive education policy and curriculum practices guaranteeing that students with disabilities had access to regular education, the authors' examination of teacher discourse during group interviews indicated that participating teachers shifted pedagogical responsibilities of working with students with disabilities to special education spaces. In turn, opportunities for rich mathematical interactions such as the one with JF were not likely to occur given participants' construction of special education places as one with unspecific broad pedagogical descriptions (e.g., "differentiated strategies," "adapting to the needs of each student," "complementary and/or supplementary to learning"). The authors argue that such characteristics contributed to increasing the responsibilities gap between general and special educators, in effect reversing national inclusive education initiatives.

#### Placement Practices

Construction of disabled students and spaces also relate to placement practices. For one, mathematics teachers and families lack a voice in placement decision-making as documented in Murzyn and Hughes' (2015) study. The authors examined three cases of mathematics placement decisions for high school students with high-incidence disabilities (e.g., specific learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders). Placement in this context is conceptualized as both the location in which students engage with mathematics and the provision of associated special education services (e.g., general education classroom with accommodations and modifications; general education classroom within a co-taught classroom; and special education resource classroom). The authors reported that special education teachers took the lead in making final placement decisions and factors unrelated to student's need influenced their placement decisions (e.g., master schedule, course options). Of note, the participants expressed concern for the lack of mathematics course options in their schools which resulted in students with disabilities having to be placed in the general education mathematics courses. Inherent in these concerns are participants' assumptions that students with disabilities are "low" in mathematics. Kurz and colleagues (2014) reported similar sentiments from their teacher participants. Thus, such concerns indicate constructions of disabled students and separate mathematics learning spaces as natural and necessary. At the same time, the general education is perceived as unyielding and unsupportive of students with disabilities (Skrtic, 1991).

The outcomes from Faulkner, Crossland, and Stiff's (2013) study underscore the constructions of disabled students and separate mathematics learning spaces as natural and

necessary. The authors examined patterns in eighth-grade placement decisions into algebra courses using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten dataset that included over 3,000 students. The authors studied teacher evaluation measures on students' mathematics ability and students' scores on a cognitive mathematics assessment. Focusing on fifth- and eighth-grade waves, the authors found that students receiving special education services were less likely to be placed into algebra courses by the time they entered eighth grade compared to students not receiving special education services. Such outcomes occurred despite the fact that students with disabilities who scored high on the mathematics assessment and by that measure alone should have afforded their placement into algebra. However, teachers rated students with disabilities low on a mathematical ability level perception indicator which was "virtually prohibitive of placement in algebra" (p. 338). Indeed, teachers' constructions of students with disabilities were powerful predictors for placement into lower- and remedial-level mathematics courses. In turn, the analysis and understanding of the teachers' role in mathematics education afford important insights into mathematics pedagogy, both its limitations and possibilities.

#### Pedagogical Stereotypes and Possibilities

Our final subtheme connects central threads from the two major themes as they relate to pedagogical stereotypes and possibilities. We conceptualize this as research that reinforce stereotypical pedagogical approaches, point to more just possibilities, or both. By stereotypical, we mean that students with disabilities are not thought of creative mathematics doers and thinkers. On the other hand, pedagogical possibilities are those that move away from stereotypical approaches. For example, Clark and colleagues' (2014) report that special educators subscribe to mathematics pedagogy for students with disabilities that should not include student struggle. This contradicts practices sanctioned by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2014) that holds students struggle as core to learning; struggle goes hand-in-hand with creativity. Clark and colleagues also reported that a higher number of professional development hours is related to the belief that mathematics teaching and learning should include periods of struggle in order for students to make meaning of mathematics. Clark and colleagues (2014) examined relationships between teacher characteristics, beliefs, mathematical content and pedagogical knowledge, and student achievement. The study involved 259 upper elementary teachers and 184 middle school teachers, with approximately 17% and 20% respectively held special education credentials. The pedagogical knowledge also included aspects of teachers' awareness of students' mathematical dispositions. Similar outcomes in pedagogical limitations and possibilities were reported by Hinton and colleagues (2015), a study which we described earlier. Their comparison of participants' responses regarding their teaching methods to measures of mathematics content knowledge found that participants who described their mathematics instruction as procedural had lower computation scores compared to those who described their practices as conceptual.

In two studies (Griffin et al., 2013; Pape et al., 2015), we note tensions between pedagogical stereotypes and possibilities. For example, Pape and colleagues' (2015) study, one we described earlier, included elements in their professional development program that

aligned to pedagogical possibilities in that it worked with teachers to approach students with disabilities as mathematics doers and thinkers. At the same time, their program also featured stereotypical pedagogical components such as targeted content on “characteristics and learning problems of students with learning disabilities” and “evidence-based practice in mathematics for students with learning disabilities” (Pape et al., 2015, p. 19). A main characteristic of such practices is its set sequence that includes teacher demonstration, guided practice, and presentation of information in small steps (Miller & Hudson, 2007).

In the Griffin and colleagues’ (2013) study, pedagogical stereotypes and possibilities tension manifested somewhat differently. For pedagogical possibilities, the authors aimed to better understand teachers’ actions and students with disabilities’ engagement and outcomes in two inclusive mathematics classrooms. The authors spent four months observing teacher discourse practices regarding time spent on teaching mathematics terminology, formal assessments, and peer-to-peer interactions, and assessed students’ mathematics progress. The authors noted that the teacher who spent more time on direct instruction had students who achieved better mathematics performance outcomes compared to the teacher who spent more time providing peer-to-peer learning opportunities. As such, the authors suggested stereotypical pedagogies. Specifically, they advocated for teacher-directed approaches which incorporate “strategy instruction, offers frequent opportunities for review and practice, involves thorough concept development using manipulative materials and visual depictions, and deemphasizes opportunities for peer-mediated instruction may support the learning of students with disabilities and other struggling students” (Griffin et al., 2013, p. 18).

Lastly, pedagogical possibilities were more limited in Harris and colleagues’ (2014) study, which focused on developing prospective special educator’s mathematics pedagogical knowledge around an intervention program that emphasizes mathematics fact acquisition, skill-building, and repetition. They described their target students as ones “struggling to understand math terms and their meanings” (p. 96) and that students needed to reinforce vocabulary learning. Similarly, Malone and Fuchs (2014) also recommended deficit-centered approaches by modifying “instruction based on students’ needs” which presumably means to address “students’ academic deficits” (p. 385).

## Discussion

In this exploratory review, we employed a disability studies lens to analyze the focus and findings of 15 recently published research articles from 2013–2015 that spotlight the role of educators in the mathematics schooling of students with disabilities. In this section we discuss the outcomes of our analysis guided by the interrelated two research questions: What is the focus and outcomes of the studies? How were students with disabilities in mathematics framed in these studies? We also describe implications for future research in advancing access, achievement, recognizing and valuing students with disabilities as mathematics doers and thinkers, and shifting power.

