

Transcript

00:00:16 Speaker 1

Hello everyone, this is Kumari Bandari from black and brown bioethics. And you're listening to the power and privilege in academia podcast the show that gets together with academics from marginalised backgrounds to question academic hierarchies.

00:00:31 Speaker 1

Structures and conventions unpack their inherent issues and discuss solutions.

00:00:37 Speaker 1

Today we're talking about inclusivity in publishing with Doctor Agomoni Ganguli-Mitra and Dr Sabrina Germain.

00:00:45 Speaker 1

We will discuss what there is to know about inclusivity in publishing.

00:00:49 Speaker 1

What barriers currently exist on the global scale, and who can do what to increase chances of publishing?

00:00:56 Speaker 1

And now to introduce our speakers.

00:01:00 Speaker 1

Doctor Agomoni Ganguli-Mitra lecturer and Chancellor's fellow in bioethics and global health ethics and Deputy director of the JQ Mason Institute for Medicine.

00:01:11 Speaker 1

She has a special interest in global bioethics, structural and gender justice.

00:01:17 Speaker 1

Hi, good morning. Has written on ethical issues related to global health emergencies, public health, global surrogacy, sex selection, biomedical research, racism in health and the concepts of exploitation, vulnerability and power.

00:01:31 Speaker 1

In bioethics.

00:01:33 Speaker 1

Our second speaker, Doctor Sabrina Germain, is a reader in.

00:01:37 Speaker 1

Healthcare law and.

00:01:38 Speaker 1

Policy at the City Law School, City University of London.

00:01:42 Speaker 1

She is a member of City University Centre for Healthcare Innovation Research, the University of Shirebrook Centre for Law and Governance, and the Canadian Research Centre on Law and Health Policy. Sabrina's research interests focus on questions of distributed.

00:01:59 Speaker 1

And the role of medical professionals in the health care law making process.

00:02:04

She.

00:02:04 Speaker 1

Is the author of two monographs, the first being justice and profit and healthcare law, and the second being the co-authored monograph. Medical doctors and health reforms.

00:02:15 Speaker 1

Currently, she focuses on research projects on inequalities in accessing healthcare services for honourable groups and the access to abortion of racially minoritized and gender minority individuals in the UK and in Nepal.

00:02:31 Speaker 1

Thank you for joining us both of.

00:02:33 Speaker 1

You let's get this show started.

00:02:46 Speaker 1

There is a tweet that I came across recently on the topic of academic publishing that I have since been wanting to unpack and discuss, and I thought what better place to do that than here with you too. So let's get down to business.

00:03:02 Speaker 1

The tweet itself was about a reviewer's comment on a paper that was submitted to a Springer Nature Journal, and the commenting question was begin quote. I think that to write papers that are competitive, you should probably partner with more experienced authors in the Western world. I understand that that might be difficult.

00:03:23 Speaker 1

Impossible in Saudi Arabia. Sorry and quote.

00:03:27 Speaker 1

Right.

00:03:28 Speaker 1

Heavy stuff. So this tweet and the expectedly heated Twitter threat that followed was a few different issues related to the world of academic publishing. To start with, the publishing world seems to be biased towards high income countries.

00:03:43 Speaker 1

And for many major journals, most editorial teams and reviewers are from the Western world.

00:03:49 Speaker 1

So this might.

00:03:50 Speaker 1

Perpetuate narrow ideas of what constitutes good or competitive research.

00:03:57 Speaker 1

And my question within the context of all of.

00:03:59 Speaker 1

This is how.

00:04:01 Speaker 1

Do you think this creates issues in power dynamics that affect the creation and dissemination of knowledge as the money? Would you like to go first?

00:04:09 Speaker 2

Thank you very much.

00:04:11 Speaker 2

There are several layers, of course, to both the tweets and also to the question that you've given us, we'll explore this again and again. I think throughout the conversation, but I think to get us started this very well illustrates this idea that expertise and knowledge is the purview of the West, and it really hints.

00:04:29 Speaker 2

The much bigger issue about Coloniality in in knowledge production and creation this.

00:04:35 Speaker 2

Here that knowledge is created and disseminated from the West and.

00:04:39 Speaker 2

Is to be.

00:04:40 Speaker 2

Consumed by the rest of the world, and maybe that way they will be able to pull themselves up from a dark hall of ignorance or something along those lines, right? However, having said that, and I don't want my next comment to sort of take away from what I just said.

