


## Chapter-3

# DESIRED, YET IGNORED: DISABLED INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND NEOLIBERAL HIGHER EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter discusses Disabled International students' experiences, seeking to understand how interlocking forms of oppression – ableism and racism – work in tandem to push the impacts of intersectionality in the neoliberal education system. Forming the basis of this work are two separate discussions about Disabled students and International students around their participation in global campuses. It can be argued that COVID-19 posed a new set of challenges for Disabled domestic and non-disabled International students participating in higher education. It therefore also intensified the challenges Disabled students experienced when studying internationally. This chapter explains why, in an increasingly interconnected global society, the need for universities to challenge hegemonic and unequal structures and be inclusive, leaving no one behind, has never been more significant.*

**Keywords:** Disabled International Students, Intersectionality, Ableism, Racism, Higher Education, COVID-19, Educational Inclusion

### INTRODUCTION

The chapter comments on some of the reasons why in the globalized education system, in which students are encouraged to travel internationally to benefit from transcultural higher education (HE), the mobility of Disabled International students appears to be limited. Literature supporting this group of students on their journey is scarce, despite the fact that Disabled International students, as a group, experience not only the set of barriers faced by their Disabled counterparts domestically, and those encountered by their non-disabled International peers, but also have their own unique challenges to confront on a daily basis. COVID-19 reinforced and exacerbated some of these difficulties affecting Disabled International students' opportunities to travel and study abroad, yet little has been researched and written on this topic.

The term “disability” is defined throughout this chapter in social model terms. In brief, this perspective considers “impairment” as a biological experience, whereas the concept “disability” is defined as societal discrimination and prejudice related to a larger issue of injustice and marginalization (Holden and Beresford, 2002). Rooted in the individual medical interpretation of disability, British scholars argue that the phrase “students/people with disabilities” denies the political or disability identity, which has emerged from the Disabled People’s Movement in a similar way to Black and Gay political identities (Barnes, 1992). When used in this context, the term “disability” refers to a student’s medical condition rather than the disabling educational system and/or society at large, confusing the crucial distinction between disability and impairment. For this reason, in the chapter the use of

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