### Building Mathematics Understanding as Valuable



The results of our analysis indicate that supporting educators' mathematical understanding is valuable in terms of translating these understandings to practices that approach students with disabilities as doers and thinkers. Developing deep mathematics understanding is one of the most important components of effective mathematics teaching (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008). Yet, such understandings for special and general educators working with students with disabilities have received limited attention (Faulkner & Cain, 2013). The five articles in our review that address teacher's mathematics understanding (Afamasaga-Fuata'i & Sooaemalelagi, 2014; Clark et al., 2014; Faulkner & Cain, 2013; Hinton et al., 2015; Pape et al., 2015) highlight the importance of this line of research. In particular, that supporting educators to make deeper mathematics understanding is associated with the potential of implementing mathematics pedagogy that is more substantive. Importantly, this area of research shifts the deficit focus from students with disabilities to broader factors, in this case, educators' mathematics understanding. Future research can examine the extent to which building deeper mathematical understanding translate to more just mathematics practices for students with disabilities.

### **Re/Construction of Disabled Students, Spaces, and Pedagogy**

Our analysis also points to problems and advancements in the body of research that spotlight the role of educators in mathematics schooling of students with disabilities. We note one such dichotomy in the area of pedagogical stereotypes and possibilities. The former is deemed to be "evidence-based and effective" for students with disabilities, yet such claims are derived from narrow conceptions of mathematics (e.g., producing the correct answers on arithmetic problems). These claims reinforce conceptions of the discipline of mathematics as fixed with facts and procedures that must be mastered and memorized through rote performance rather than as an ever-expanding discipline where the answer to the fundamental question of what is mathematics continue to be explored (Gutiérrez, 2017).

In turn, these practices limit the practices of students with disabilities as mathematics doers and thinkers. We found endorsements of such practices in a notable number of the studies we reviewed (Griffin et al., 2013; Harris et al., 2014; Malone & Fuchs, 2014; Pape et al., 2015). Interestingly, within some of these same studies (Griffin et al., 2013; Pape et al., 2015), endorsements of stereotypical pedagogies were situated within pedagogical possibilities. For example, Pape and colleagues engaged participating teachers in supporting development of their mathematical and pedagogical understanding that would in turn position students with disabilities as mathematics doers and thinkers. This tension between pedagogical stereotypes and possibilities are problematic. In particular, in the signaling to the consumers of this research (e.g., teacher educators, prospective and practicing teachers, school leaders) who may then sustain stereotypical forms of mathematics education for students with disabilities that views them as incapable of having unique ways of constructing mathematics, who must be told exactly how to solve mathematical problems. However, other studies provide pedagogical possibilities as opportunities for future research and more just practices.

The work with Dana (Heyd-Metzuyanim, 2013) and JF (Hostins & Jordão, 2015) shows us that there are more just explanations for the construction of disabilities in

mathematics and ways to reconstruct students with disabilities as mathematics doers and thinkers. In turn, we recommend that future research and practices recognize and value students with disabilities as mathematics doers and thinkers while rejecting notions of deficiencies (Gutiérrez, 2017). Building this knowledge base and documenting these efforts will be crucial to counter other problematic phenomena in the studies that we reviewed including unjust placement decisions (Faulkner et al., 2013; Murzyn & Hughes, 2015) and stereotypical constructions of students with disabilities in mathematics (Griffin et al., 2013; Kurz et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2014; Malone & Fuchs, 2014; Pape et al., 2015) and the spaces they occupy (Bailey et al., 2015).

Lastly, the results of our analysis indicate that power is often located outside of the individuals most impacted by discriminatory practices. Positive outcomes largely depend on effective educational experiences, yet individuals with disabilities have very little say in their education regarding, for example, placement decisions into certain mathematics courses. We suggest that future research explore ways in which educators build consciousness of social forces that perpetuate ableism across all facets of mathematics education and through emancipatory forms of inquiry and practices.

## Conclusion

This research utilized a disability studies lens to explore 15 recently published journal articles. To address our research questions, we shared results of two major interrelated themes: (1) addressing teachers' mathematics understanding as valuable and (2) re/construction of disabled students, spaces, and pedagogy. We described how the outcomes of this research can help advance future work in the area of mathematics education and disability. We find advancements in socio-political research focused on concepts such as the co-construction and reconstruction of disability. In turn, we recommend continued focus on socio-political research while pursuing inquiry on power and agency. This focus will ensure improvement in the quality of opportunities for students with disabilities to be perceived as mathematics doers and thinkers, to construct mathematics knowledge alongside their peers, and to have teachers who have a deep understanding of mathematics and humanizing pedagogies. Indeed, such a commitment will contribute to positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities in and out of schools.

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## Research Article

### The Symbolic Ableism Scale

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**Abstract:** This study validates the Symbolic Ableism Scale (SAS), which examines subtle prejudice. The SAS has four underlying themes: individualism; recognition of continuing discrimination; empathy for disabled people; and, excessive demands. The SAS is a tool that can be used to help understand how contradicting disability ideologies manifest in modern society to determine how best to counteract them.

**Keywords:** Modern Prejudice; Ableism; Discrimination

### Introduction

Although disabled people have gained significant strides when it comes to rights, services, and supports, they are still socially devalued (Gill, 2000). Groups are socially devalued when their difference is considered deviant as a result of social norms, roles, and expectations (Wolfensberger & Tullman, 1982). People who are devalued can be seen as pitiful, charity cases, menaces, sick, and/or subhuman. Those socially devalued groups face social distancing, segregation, and, on an extreme level, genocide. Shakespeare (1996b) also cites the “critical role” prejudice and stereotypes play “in disabling social relations” (p. 192).

As evidenced by decades of research, social oppression against disabled people – ableism – is extremely prominent, resulting in economic, social, environmental, and psychological disadvantages imposed on disabled people (Abberley, 1987; Barnes, 1997; Baynton, 2001; Kumari-Campbell, 2009; Linton, 1998; Shakespeare, 1996a). While ableism is still very pronounced, today it operates both overtly and subtly (Keller & Galgay, 2010). Yet, social psychology’s study of subtle prejudice has mostly focused on prejudice towards people of color, especially Black<sup>1</sup> people, and women. Despite decades of literature noting disability discrimination’s existence, social psychology has drawn less attention to subtle disability prejudice. However, disability’s orientation as a social minority group, analogous in some ways to race, provides opportunities for similar theories about prejudice to be explored for their application to disability.

### Social Psychology’s Examination of Racial Prejudice

Social psychology’s research on race in the United States first emerged to examine racial differences (Gamst, Liang, & Der-Karabetian, 2011). This research reflected and perpetrated prejudice – it ‘naturalized’ differences between races – while upholding assumptions of White racial superiority (Gamst et al., 2011). Dovidio (2001) divides social psychology’s more recent racism research into three waves. The first wave (1920s) shifted research away from theories about white superiority and instead viewed prejudice as psychopathology (Dovidio, 2001). The second wave, which began in the 1950s, viewed prejudice as a normative process thereby shifting the focus away from pathology (Dovidio,

2001). In this period aversive, and symbolic<sup>2</sup> racism theories emerged (Dovidio, 2001). Symbolic racism is expressed more indirectly and symbolically than traditional old-fashioned prejudice (Dovidio, Mann, & Gaertner, 1989; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). Tied to conservative ideology, symbolic racists hold particular views on opportunity in America (e.g., work ethic, land of opportunity) so see the distribution of wealth and power reflecting effort and ability rather than being the result of structural inequalities (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Pettigrew, 1989). Aversive racists are those who believe they are not prejudiced—in fact, egalitarian values are important to their self-image—yet feel discomfort around Black people and often act in prejudiced ways (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Thus, this form of racism theory examines aversive racists' anxiety and discomfort around Black people, how this prejudice is inconsistent with their self-concepts, and the rationalized disassociated products of these inconsistencies. These new types of racism theories “argued that, as a result of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, White Americans became more hesitant to openly express their racial hostility” (Gamst et al., 2011, p. 252).