00:04:56 Speaker 2

But I.

00:04:57

Think.

00:04:58 Speaker 2

Academic publishing. Scholarly publishing has its own language and academic styles and skills again, which is not the purview of Western or Global N academics, but it's it's something that we've had access to that we've been trained in and that we've had lots of opportunities to sort of try and fail.

00:05:18 Speaker 2

And to be nurtured and supported by others who've had the resources to hone those skills right.

00:05:24 Speaker 2

So even coming from 1 discipline to the other, you'll find that there are very different styles and expectations about how we write in academia, and it's its own language. So it is not just a question of experience and expertise, it's a question of learning the kind of styles that are expected in certain kind of context.

00:05:44 Speaker 2

So just to get us started, I think that's my my initial response to that tweet and your question.

00:05:50 Speaker 1

Thank you for that.

00:05:51 Speaker 1

Sabrina, would you like to respond to what everyone shared and to the question in general?

00:05:56 Speaker 3

Yes, absolutely. I think everyone is making very good solid points about the colonialist kind of aspect of the question. I think this is very interesting a question because this is something that is rarely openly discuss.

00:06:08 Speaker 3

Trust, and I think that more honesty and transparency towards these dynamics should be brought to the fore, producing help output of a great quality is only kind of a small part of what publishing is, in my opinion. There's various layers as highlighted in the conversation. I think we can substantially contribute to academic research, whether or not we can get public.

00:06:31 Speaker 3

Or not. But the creation and destination of knowledge that I mentioned that you highlight in the the question here is very problematic because this is the type of discourse from members of editorial boards that shows obviously prejudice and bias. I think it's even more problematic because it it does cue the metrics towards high income country researcher.

00:06:51 Speaker 3

But also it has the unfortunate and very serious consequence of stifling the knowledge production and the knowledge sharing of creative research from low income countries.

00:07:01 Speaker 3

And we will see them being often turned down from some journals and also journals have reputations very pragmatically and and researchers talk among themselves. So it's easy to imagine many researchers from low global S countries, low income countries being put off from submitting in a certain type of publication. So this impacts us.

00:07:21 Speaker 3

All, it doesn't help to improve the quality of our knowledge. It shows in our mindedness and it fosters bias. And it also constructs an incomplete picture on some very important issues. So.

00:07:32 Speaker 3

There is very strong structural and negative power dynamics at play because journal based in high income countries also have a greater impact factor and high income countries researcher will be more quickly established as expert if they tend to publish more in those journals. So this means that it is more likely that when it comes to editorial board member.

00:07:53 Speaker 3

They.

00:07:53 Speaker 3

Will see high income countries colleagues as a more apt to publish and therefore they will progress altogether their careers faster. So there's a lot of underlying current in, in in this as well.

00:08:05 Speaker 2

Yes. And if I can just almost emphasise something that Sabrina said.

00:08:08 Speaker 2

Which I think.

00:08:09 Speaker 2

Is at the core of what we'd want to get at is that this is a loss for everyone concerned, right? This is a very much a loss for global knowledge.

00:08:18 Speaker 2

Action and access. If we're not hearing all the voices, we're not getting a good picture of what knowledge creation is and where knowledge is what different perspectives are that we're missing. If we're not allowing the platform to be accessible and open to every voice that needs to be there, it's very much a loss for global academia.

00:08:39 Speaker 1

I'm loving the variety of points both of you have touched on and would like to get more into that as the conversation progresses as the next step though, going back to the tweet.

00:08:50 Speaker 1

That tweet inspired others to share similar horror stories. One Twitter user shared a comment made by a review of prominent Anglo American Journal and the comment said we are sorry, but the geographic scope of your research, meaning the country you are doing your research, is not of interest to our readership.

00:09:08 Speaker 1

Now, while there is an argument to be made for journals with a specific geographical focus, not being interested in articles focusing on other geographies, if the journal is not geography specific, this comment is clearly discriminatory.

00:09:22 Speaker 1

And it touches on a well recognised pattern of higher numbers of publications from high income countries compared to low income countries, which we already recognised in this space. And I wanted to hear your perspectives on how we can overcome such discriminatory gatekeeping and work towards more geographical representation in scholarly publishing.

00:09:42 Speaker 1

For instance, how do we broaden the topical and geographical interests of a readership because that comment highlights that the power also rests with the leadership and not just with the editorial boards, which is what we first highlighted.

00:09:55 Speaker 3

Yes, well, I think it starts with greater diversity on editorial boards or commissioning committees, but for editorial boards to become more diverse, there needs to be publishing from various geographical areas and more diverse research.

00:10:09 Speaker 3

So it becomes harder for researchers from the global souths to become members of editorial boards if they cannot get their papers published in that journal, because obviously this is kind of a circular phenomenon. So it comes down to publication and resources that are needed to produce articles in my opinion. So we need to have less bias.

00:10:29 Speaker 3

About the decisions of who is acting as a peer reviewer and who we invite to co-author articles, books, or when we're inviting people on projects that edited collections for.

00:10:40 Speaker 3

People, there's outstanding scholarship and research produced in global S countries, and of course, we should be acknowledging that and valuing that. But we need to be more intentional and mindful in how.

00:10:50 Speaker 3

We do this.

00:10:51 Speaker 3

Especially when we review these authors, we need peer reviewers that have more inclusive mindsets in my opinion, and we need for them to hold.

00:11:00 Speaker 3

The appropriate expertise on a topic or a geography.

00:11:03 Speaker 3

And we have to have them offer non biased and fair assessment of the work, and this is not always the case, unfortunately, because of a lack of diversity on those boards. So members of the board needs to have also connections with these other geographies and these other areas of expertise and they need to cultivate them and that requires.

00:11:23 Speaker 3

Effort because we have to see them being included and to see these areas of specialty being included in the purview of the journal and what they're they're looking after. So it's not for them to really decide what the readership wants, although they do believe they are the gatekeepers, but they should be a bit more open minded of what they're looking at. As I said, it's a very.

00:11:43 Speaker 3

Circular phenomenon in in my opinion, I Gemini, I don't know what your thoughts are on this, but that's my.

00:11:48 Speaker 3

Feeling.

00:11:49 Speaker 2

Yeah, absolutely.

00:11:51 Speaker 2

I very much echo a lot of what he said. I think, of course that the idea of the geographical scope is almost, of course I don't know the background of that tweet at all. I don't know what kind of journal it was and what they were suggesting to publish.

But, you know, unless you signed to submit a piece to the Journal of South Asian Studies and it's a piece on Iceland and it's got no connection.

00:12:14 Speaker 2

Again, I think that that kind of comment really embodies that neocolonial idea of where knowledge production lies and what is of interest to certain readers and so on. And I think there's so much to unpack there, and preferably also written in English and so on, as Sabrina said, better geographical representation on editorial boards is.

00:12:34 Speaker 2

Absolutely key, but I think we need to also go a little bit further upstream and thinking about funding and funders and where the money goes to actually.

00:12:43 Speaker 2

Have the research done, those of us who have the time and the space to do research is also because we are funded in some way or the other to do the research right. And so you need in order to have better power dynamics, you need the money to be flowing in context where then people are given the time and the spaces and the resources required to do.

00:13:03 Speaker 2

Research that will be published, the work of editors, I think is absolutely key. And you've said much of what I had in mind as well. Sabrina, there's definitely needs to be an active reeducation of targeting, other kinds of research, other kinds of geographies.

00:13:19 Speaker 2

And it's difficult because also most of the editors who are also academics are doing this in their extra time, of which they have none. And they're doing this for free and they're, you know, there's all this Labour going into a huge machinery that's making a lot of money, but where nobody else is really supported to do this work. So I recognise in saying this, we're expecting.

00:13:40 Speaker 2

Interest to do more work than they have so far, but I think it's absolutely key if we're going to.

00:13:45 Speaker 2

These are geographical representation, our readership, and so on. It's a difficult.

00:13:51 Speaker 2

Task but we have to do this through encouraging publication through encouraging, as you said collaboration, Co authoring and so on. But also there is something very key to remember that we shouldn't fall back on this idea that you know here are the top journals and of course they're based in the global north, right.

00:14:07 Speaker 2

There was a.

00:14:08 Speaker 2

Recent paper, I think it was comment to paper.

00:14:11 Speaker 2

Which the title was the knowledge from the global S is in the.

00:14:14 Speaker 2

South, right. So it is also recreating that kind of power dynamics between the global north and the global S to say here we're opening up this platform to you, why don't you come and publish with us? We're giving you this fantastic platform. We have to take a step back and to be humble.