The third wave, the 1990s on, examines both the perpetrators of prejudice and the targets of prejudice (Dovidio, 2001). This includes cognitive processes involved in stereotype formation and the psychological responses by targets (Dovidio, 2001). Aversive and symbolic racism research is expanded in this wave; racial microaggression research also grew during this time. Racial microaggressions are brief, everyday messages that degrade people of color because of their membership in a racial minority group (Sue, 2010). While symbolic racism or aversive racism research examine the perpetrators of prejudice, microaggression research examines the manifestations of discrimination and the experiences of those affected by it.

While there has been growing research on aversive ableism (Friedman, 2016) and disability microaggressions (Keller & Galgay, 2010), less attention has been drawn to symbolic ableism. Thus, this study adapted a prominent symbolic racism measure, the Symbolic Racism Scale (SRS), for disability so research can begin to explore and later work to combat this type of prejudice.

### **Symbolic Racism and the Symbolic Racism Scale**

Unlike traditional old-fashioned racism that looks at overt and dominant prejudice, symbolic racism is a form of subtle prejudice linked with conservative values. Symbolic racists believe racial discrimination is no longer a serious issue, disadvantaged Black people are just unwilling to take responsibility for their lives, Black people are demanding too much too quickly and thus going beyond what is ‘fair’, and the special treatment of Black people is not justified (Henry & Sears, 2002; McConahay & Hough, 1976; Sears & McConahay, 1973). Symbolic racism is rooted in abstract beliefs about socialized values, which Black people supposedly violate (Henry & Sears, 2002, 2008; Sears, Henry, & Kosterman, 2000). However, it is symbolic racists' values that feel threatened not their personal welfare or self-interest; symbolic racists fear the direction of the nation (McConahay & Hough, 1976). In order to be subtle and not overt, symbolic racism is typically expressed through symbols, such as opposition to busing or opposing affirmative action. These acts “are justified (or rationalized) on a nonracial basis but that operate to maintain the racial status quo with its



attendant discrimination against the welfare, status, and symbolic needs of Blacks” (McConahay & Hough, 1976, p. 24). Symbolic racism is related to racial antipathy and conservative values, especially because “it is based on the belief that blacks violate key American values, particularly the idea of individualism, the belief in working hard to get ahead in life” (Henry & Sears, 2008, p. 111).

Because of its subtle nature and the way it is justified, symbolic racism is not necessarily recognized by the perpetrator as prejudiced. McConahay, Hardee, and Batts (1981) found White people perceived symbolic racism items as having lower levels of perceived racism than old-fashioned racism. Moreover, in their study, old-fashioned racism scores were significantly lower when the experimenter was Black than White while symbolic racism scores were unaffected (McConahay et al., 1981). While old-fashioned racism scores were reduced because of an attempt to limit expressions of antipathy for social desirability, symbolic racism scores were relatively similar regardless of experimenter race because symbolic racism items were viewed as prejudice-neutral (McConahay et al., 1981).

The SRS was created in the 1970s in order to measure the complex interplay between modern subtle racial prejudice, abstract beliefs, and conservative values (Henry & Sears, 2002). The SRS has been continually refined over time after use with thousands of different participants; it has since become the most prominent measure to examine symbolic racism. One of the largest critiques of symbolic racism and the SRS is whether it measures an anti-minority affect or just conservative ideology because of how it combines ideology and prejudice (Blatz & Ross, 2009). According to some suggestions, those high in symbolic racism may just refuse policies because of justice-based principles (Blatz & Ross, 2009). However, research has found that symbolic racism predicts racial policy opposition, such as affirmative action opposition, even when conservative ideologies are controlled (Blatz & Ross, 2009). Moreover, McConahay and Hough (1976) also found old-fashioned racism, symbolic racism, and sympathy scales were all separate dimensions of racism. Blatz and Ross (2009) suggest “it is time to ‘lay to rest the notion that White opposition to racially targeted policies is primarily motivated by nonracial considerations’” (p. 258). While it is not uncommon for symbolic racism to influence political attitudes, symbolic racism operates separately with conservatism; symbolic racism determines “racial policy attitudes, rather than that opposition to race-based programs, determines symbolic racism” (Henry & Sears, 2008, p. 113).

As the SRS is a prominent method to explore subtle prejudice against Black people, particularly in relation to abstract beliefs, we believe the SRS would be similarly useful for exploring complex prejudice against disabled people. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to validate a version of the SRS that has been adapted for disability – the Symbolic Ableism Scale (SAS). To do so, this study utilizes a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) to determine the underlying structure of the SAS, to determine composite scores for the factors underlying the SAS, and to determine if any of the variables needed to be removed.

## Methods

### Participants

In attempt to get a sample with a wide range of attitudes towards disability for this pilot study, participants were recruited from a variety of sources, including: undergraduate students; clinical professionals; siblings of disabled people; and, graduate students specifically in the field of Disability Studies. While the undergraduate students were intended to parallel the unexperienced general public, the remaining groups represent unique experiences with, relationships to, and knowledge of disability that should produce a range of attitudes towards it. There was no financial compensation for participating – all participants were volunteers.

A total of 155 participants completed the study. Most participants were women ( $n = 133$ , 85.8%), with fewer men ( $n = 21$ , 13.5%). 126 participants (81.3%) were nondisabled, 22 (14.2%) disabled, and 7 (4.5%) preferred not to say. Slightly more than half of participants were White ( $n = 83$ , 53.5%), with the remainder being Asian or Pacific Islander ( $n = 29$ , 18.7%), Hispanic or Latinx ( $n = 21$ , 13.5%), Black ( $n = 10$ , 6.5%), Middle Eastern ( $n = 5$ , 3.2%), interracial ( $n = 6$ , 3.9%), and other ( $n = 1$ , 0.6%). Participants ranged in age: 18-25 ( $n = 86$ , 55.5%); 26-33 ( $n = 33$ , 21.3%); 34-40 ( $n = 17$ ; 11.0%); 41-48 ( $n = 8$ , 5.2%); 49-56 ( $n = 8$ , 5.2%); 57-64 ( $n = 5$ , 3.2%); and, 65-72 ( $n = 1$ , .06%). Participants came from four groups: undergraduate students ( $n = 68$ ; 43.9%); siblings of disabled people ( $n = 48$ ; 31.0%); graduate students in Disability Studies ( $n = 16$ ; 10.3%); and clinical professionals ( $n = 23$ ; 14.8%).