00:14:30 Speaker 2

And say actually.

00:14:31 Speaker 2

We should be going out and reading other other things that are published in other journals and journals that would.

00:14:36 Speaker 2

Otherwise not be reading because we're based in the global north and so on. So we have to also go look for the knowledge for the research and the writing that's maybe not appearing in our journals and not written in English as well.

00:14:50 Speaker 3

I think if I can, I'd like to.

00:14:51 Speaker 3

Pick up on.

00:14:51 Speaker 3

That last few points I think you're making such important comments around the elite nature of academia. Of course, this is inherent to what we do. We we always look at

ranking and which one is the top journal we want to publish in. We need to be very mindful.

00:15:10 Speaker 3

So there's there's the aspect as well. After, as you highlighted of.

00:15:14 Speaker 3

The fact that this is not something that is free labour essentially, so we cannot expect, of course, all editorial board members to having all-encompassing knowledge of other people's areas or geography. However, we should be very mindful and intentional, maybe looking out outside the box.

00:15:35 Speaker 3

And the top ranking journals. So in various forums, not just with regards to what we want to achieve individually as colours, but how we view our colleagues as well and what they.

00:15:45 Speaker 3

Team. So it's how we measure excellence and research excellence and I know we're going to most probably be talking about this a little further down the line. But I think it's about checking our biases, all of us in, in this academic space.

00:15:59 Speaker 1

I actually have a follow up.

00:16:00 Speaker 1

Question on everything that you just shared. How do you think that journals and editorial boards can be held accountable in terms of implementing some of the measures that you mentioned?

00:16:12 Speaker 2

Very tough question. I think some some editorial boards are trying to make an effort.

00:16:20 Speaker 2

But I think it's still very slow and I think I mean to go back to a point that I made earlier. I think a lot more resources need to go into supporting editorial boards into making these changes. Right now it's a, you know, it's a couple of academics who are sort of the the main editors who then, you know, have an editorial board, but are very much dependent on everybody's goodwill.

00:16:40 Speaker 2

And volunteer work. And I think if we don't have more resources, it is virtually impossible to us than spread academics to make even more time to make sure that we're doing the right thing. If if we do want to be doing the right thing, I think we need the time and resources to do that. I think one step would be to.

00:16:58 Speaker 2

Support editorial boards better in terms of infrastructure, in terms of time and how to do this work.

00:17:03 Speaker 3

Yeah, I think resources are key, but I see in recent weeks, years, some editorial boards putting out calls and very intentionally seeking diversity on their boards, being diversity, not just with regards to geographies or necessity, but also with regards to career.

00:17:20 Speaker 3

Rules. So we always thought this was kind of you know the remit of high level highly intellectual professors to be on editorial boards. But there is really an opening up to early career researchers. I can even think of some top journals that are doing that at the moment where they understand that the fresh blood and new ideas from early.

00:17:40 Speaker 3

For researchers is invaluable and therefore should be sought out, and I think.

00:17:44 Speaker 3

This.

00:17:44 Speaker 3

Brings in hopefully some diversity of thought on board and some sense of legitimacy in a way, so hopefully accountability will will be hard. I think because this is.

00:17:57 Speaker 3

Still, a very arbitrary arena, but I think that there's hope out there of wanting to change things for sure.

00:18:04 Speaker 1

That's good to hear that there is hope and that change is happening, though a bit too slowly, perhaps for what we would.

00:18:10 Speaker 1

Like to see.

00:18:12 Speaker 1

And I would actually like to go back now to something again. You mentioned at the very beginning regarding different languages that we see used in journal writing or in publishing in journals and the different resources and training that is required to do that kind of writing. And so with that in mind, what might be some obstacles that are currently in place when thinking about?

00:18:35 Speaker 1

Making publishing more accessible to academics from diverse backgrounds and levels of familiarity with languages in which journals publish.

00:18:43 Speaker 2

Yes, I think, I mean, it's interesting, you talk of obstacles.

00:18:47 Speaker 1

I'd like to.

00:18:48 Speaker 2

Turn the question on its head really and say.

00:18:51 Speaker 2

What are the ways in which?

00:18:52 Speaker 2

We're gatekeeping these spaces.

00:18:54 Speaker 2

Right. So instead of thinking about obstacles, what are the ways in which we need to make sure that we're not doing business as usual because it's clearly not working in terms of thinking about diversity in the broad sense?