### Measure

Items for the SAS were adapted from the SRS (Henry & Sears, 2002). To do so, research on all versions of the SRS were reviewed; based on SRS research, and research on disability prejudice (e.g., Abberley, 1987; Barnes, 1997; Baynton, 2001; Keller & Galgay, 2010; Linton, 1998; Shakespeare, 1996a), applicable questions from each of the themes of the SRS (i.e., denial of continuing racial discrimination; Blacks should work harder; demands for special favors; undeserved outcomes; individualism) were selected. In each of the questions 'Black people' or 'Blacks' was replaced by 'disabled people' while the rest of the sentence structure remained the same. Questions that were very specific to prejudice against Black people (e.g., "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class" (Henry & Sears, 2002, p. 261)) were not directly adapted. As such, an additional disability specific question following the nature of the SRS items was added (i.e., disabled people should stay hidden) to capture a missing, yet critical, part of disability history in the United States – segregation and institutionalization. The resulting adapted SAS items were:

1. Discrimination against disabled people is no longer a problem in the United States.
2. If disabled people would just try harder they would be as well off as nondisabled people.
3. Disabled people are demanding too much from the rest of society.
4. Disabled people do not complain as much as they should about their situation in society. (Reverse keyed)

5. Over the past few years disabled people have gotten less than they deserve. (Reverse keyed)
6. It is easy to understand the anger of disabled people in America. (Reverse keyed)
7. Disabled people should stay hidden.
8. Even if disabled people try hard they often cannot reach their goals. (Reverse keyed)
9. Even if disabled people are ambitious they often cannot succeed. (Reverse keyed)
10. If disabled people work hard they almost always get what they want.
11. Most disabled people who don't get ahead should not blame the system; they really have only themselves to blame.
12. Hard work offers little guarantee of success for disabled people. (Reverse keyed)
13. Any disabled person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.

The SAS measure uses a seven-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree with a number of reverse keyed items. The adapted scale was reviewed by five experts in disability studies, prejudice, and/or social psychology.

### Procedure

After ethics approval from the University's institutional review board (IRB), participants were recruited through emails describing a study on disability attitudes. The emails were forwarded to potential participants through applicable listservs. If interested, participants visited the online survey link where they were presented with the informed consent and began the survey thereafter. Participants completed the SAS then completed information about their demographics. Finally, they were thanked for their participation and given the principal investigator's contact information if they should have questions or need debriefing.

## Results

### Data Screening

The data were screened for administrative errors and missing data. With a final sample size of 155 there was a ratio of approximately 12 cases (subjects) per variable ( $n = 13$ ), satisfying the minimum amount of data for factor analyses (Garson, 2008).

### PCA of the Symbolic Ableism Scale

A PCA with varimax rotation was conducted to determine which factors loaded into each determined component of the adapted SAS. Sampling adequacy using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure was .73 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was found to be significant ( $\chi^2 (78) = 522.30, p < .001$ ). PCA results revealed that factors loaded into a total of four components with eigenvalues that exceeded 1.00 and accounted for 60.44% of the total variance for the 13 items' scores (see Table 1, for factor loadings). In addition, a visual examination of the scree plot confirmed that there were four unique components present.

Table 1

*Principal Components Analysis of the Symbolic Ableism Scale (SAS)*

<u>Items</u>	<u>Component 1</u>	<u>Component 2</u>	<u>Component 3</u>	<u>Component 4</u>
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8. Even if disabled people try hard they often cannot reach their goals.	.76	
9. Even if disabled people are ambitious they often cannot succeed.	.85	
10. If disabled people work hard they almost always get what they want.	.58	
12. Hard work offers little guarantee of success for disabled people.	.72	
13. Any disabled person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.	.74	
1. Discrimination against disabled people is no longer a problem in the United States.		.63
2. If disabled people would just try harder they would be as well off as nondisabled people.		.65
3. Disabled people are demanding too much from the rest of society.		.75
7. Disabled people should stay hidden.		.57
11. Most disabled people who don't get ahead should not blame the system; they really have only themselves to blame.		.58
5. over the past few years disabled people have gotten less than they deserve.		.82
6. It is easy to understand the anger of disabled people in America.		.82
4. Disabled people do not complain as much as they should about their situation in society.		.72

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The authors examined the four identified components, compared each to the SRS (Henry & Sears, 2002), and determined themes. The first theme, individualism, included questions 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13. Questions 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11 were comprised in the second theme, recognition of continuing discrimination. The third theme of empathy for disabled people contained SAS questions 5 and 6. Question four completed the final theme, excessive demands. Cronbach's alpha was utilized to ensure internal consistency for each of the first three components. Cronbach's alpha could not be conducted for the final theme given that only one item loaded on the component. Cronbach's alpha was adequate for each scale: .80 for individualism, .65 for recognition of continuing discrimination, and .69 for empathy for disabled people.

### **Descriptive Data**

An analysis was conducted to examine the percentiles of each participant's average score to enable interpretable results. Scores of .23 or less (25th percentile) were considered to have little to no symbolic ableism. Further, scores between .24 and .31 (up to 50th percentile) were considered to have slight symbolic ableism, scores of .32 to .40 (up to 75th percentile) moderate symbolic ableism, and scores .41 and above as strong symbolic ableism. Table 2 provides descriptive data for the SAS across participants. The mean score of participants on component 1 (items 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13) suggests that participants are moderately symbolic ableist towards disabled people regarding individualism ( $M = .53$ ,  $SD = .23$ ). Component 2 (items 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11) showed that participants believe that there is continued discrimination against disabled people in society ( $M = .06$ ,  $SD = .09$ ). For the third component (items 5 and 6) of empathy, participants report low levels of symbolic ableism towards disabled people ( $M = .24$ ,  $SD = .24$ ), suggesting they do have empathy for disabled people. Finally, component 4 (item 4), excessive demands, participants' responses suggest a moderate level of symbolic ableism towards disabled people ( $M = .53$ ,  $SD = .29$ ).

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics of the SAS Across Participants (N = 155)*

<u>Items</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Component 1: Individualism	.53	.23
8. Even if disabled people try hard they often cannot reach their goals (R)	.57	.34
9. Even if disabled people are ambitious they often cannot succeed (R)	.64	.34
10. If disabled people work hard they almost always get what they want	.41	.27
12. Hard work offers little guarantee of success for disabled people (R)	.49	.31
13. Any disabled person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding	.54	.30
Component 2: Recognition of Continuing Discrimination	.06	.09
1. Discrimination against disabled people is no longer a problem in the United States	.09	.15
2. If disabled people would just try harder they would be as well off as nondisabled people	.07	.17
3. Disabled people are demanding too much from the rest of society	.06	.15
7. Disabled people should stay hidden	.01	.05
11. Most disabled people who don't get ahead should not blame the system; they really have only themselves to blame	.09	.17
Component 3: Empathy for Disabled People	.24	.24
5. Over the past few years disabled people have gotten less than they deserve (R)	.25	.27
6. It is easy to understand the anger of disabled people in America (R)	.22	.28
Component 4: Excessive Demands	.53	.29
4. Disabled people do not complain as much as they should about their situation in society (R)	.53	.29

*Note.* All items were scaled from 0 to 1. Higher scores reflect greater symbolic ableism towards disabled people. (R) indicates items that were reverse coded.