00:19:08 Speaker 2

And I think the the first thing and I'd be quite interested in hearing what Sabrina has to say about this is.

00:19:13 Speaker 2

That, I think, quite ironically, in a podcast about publishing, I think publishing in a way is a problem in that publishing, especially in these sort of high impact journals, these prestige journals is still one of the biggest markers of success. Instead of thinking about all the ways in which we're academics and that we're creating knowledge that we're teaching, that we're nurturing, that we're supervising, that we're supporting others to advance in their careers.

00:19:38 Speaker 2

Where you're published still is a very big marker of how well you're doing as an.

00:19:43 Speaker 2

Like and I think that kind of culture change is a very long process, but I think it's absolutely necessary in order to sort of kind of break the cycle of having to always published in the spaces and then coming up to these same obstacles again and again and associated with that is this idea, although I think at least in my institution and I see this elsewhere as well.

00:20:03 Speaker 2

There is a slight change of culture around this idea that you have to publish a lot. Again, if you've published a lot in high impact journals, you're seen as this. You know * academic and so on. And that really forces a lot of people to.

00:20:16 Speaker 2

Publish all the time and it makes space for things like predatory journals and so on. And then you know you lose track of what's going on even in your field because there's so much happening and hardly a day goes by without some predatory journals. You know, sending you emails, asking you to publish in their journals and so on. So I think there's something at the core.

00:20:36 Speaker 2

Publishing and how that relates to an academics worth is something that we need to question, and it's very problem.

00:20:43 Speaker 2

On the question of language, I think the predominance of English is really again automatic and it's colonial of course, but it also means that we're not accessing A wider knowledge spectrum, because of course there's knowledge produced in other language. But there's also concepts produced in other language that can't possibly be translated.

00:21:02 Speaker 2

In English, either right. So there is all sorts of things going on.

00:21:05 Speaker 2

Where we're sort of really speaking.

00:21:07 Speaker 2

Within our quite big, but still within our bubble, in this echo Chamber of thinking, we've sorted it all out in our head.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

This, but we're bound to miss out on really important ideas and concepts. If we think publishing and writing in English is the only kind of knowledge we should be accessing. So, for example, just of course, scholarly publishing is still incredibly inaccessible. It's quite elitist, it's quite colonial, it's quite ablist as well. And the way we.

00:21:34 Speaker 2

Use language in order to produce and to present.

00:21:38 Speaker 2

And that's, I think, really problematic in one of a recent project I was part of, we tried to set up a website with some case scenarios about humanitarian research and health where we had some scenarios about epistemic injustice. And the question of language in humanitarian work. And there what we tried to do again, we we ran out of resources.

00:21:58 Speaker 2

Who couldn't do that many, but we'll try to translate these in trail, for example, where we try to at least signal that is important to have knowledge produced and disseminated in language.

00:22:11 Speaker 2

Beyond English, so there. I mean there are little things that we can do, but there are also bigger questions that we need to really, you know stop and think about what what we want to be doing as as academics and how we want to be creating the idea of a good academic.

00:22:25 Speaker 1

Absolutely. And I think it also connects back to readership, because once again, if most of the writing is in English, are we assuming that the audience or readership we want to communicate and engage with is composed of English speakers and readers?

00:22:40 Speaker 3

This strategy made me think of just an anecdote. I was having a chat with a colleague that was coming back from conference and I said, oh, it's such a great. I was on European law, wasn't part of the conference and they said this is interesting. There were so many people sharing papers and then I realised there's a world out there that this is published in English and this is not to speak to global S countries. This is to speak about.

00:23:02 Speaker 3

And somebody meant said, how do you know this publication, which is a very, very famous publication in France, in France? And I thought this is quite funny how opaque and kind of contained are our boundaries of knowledge as well.

00:23:16 Speaker 3

Which also speaks to the very problematic nature of publishing. So of course, when we're in English speaking world, we do believe that it travels so far and you know well as far as other people want to read our research, I mean, I guess so far as we have such a small community as academics, we believe we travel those frontiers and everybody's aware of our research.

00:23:37 Speaker 3

Certainly not. We're very close group of very small.

00:23:40 Speaker 3

Individual interested in one very small field, but I thought it's even worse than we think because we're so unaware of what else is around and that's a real shame. I can think of a few obstacles as well, not only to hegemonic points which I think are extremely valid. I can think of a few other ones. Having experienced them myself.

00:24:00 Speaker 3

Not because of geography per say with regards to my research, but because of the place where I work because I'm not from the UK.

00:24:07 Speaker 3

And so I don't have the network that UK academic would have. For example, I'm Canadian. So I think that I found myself especially as a woman of colour, looking at issues around women of colour. In my research, I found that it was harder for me to get my foot in the door of some journals and it comes down of course.

00:24:28 Speaker 3

To peers and peer reviewing of someones work in a new arena in a new.

00:24:33 Speaker 3

Country but also it's the relationship that publishing has with networking itself, because it's much down to the net working with regards to publishers, editors and who you know on editorial boards and nobody wants to talk about this openly. It's all about very strict peer reviewing. It's all about.

00:24:54 Speaker 3

You know the greatest knowledge and excellence. It's not about relationships, but we all uncover bit by bit as we become more senior that there's a lot to do with kind of a human aspect to publishing.

00:25:06 Speaker 3

And I think what we found is that specialist journals, we can get into with a particular research that we would have because they're interested in more interdisciplinary work or they're interested in other geographies, especially on special issues, for example. But with regards to generalists, top generalist journals, they're extremely hard to get into.

00:25:27 Speaker 3

And this is for the good reason, because there's more competition obviously for.

00:25:30 Speaker 3

Those top journals.

00:25:32 Speaker 3

But as I said, this is problematic because they're ranked higher because they have a higher impact factor and they have a wider readership. So the recognition of 1's work and expertise is confined to specific journal, but also confined to a certain ranking in a.

00:25:49 Speaker 3

Way.

00:25:50 Speaker 3

So what I would list.

00:25:52 Speaker 3

If I can do my laundry list of obstacle, I would say, well, there's of course a lack of diversity and editorial board and publishing House committee. I'd say there is a lack of diversity on the peer reviewers book proposal or article.

00:26:04 Speaker 3

There's recurrent network with regards to foreign authors that creates an indirect barrier for them. There is a lack of resources that we've highlighted time and time again, and this is very right with regards to institution. We employ us and we might be very fortunate as I am to be very well supported to go to conferences, for example, but.

00:26:24 Speaker 3

Others are not as fortunate, and also they don't have access to peer reviewers before submitting their work, which is also very problematic. And this is something that that we need. We need a support system prior to submission, so these are would be my laundry list of horrible things that would prevent good politicians.

00:26:41 Speaker 1

Thanks for that.

00:26:41 Speaker 1

Sabrina and actually, I think you also touched on a very important point about the importance of networks, human connections and the behind the scenes work that happens when it comes to publishing and actually when when it comes to the writing process itself, for instance, chances of publishing also affected by access to opportunities to attend.

00:27:01 Speaker 1

Conferences and build these sorts of collaborations that could lead to co-authored papers, which in turn might eventually lead to papers that you lead.

00:27:09 Speaker 1

When thinking about publishing, how do you level the playing field so that those who are not able to access such opportunities are not necessarily negatively impacted and what can individual academics themselves do to increase their chances of building collaborations that are helpful in publishing?

00:27:28 Speaker 3

I think it's quite.

00:27:29 Speaker 2

Connected to Sabrina's earlier response.

00:27:32 Speaker 2

Like yourself. Sabrina, I'm not from the UK and I was mostly not trained in the UK either, so I find it quite difficult to actually know who is who in the field. When I got to the UK, I have some big names, but I've said I don't know some of my peers. I don't know who is sort of up and coming and so on.

00:27:46 Speaker 2

So even I with so much resource and so much privilege find it difficult. So I can't just about imagine what it's like to be an early career researcher to be a person of colour, to

be a woman of colour. In this context, it's struggling amount of challenge and I think as you said, networking and connection is absolutely key here. Even if we think.

00:28:07 Speaker 2

That all it takes is good peer review, good anonymous peer review. It's not just that right, because where you go to conferences, who you're going to be connected to depends on who you know. And it depends on whether you've had the right kind of supervisors and mentors and who they're connected to. Right. So you're going to meet the people that you're supervisors and.

00:28:27 Speaker 2

Mentors are connected to and then you get invited to do a co-authored edited chapter and then edited volume for example, and that's how you get a foot in the door, and so on and so forth. So all of us who have managed to get somewhere in academia had a lot of those kind of often invisible support that you.