Table 3  
*Demographic Characteristics by Average Composite Score for the SAS (N = 155)*

	<u>Component 1</u>		<u>Component 2</u>		<u>Component 3</u>		<u>Component 4</u>	
Description	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Total	.53	.23	.06	.09	.24	.24	.53	.29
Gender								
Man	.52	.25	.06	.11	.27	.28	.43	.21
Woman	.53	.23	.07	.09	.23	.23	.55	.30
Age								
18 to 25	.61	.20	.08	.10	.27	.24	.56	.27
26 to 33	.40	.26	.05	.09	.17	.19	.47	.32
34 to 40	.48	.20	.05	.09	.17	.21	.49	.29
41 to 48	.44	.29	.04	.04	.12	.15	.46	.39
49 to 56	.38	.22	.05	.09	.36	.41	.65	.35
57 to 64	.51	.29	.04	.05	.17	.18	.53	.40
65 to 72	.60	*	.10	*	.09	*	.67	*
Race								
White	.48	.24	.05	.08	.22	.24	.52	.31
Asian	.60	.24	.09	.12	.25	.21	.56	.31
Hispanic/Latinx	.56	.21	.08	.10	.30	.24	.48	.24
Black	.54	.21	.06	.11	.24	.32	.58	.21
Middle Eastern	.69	.12	.11	.13	.20	.17	.73	.19
Interracial	.58	.23	.06	.09	.14	.15	.58	.20
Other	.50	*	.10	*	.00	*	.17	*
Disability								
No	.55	.23	.07	.10	.25	.24	.55	.28
Yes	.43	.20	.04	.07	.18	.25	.43	.35

Participant group								
Graduate students: Disability Studies	.28	.14	.02	.04	.08	.14	.42	.39
Undergraduate students	.60	.21	.08	.10	.29	.24	.57	.27
Siblings of disabled people	.48	.24	.06	.10	.20	.24	.54	.31
Clinical professionals	.61	.20	.06	.09	.27	.24	.51	.21

*Note.* \*Only one participant self-reported in this category.

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics of participant demographic data based on the average composite score for each of the four identified components. A means analysis was conducted to understand the differences among components for gender, age, race, disability status, and participant group. The results show that men reported slightly more symbolic ableism on the empathy component ( $M = .27$  versus women  $M = .23$ ); however, women's average score was higher on excessive demands ( $M = .30$  versus men  $M = .21$ ). People that identified as White ( $M = .48$ ) had the lowest levels of symbolic ableism for individualism while Asian and Middle Eastern participants reported the highest levels ( $M = .60$ ,  $M = .69$  respectively). Moreover, people who were Middle Eastern exhibited high levels of symbolic ableism on excessive demands ( $M = .73$ ). Across components, nondisabled participants reported slightly higher average symbolic ableism scores compared to disabled people. Of the four groups participating in the pilot study, graduate students in Disability Studies average symbolic ableism score was the lowest on each of the four identified components. Additionally, undergraduate students reported the highest symbolic ableism on components two ( $M = .08$ ), three ( $M = .29$ ), and four ( $M = .57$ ). Undergraduate students ( $M = .60$ ) and clinical professionals ( $M = .61$ ) average symbolic ableism scores were greater than siblings of disabled people ( $M = .48$ ) and graduate students in Disability Studies ( $M = .28$ ). Scores were similar for undergraduate students, siblings of disabled people, and clinical professionals on components two (range =  $.06 - .08$ ), three (range =  $.20 - .29$ ), and four (range =  $.51 - .57$ ).

## Discussion

Because of the prevalence of subtle discrimination against disabled people and the need to tease out that complexity, the aim of this pilot study was to validate the adapted SRS – the SAS. To do so, a PCA was conducted to examine the components of the SAS. The findings revealed four underlying themes: individualism; recognition of continuing discrimination; empathy for disabled people; and, excessive demands.



## Individualism

The first component was the theme individualism – the idea that success is dependent on hard work, and only on hard work (Henry & Sears, 2008). American dream individualism, or the idea that one can simply ‘pull oneself up by the bootstraps,’ relies both on a Protestant work ethic narrative wherein people have direct responsibility for their own outcomes, and a just-world theory wherein people are rewarded for noble actions. Not only is this upward mobility no longer common (Beller & Hout, 2006), individualism can also be particularly problematic when intertwined with narratives about disability, such as those that suggest disability must be ‘overcome.’ For example, inspirational disability portrayals often perpetuate the myth that ‘the true disability is a bad attitude.’ The inspiration narrative dictates that everything disabled people do is inspirational because they must ‘overcome’ their disability or that they succeeded ‘despite’ their disability. Not only does this not reflect the lived reality of most people, it also creates unobtainable expectations for disabled people by perpetuating the myth that their true disability is a bad attitude instead of institutional barriers (Tighe, 2001).

## Recognition of Continuing Discrimination

Unlike in the SRS where the component was ‘denial of continuing racial discrimination,’ component two in the SAS is the recognition of continuing discrimination of disabled people. Both historically and today ableism is extremely prominent. Conservative ‘pull yourself up by your bootstrap’ individualism and dislike for welfare systems may certainly interfere with their views of disabled people, however:

“Unlike the experience of many minorities, opposition to disability rights seldom has been marked by overt displays of bigotry or hostility; and politicians have often been included to provide sympathetic endorsements for the goals of disabled persons, even when they have shown strong resistance to the claims of other disadvantaged groups” (Hahn, 2005, p. 42).

Unlike the denial of continuing discrimination of which Black people are subjected to by symbolic racists, this recognition of continuing discrimination may be unique to ableism because of roots in pity, paternalism, and empathy for disabled people – ‘deservingness.’ As such, it may be pertinent to explore the usefulness of an additional variable that directly addresses pity.

## Empathy for Disabled People

Component three was empathy for disabled people; this theme also runs counter to the SRS, where the component was ‘undeserved outcomes.’ Similar to component two, component three recognizes that disabled people are subjected to unequal treatment. Yet, component three may be particularly intertwined with pity and paternalism, which may be why there were higher symbolic ableism scores than component two. Although having pity is not inherently negative, the pity narrative is harmful for disabled people because it assumes that they are inherently tragic because of their disabilities, that they are incapable, and/or that they are victims (Reid, Stoughton, & Smith, 2006). According to the sick role, society accepts

that disabled people are not responsible for their condition and disabled people can avoid (some) deviance if they fulfill the sick role that legitimizes their incapacity as a valid reason for unproductivity (Barnes & Mercer, 2003).

Pity towards disabled people relates to expectations about what it is like to be disabled as well as perceptions of incompetence. For disabled people, perceptions of low ability and high warmth often create lowered expectations simply because of group membership (Harris & Fiske, 2007). Thus, positive responses may be due to sympathy that marks disabled people as more deserving of help (Appelbaum, 2001). People tend to be biased towards favoring disabled people even though disabled people's disadvantages are often exaggerated (Susman, 1994). For example, Murrell, Dietz-Uhler, Dovidio, Gaertner, and Drout (1994) found disabled people and older adults were seen as more deserving of preferential treatment than Black people because their state was seen as outside of their control, called a positive response bias or the sympathy effect by Susman (1994).

### **Excessive Demands**

The fourth component is excessive demands. Tied to individualism, according to SRS research, this belief that social minorities are demanding special favors:

“Seemed to reflect a consistent internal logic: if the civil rights era had ended discrimination, Blacks' continuing disadvantage had to be due to shortcomings among Blacks themselves; and if that were true, both their demands for special attention and any special gains were illegitimate. Each falls under the umbrella of the 'blend' of negative affect against Blacks and conservative values, reflecting the idea that Blacks violate key cherished American values” (Henry & Sears, 2002, p. 256).

For disabled people, while the same logic may apply, excessive demands include an additional emphasis on their 'demand' on the welfare system. Attitudes towards welfare are often determined by self-interest, beliefs about justice (values and norms), socialization, and national welfare culture – cultural integration of dominant ideologies (Andreß & Heien, 2001). Anti-social welfare attitudes in the United States are often justified based on “the appeals to the values of individualism” (Feldman & Zaller, 1992, p. 272), which can also be problematic for disabled people, as described above, is reflected in the high SAS scores for this component.

However, there may be an additional reason component four received high scores. We believe one reason for this may be the wording of the only question under this component: “disabled people do not complain as much as they should about their situation in society.” The question's wording is double-barreled as it could be interpreted to mean both disabled people should complain more, or complain less. Thus, the question is relatively ambiguous depending on how one interprets it. Even Disability Studies graduate students, who had the lowest symbolic ableism scores on average, scored in the strong symbolic ableism range for this question. Because of its problematic wording we suggest this question be restructured for clarity; in its revised format it should be: “disabled people complain too much about their situation in society.” The final SAS scale is:

1. Even if disabled people try hard they often cannot reach their goals. (Reverse keyed)
2. Even if disabled people are ambitious they often cannot succeed. (Reverse keyed)
3. If disabled people work hard they almost always get what they want.
4. Hard work offers little guarantee of success for disabled people. (Reverse keyed)
5. Any disabled person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.
6. Discrimination against disabled people is no longer a problem in the United States.
7. If disabled people would just try harder they would be as well off as nondisabled people.
8. Disabled people are demanding too much from the rest of society.
9. Disabled people should stay hidden.
10. Most disabled people who don't get ahead should not blame the system; they really have only themselves to blame.
11. Over the past few years disabled people have gotten less than they deserve. (Reverse keyed)
12. It is easy to understand the anger of disabled people in America. (Reverse keyed)
13. Disabled people complain too much about their situation in society.

Future research should examine if the fourth component continues to score relatively high on symbolic ableism with the new wording, as well as if with the new wording the question actually falls underneath one of the first three components on a future factor analysis.

### **Descriptive Differences**

While the aim of this study was to validate the SAS, and not to document symbolic ableism across the United States, our findings did reveal descriptive differences across groups that may serve as fruitful areas of future study. Women in our study had slightly lower symbolic ableism scores for the empathy component than men. This finding is reflected both in previous research which has found women tend to feel more favorably toward disabled people than men (Hirschberger, Florian, & Mikulincer, 2005), and social roles of women in the United States. Conversely, women scored higher than men for the excessive demands component. This finding may be due to the fact that women are more likely to take on support and caregiver roles in general, especially women siblings who are more likely to support their sibling with a disability than men (Hodapp, Urbano, & Burke, 2010). In fact, on average, siblings in our study scored as high symbolic ableist for the excessive demands component. Another possible explanation may be the aforementioned issues with the wording of this question. Future research should explore this complex interaction between gender, disability attitudes, and the SAS components.

While disabled people scored lower symbolic ableism than nondisabled people on all four components, on average they still scored as moderately high on two of the components – individualism, and excessive demands. These findings may be indicative of the internalization of the pervasive negative societal and institutional views of disability. This finding mirrors past research which has found disabled people commonly hold prejudiced attitudes about disability, especially implicit (unconscious) attitudes (Friedman, 2016; Nosek et al., 2007). Disabled people's understandings of disability are often colored by having to navigate

ableism, including compulsory able-bodied/mindedness – the assumption and enforcement of able-bodied/mindedness and the marking of those outside this binary as deviant (Kafer, 2013). This internalization of social devaluation can negatively impact disabled people's view of disability, self-esteem, and life satisfaction (McCarrey, Piccinin, Welburn, & Chislett, 1990).

While there were not large differences across racial/ethnic groups, our findings revealed that White people had lower overall individualism scores than Asian, and Middle Eastern people. It is possible these findings were specific to these samples. However, these findings may also mirror ethnic and cultural differences, such as 'Western' versus 'Eastern' philosophical approaches to life. More research should be conducted to understand if these racial/ethnic differences are replicable with wider and more diverse samples. If similar differences result, future research should explore how to make the SAS more culturally relative to a diverse sample.

We wanted participants with a wide range of experiences with and knowledge of disability. For this reason, we had four participant groups which we believed would have different combinations of knowledge (none, clinical, Disability Studies) and experience (personal, relational, arm's length, none). Findings revealed a range of symbolic ableism from the four participant groups (undergraduate students; siblings; clinical professionals; Disability Studies graduate students) across the four components. Both the undergraduate students, and the clinical professionals scored comparatively high on individualism on average. While undergraduates had little disability knowledge or experience, clinical professionals have a very particular kind of clinical knowledge about disability. Disability Studies has long criticized the medical model for its individualized view of disability; when individualized and thus depoliticized, it "makes it easier for most people to read this kind of decontextualized paean to personal responsibility as apolitical and benign" (Kafer, 2013, p. 96). As such, it places the onus for change on the disabled individuals in direct alignment with individualism. Although graduate students in Disability Studies on average scored slight symbolic ableism on individualism, they had the lowest symbolic ableism scores across all of the groups for recognition of continuing discrimination, and empathy for disabled people. Similarly, siblings of disabled people also had lower symbolic ableism scores in the empathy component. Although more research is needed, these findings suggest the types of intimacy with, and understandings of disability can lead to reduced symbolic ableism.

### **Limitations**

When interpreting our findings, a number of limitations should be noted. One limitation was the relatively small sample size of convenience. There is a chance of self-selection bias because all participants were volunteers. While there is a precedent for using undergraduate students to mirror the general population (Peterson & Merunka, 2014), their results may not be reflective of the general population. While only slightly more than half of our participants were White, there was an unequal distribution of people of color that is not reflective of the United States as a whole and may have impacted our findings. This was a pilot study to validate the SAS; thus, only descriptive statistics were run to compare groups. Future research should use a larger and more representative sample, and statistical analyses to

examine significant group differences.

It should also be noted that although this study focused on ableism using lessons from social psychology's research on racism, ableism and disability do not exist in a vacuum – disability and race are not mutually exclusive categories and these forms of prejudice very often intertwine. As such, this study is limited in that it focused only on disability; future research should explore methodologies that examine prejudice directed at people of multiple minority identities. Doing so is critical not only because of the limited research about these forms of prejudice that impact people from multiple social minority groups, but also because it is necessary before ableism can truly be dismantled.

### **Avenues for Future Study**

Both symbolic racism and aversive racism theories explore not only subtle prejudice, but also ties to political orientation. While aversive racism explores prejudice among more liberal people, symbolic racism is purported to be a combination of conservative values, especially individualism, and political beliefs (Sears & Henry, 2003). Research suggests anti-Black affect and conservative values are cognitively connected and should be measured simultaneously as “symbolic racism is grounded about equally in both [...] symbolic racism is the glue that links political conservatism to racial prejudice among Whites in the contemporary era” (Sears & Henry, 2003, p. 264). Because of symbolic racism's deep ties with political orientation, future research needs to explore the relationship between political orientation and symbolic ableism, both in terms of if the pattern is the same (conservatives are typically symbolic ableists, liberals are typically aversive ableists), and to determine if symbolic ableism is grounded in conservatism.