00:28:44 Speaker 2

Yet I think in thinking about how to level the playing field.

00:28:49 Speaker 2

I mean, there's such a huge amount of work to do there. I wouldn't even know where to start. But one thing to think about, especially in conferences that take place in the global North, as many of them do, is to think about things like conference fees, but also things like visas, right. So one of the biggest issues that we find in international concern.

00:29:09 Speaker 2

For top international conferences in our field, is that a lot of people can't come because there's no chance for them to get a visa or to get a visa in time.

00:29:18 Speaker 2

So if we are serious about this, we really need to rethink the format of our conferences and think about whether we want to do many more online conferences, for example, and a lot of people are reluctant because they really like meeting people in person and doing those kinds of networking. And I understand that. But at the same time, that's just gatekeeping and keeping our privilege.

00:29:37 Speaker 2

To ourselves.

00:29:38 Speaker 2

Really.

00:29:39 Speaker 2

Also, to make an effort, just like with editorial boards, to have much more diverse panels, not just in terms of, you know, things like gender and race, but also things of thinking, of disability and so on, and class and all sorts of other factors that it's going to become an obstacle for a researcher. And also it shouldn't.

00:29:59 Speaker 2

Just be the responsibility of.

00:30:02 Speaker 2

Minoritized scholars, for example, to make sure they put themselves out there. Right. So I was in a panel on again on writing for early career researchers. And one of the things I said and exactly goes back to what you said, Sabrina, about this idea that you just send, send it somewhere to the ether and somehow the magic.

00:30:22 Speaker 2

Peer review happens and you get published and it the reality is just so different, right?

00:30:28 Speaker 2

And I said to them, if there are special issues, go for them because that's one of those less opaque and more transparent spaces where you actually can get in touch with the yes editors and say I'm thinking about writing on this. What do you think? I recently was part of a guest said to the special issue and we very much encouraged those who were submitting to get in touch because we wanted to really.

00:30:51 Speaker 2

Encourage more diversity. It was, in the end, much, much harder than we had.

00:30:55 Speaker 2

Imagine and actually I don't even think that we did such a great job in the end, but it was just so difficult, even though we tried. But at least with special issues that you can have that conversation, you can make those connections. And then of course, articles still get sent to peer reviews and might still not make it to the to the special issue.

00:31:15 Speaker 2

And So what I was saying about this idea.

00:31:18 Speaker 2

Of you know what?

00:31:19 Speaker 2

Minoritized researchers, as individuals can do it's hard to say. Put yourself out there, make connections because I can't promise that they're not going to be met with condescension and ignorance and just discrimination. So it's a very difficult thing to say to people to just, oh, just go out there and just, you know, strike up a conversation. I've never gone to a conference.

00:31:41 Speaker 2

And I had a conversation with somebody I had not known before, right, that this is just not my personality. I'm I don't come into a room and wield that kind of authority. I hate drinks reception because I'm so short compared to everybody else. I feel like I'm, you know, having to look up around the room at all these men wearing suits and really, really tall and. And I just feel like I need to crawl into my.

00:32:02 Speaker 2

Hotel room and cry because it is just not a space that's made for me. There's only so much individuals can do, and it's definitely on us as global North academic.

00:32:14 Speaker 2

Especially as we gain more power and privilege to make sure that these inclusions are much more intentional and systematic, rather than just saying we've made the space, there's an open space come if you will, and do the best you can do. I think that's just.

00:32:29 Speaker 2

Not good enough.

00:32:30 Speaker 3

I couldn't agree more and I think a lot of things that you've said Echo with me, not just for the fact that I'm also extremely short and feel very awkward in those spaces, but I think.

00:32:41 Speaker 3

That it should. The orders should not be on those colours. We should be, I'll say it time and time again. We should be more intentional and who we pick as peer reviewers. If you are on an editorial board, you should really think about who you're asking and how you think they might receive a piece, because a lot of it is very subjective.

00:33:02 Speaker 3

And it is not necessarily speaking to the quality of the piece, but more how it lands with a colleague because of their theoretical approach or their own work. So we all have bias and and and such we're humans, but we have to be.

00:33:17 Speaker 3

Very mindful of that.