Disabled people seemingly violate individualism in two ways: based on stereotypes, they are seen as not working hard to get ahead (i.e., individualism); and, they can work hard and still not get ahead (i.e., recognition of continuing discrimination, and empathy for disabled people). Because of social desirability, this cognitive dissonance, the product of holding these conflicting ideas – belief in a just world, and recognition that disabled people face discrimination – manifests itself in subtle ways where the person is less likely to be ‘caught’ being prejudiced, that is where they have an alternative justification for their behavior (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). For example, in one study, when symbolic racists were presented with a letter that justified choosing White applicants (i.e., we want our employees to look like our customers) they selected significantly fewer Black job applicants than when they were not presented with the justification (Brief, Dietz, Cohen, Pugh, & Vaslow, 2000). Future research needs to explore the many ways symbolic ableism manifests, including how symbolic ableists justify their beliefs.

While its subtle nature is a hallmark of modern prejudice, empathy and recognition of continuing discrimination were not only unique to the SAS, but contrary to the SRS where there is a denial of continuing racial discrimination. While we have suggested these differences may be related to the unique ways disability is conceptualized compared to race, more research is needed to examine the functions underlying these constructs, and how they

operate in terms of prejudice, particularly in relation to symbolic ableism.

The aim of this study was to validate the SAS so it could be used for further exploration of symbolic ableism. Sears and Henry (2005) explain, “This is the problem that has animated our own [SRS] research agenda: how to understand Whites’ continuing resistance to efforts to increase racial equality despite much evidence that in some measurable ways their racial attitudes have become substantially liberalized” (p. 96). The SAS is an attempt to understand how contradicting ideologies about disability, and conflicting attitudes towards disabled people manifest in modern society in order to determine how best to counteract them.

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## Endnotes

1. A decision to use Black instead of African American was intentional in alignment with a Black feminist and Black Studies pride/identity models (hooks, 1995; Kvasny & Hales, 2010; Smith, 1992). It is similar to the reclaiming of disabled by people with disabilities.
2. During early research there was a divergence between 'symbolic' and 'modern' racism theories. However, a significant bulk of the literature now considers these concepts to be the same (Henry & Sears, 2008).

**Multimedia****Review of *Have Dog Will Travel***

Diana Baker, PhD

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

*Have Dog, Will Travel: A Poet's Journey*

Stephen Kuusisto

Simon &amp; Schuster, New York, 2018, 237

**Abstract:** A book review of *Have Dog Will Travel*, a memoir about a poet's relationship with his Guide Dog.

**Keywords:** Guide Dog; Blindness; Memoir

Before reading the poet Stephen Kuusisto's (2018) memoir *Have Dog, Will Travel: A Poet's Journey*, I'll admit to having conceived of guide dogs as a purely pragmatic accommodation, along the lines of a calculator helping you solve math problems. But Kuusisto eloquently captures the experience of walking with his guide dog, Corky: "It doesn't feel like driving a car. It's not like running. Sometimes I think it's a bit like swimming. A really long swim when you're buoyant and fast. There's no one else in the pool" (p.3).

Although Kuusisto was born legally blind, he spent the first of his nearly four decades making do with his limited vision. But at age thirty-eight, after being laid off from a job in academia, the author applied to Guiding Eyes for the Blind and was matched with a guide dog named Corky, which afforded him "spontaneity" (p. 140) in both mundane and transcendent ways. In his dogless days, for example, he struggled to travel almost anywhere alone, whereas afterward he and his "unflappable" dog can go anywhere—even "fantastic ghastly place[s]" like Milan with its "jagged paving bricks, broken sidewalks and Vespas like runaway donkeys" (p.2–3). But he suggests that the more ordinary endeavors, like "doing what other people did when they couldn't sleep," namely wandering the aisles of the 24-hour Walgreens (p.187), may be equally freeing.

The journey to guide dog-guided liberation did not, however, come without setbacks. But to understand these setbacks, one has to delve a bit into Kuusisto's childhood. It all began with his birth three months early, alongside an identical twin brother who did not survive. For Stephen, the primary long-term medical consequence of his early arrival was a visual impairment caused by retinopathy of prematurity. Stephen's younger sister Carol completed the family, which was in equal measures successful and dysfunctional. His "ascetic" father was an academic who took the family to Helsinki where he was studying the Cold War and who later became president of Hobart and William Smith, a small liberal arts college in upstate New York (where I myself am now employed as an assistant professor of education),

while his “sorrowful” mother was consigned to a life of “postwar domesticity,” (p.31) and was often “passed out on the sofa with the shades drawn” (p.120). Arguably the most damaging aspect of Kuusisto’s upbringing was how his parents instilled in him the idea that “disabled kids were victims of a nearly unimaginable fate, a predatory darkness” (p.7). So as a child, Stephen did everything in his power to feign normalcy (read: sightedness).

Kuusisto moved past this internalized ableism, not only tolerating, but eventually embracing the accoutrements of his visual impairment. First there was the white cane, then Corky—until “there was no pretending. No grasping for admission to normal-land” (p.23). Despite achieving this personal serenity, Kuusisto still had to deal with unenlightened others: “Doe-eyed holy-roller types—people who’d grown up watching the Jerry Lewis telethons, who’d absorbed a thousand sermons about the blind, who need the grace of God—wanting to touch us, pray for us, at the very least, tell us how uplifting we were” (p.160) In response to this kind of idolatry, Stephen wondered “Can’t a blind person just be customary?” (p.74).

But the prevailing storyline in the memoir is the unexpected intimacy that Kuusisto develops with Corky, and the ways that relationship contributes to his understanding of himself and his perception of disability. For Kuusisto, the experience of walking with Corky is so intoxicating that he sometimes wonders whether it can really last. “Does that feeling stick? Will I always feel like I’m flying?” (p.71). Ultimately he concludes that the contentment is something subtler but more enduring: “[Corky would] rise from her bed and bring me my Nikes. Shoes first, then a glorious day. Always the dog’s suggestion”(p.234).

The memoir is subtle too. Brief but sublime. It traces the arc of a person who at first tries to deny his disability but gradually comes to understand that assistance from a guide dog doesn’t discount his “indomitable” former self who had tried to fight through a fully sighted world without help. As he puts it: “A life of feigned sight hadn’t been wasted. I’d learned to listen while stumbling around. It took boldness to travel without help. And now, with fine-tuning, I was a quicker more refined man of the street” (p.125).

**Diana Baker**, an assistant professor of education at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, teaches special education courses for pre-service teachers. Her research focuses on neurodiversity, multilingual students with autism, and the inclusion of students with disabilities in dual-immersion programs.

## Notes from the Field

### Summer 2019 Editorial Internship Opportunity

Megan A. Conway, PhD  
RDS Editor-In-Chief

#### Summer Editorial Internship Opportunity at the Review of Disability Studies

The Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal (RDS), welcomes applicants for a part-time, temporary, 8 week-long, paid summer internship from May or June through August, 2019. Hours will be negotiated, but candidates should be able to commit at least 10 hours per week. The internship can be completed in person at the Center on Disability Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa, or virtually via the internet.

Interested candidates should send a cover letter and resume to RDS Editor Megan Conway at [mconway@hawaii.edu](mailto:mconway@hawaii.edu) by April 1, 2019.

The Editorial internship will provide experience with a variety of editorial tasks, including checking page proofs, editing indexes, proofreading copy, reviewing prepress proofs, handling corrections, general article preparation, and possible long term projects such as soliciting advertisers or looking into grant funding opportunities. The intern will also learn about the editorial technology that we are using as part of RDS's commitment to being a fully open-access, digital journal. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about scholarly publishing in a collaborative, digital environment.

The ideal intern candidate will have a minimum education of three years towards a bachelor's degree; a strong desire to learn about publishing in the field of disability studies; basic computer skills including experience using digital communication platforms such as Google Docs and MS Office; the ability to work well individually and as a member of a team; strong communication and writing skills in English, with an eye for detail; and the ability to communicate professionally via email and in regular audio/video conferences.

RDS welcomes applicants from diverse backgrounds. Candidates who have significant personal experience or engagement with disability and/or other communities that are underrepresented in scholarly publishing are strongly encouraged to apply.

## Notes from the Field

### Disability Studies 2019 Summer Online Courses

Kai-Ying Lin

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Center on Disability Studies

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Disability Studies Summer Online Courses are now available. Register for both undergraduate and graduate courses through UH Outreach College [www.outreach.hawaii.edu](http://www.outreach.hawaii.edu). Classes start on 5/20/2019, reserve your seat today for the following 2019 Summer courses:

#### Undergraduate Online Courses

##### **DIS 380 Disability and Diversity**

Focuses on disability as a category of diversity and identity, as well as diversity within disability. Different strategies used to increase the freedom or liberty of people with disabilities are critically examined. This is an excellent foundational course with content applicable and relevant to all fields. Instructor Lauren Ho [lauren.ho@hawaii.edu](mailto:lauren.ho@hawaii.edu) Online, 3 Credits, CRN: 91759, Summer Session I, 5/20/2019 - 6/28/2019

##### **DIS 382 Accessible Learning Technology**

This course covers U.S. Federal Laws and guidelines, accessible technology, creating accessible instructional media, developing long-term resources, advancing accessible social interaction between students and students with instructors, and using case studies as examples of good practices. Instructor Tom Conway - [tom.conway@hawaii.edu](mailto:tom.conway@hawaii.edu) Online, 3 Credits, CRN: 91955, Summer Session II, 7/01/2019 - 8/09/2019

#### Graduate Online Courses

##### **DIS 682 Special Topics in Disability: Representation in Film**

Students in this online course will view and respond to a series of films that portray disability with the following aims: (1) to interrogate their own assumptions about disability; (2) to deepen their historical understanding of the ways in which the "grammar" of film has shaped depictions of disability; and (3) to consider the ways in which these images may dialog with the ways we think about disability. Instructor Raphael Raphael - [r Raphael@hawaii.edu](mailto:r Raphael@hawaii.edu) Online, 3 Credits, CRN: 91630, Summer Session I, 5/20/2019 - 6/28/2019

#### Graduate Certificate in Disability and Diversity Studies

We offer both undergraduate and graduate coursework in Disability and Diversity Studies (DIS), including a 15-credit, interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate in Disability and Diversity Studies. For more information contact Megan Conway, [mconway@hawaii.edu](mailto:mconway@hawaii.edu) or visit [www.cds.hawaii.edu/certificates](http://www.cds.hawaii.edu/certificates).

## Notes from the Field

### Call for Art Submissions: Disability and Shame

Genesis Leong

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Center on Disability Studies

The Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal is issuing a Call for Art Submissions to be included in the special forum on the subject of shame and disability, broadly conceived. It is hoped that through critical discourse addressing the historical and current contexts, contributing factors, effects, and responses to shame, greater understanding of this phenomena will diminish discrimination and violence.

- **May 1, 2019 - Art Online Submissions Due.** Please submit to the category “Forum - Disability and Shame” at [www.rdsjournal.org](http://www.rdsjournal.org)
- **June 1, 2019 - Guest Editors Review & Publication Due**
- **June - August, 2019 - Publication Process**
- **September 1, 2019 - Anticipated Publication Date**

For questions about the content of the Forum, please contact the guest editors Stephanie Patterson, [stephanie.patterson@stonybrook.edu](mailto:stephanie.patterson@stonybrook.edu), John Jones, [jjones@truman.edu](mailto:jjones@truman.edu), or Dana Lee Baker, [bakerdl@wsu.edu](mailto:bakerdl@wsu.edu). For questions about the submissions process, please contact [rdsj@hawaii.edu](mailto:rdsj@hawaii.edu). Prospective authors & artists are encouraged to consult the RDS website at for more information about the journal and its formatting guidelines. Authors are encouraged to review previous issues of RDS in preparing their submission. Please note that initial acceptance of an article does not guarantee publication in RDS.

### Disability and Shame Forum Overview

Shame plays a powerful role in social interactions, beliefs, and institutions. Shame and shaming take varied and quite diversely motivated forms. Shame exists as both a cultural and psychological construct, stimuli for and reactions to which are heavily context-dependent. For much of history and across varied cultural contexts, disability provoked shame. Whether understood as the result of personal failings, sins of a family, misapplication of scientific findings, or empirical evidence of an unhappy deity, experiencing disability involved largely unquestioned shaming. During the last decades of the twentieth century, progress much attributed to disability rights movements finally created expanding space between disability and shame.

Yet, shame remains a powerful and often-accepted tool of social control, an incorporated pillar of our social infrastructures along with cultural norms, popular culture, and public policy. For example, in September 2016, Satoshi Uematsu killed 19 patients at a center for disabled people outside Tokyo. In the aftermath, many family members of the deceased declined to speak to the media and asked not to be identified out of shame that others would know that their family members had a disability (Ha & Sieg, 2016). Such a tragic outcome in

Japan in response to fear of disgrace signifies a decided need to examine the role of personal and societal shame and how it affects the lives of people with disabilities.

Topics to be Explored (suggested, but not limited to):

- Shame, disability, identity
- Labelling and shame
- Shame and relationships
- Shame and dependency/interdependency
- Shame and culture
- Shame and access to public programs
- Historical connection between disability and poverty
- Historical shame
- Diversity and shame
- Intersectional approaches to understanding shame
- Reclaiming shame
- Shame and employment
- Societal and family shame resulting in violence against disabled people

The *Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal* RDS is a peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary, international journal published by the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. The journal contains research articles, essays, creative works and multimedia relating to the culture of disability and people with disabilities.

## Dissertation Abstracts

Compiled by Jonathon Erlen, University of Pittsburgh

Edited by Megan Conway

*Being a Man With an Invisible Disability: College Men's Experiences.* Korn, M. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, 2017. [Ph.D. Dissertation] United States: Rhode Island: University of Rhode Island. Publication Number: 10263711

*Stigmas Associated with Having Depression Among African American Older Adults.* Adigun, O. J. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, 2017. [D.Ph. Dissertation] United States: Minnesota: Capella University. Publication Number: 10262777

*Disability Studies, Multiculturalism and Urban Science Education: A Mixed-Methods Phenomenography of Graduate Student Learning.* Boda, P. A. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, 2017. [Ph.D. Dissertation] United States: New York: Columbia University. Publication Number: 10265995

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