00:33:18 Speaker 3

I think it's particularly difficult, as you said, for early career researchers, and I think very practically with regards to conferences. If you do have a relationship with the publishing house, for example, and you are chatting at this time, just make an effort be intentional. As a conference last April and I made a conscious effort to bring in someone and.

00:33:38 Speaker 3

Introduce them to a colleague. But also I thought maybe I should introduce them to the publisher because I published an edited collection that's so long ago, and then maybe they would be interested in knowing what their work is establishing those very small human.

00:33:50 Speaker 3

Connections if you can. It is very it's incremental and it's really important and it will build up somebody's career in the end. So I think it's all about paying forward what we have had. It's all about, as you said, being aware of our privilege and and then really kind of doing the work to not necessarily mentor junior colleagues.

00:34:10 Speaker 3

At least link them up for more senior colleagues. We should be very mindful of how we receive their work when we are peer reviewers because we are asked often to peer review other people's work. So I would say that these are the two elements that really yeah stand out for.

00:34:25 Speaker 3

Me.

00:34:27 Speaker 1

Thank you both for articulating so beautifully the.

00:34:31 Speaker 1

Or might I even say the?

00:34:32 Speaker 1

Obligation that we.

00:34:33 Speaker 1

As colours in the global N have in terms of sharing our privilege and opening up that space and being more intentional in making the space more accessible and open to people from different backgrounds from.

00:34:46 Speaker 1

All over the world.

00:34:48 Speaker 1

And I would actually like to build on the topic of minoritized academic and the burdens that come with it, because often those who write about intersectional political issues, such as race or marginalised, for more canonical discussions that sideline such issues, Bianca Williams actually wrote in 2022.

00:35:07 Speaker 1

The commitment that many black women anthropologists show to interdisciplinary community based anti racist and feminist work further marginalises them both in the anthropological Canon and in other institutional practise.

00:35:20 Speaker 1

That's a direct quote from her, and it really captures that what we all know, which is that.

00:35:26 Speaker 1

Explicit political intersectional academic work is often undertaken by academics from various minorities, backgrounds, and so how can such academics continue to write about these causes that they care about without being sidelined from the canonical discussions?

00:35:42 Speaker 3

So I will say something that will be unpopular, but I will say I will say never stop writing if you can. So there's really conditional and here and we're speaking to to the point we've been making time and time again, if you have the support of.

00:35:55 Speaker 3

Your institution, but.

00:35:56 Speaker 3

Because for good writing to happen, you need to be able to take sabbatical leave. You need to have funds to go to conferences.

00:36:03 Speaker 3

You need to be supported to write grant applications, so you should write if you can write, because all writing leads to collaboration publication engage.

00:36:14 Speaker 3

Richmond, so I would also say engage in the dialogue with a broader supportive community and I think it's really important to do that. I found a lot of comfort myself sharing my experience with other women of colour in the same arena and the advice that they've given me and the help and support that they continue to give me and I think there's so much strength in.

00:36:35 Speaker 3

Polarity. So I would encourage marginalised scholars to join, establish also associations and they might seem very daunting and intimidating, but they are very supportive networks. I joined myself, the socio Legal Studies Association Board of Trustee 3 years ago and I found a wonderful network of support there. I'm also part of the.

00:36:55 Speaker 3

Social legal scholars Health law section and this helped me establish some interesting connections.

00:37:00 Speaker 3

As well so.

00:37:01 Speaker 3

I think we don't want to be sidelined and so we need to maybe go to other avenues. The podcasting is great poster presentations for more junior colleagues or engaging even in legal designs, kind of alternative ways of sharing our knowledge and presenting our work at conferences if possible. Special issues that as we've alighted our great.

00:37:22 Speaker 3

Avenues and to continue sharing our experiences, not just with our network of support, but also some allies that we think can break down those barriers and those canonical discussions.

00:37:33 Speaker 3

There is a strong group right now around me that's very keen to open doors and I found a lot of strength in that. They bring me into strategic conversations and I feel very lucky that I have these people that are willing to have an open dialogue around these issues because this is not something that everybody wants to do and we have to be able to bear the discomfort.

00:37:51 Speaker 3

To do that.

00:37:52 Speaker 2

Absolutely.

00:37:53 Speaker 2

I mean again, you give so many really important practical advice as well. Sabrina, I think that's really, really useful. I think a few things come to mind. 1 is that I think this idea of creating community or finding community is so important. I think the only way to survive in academia, perhaps in other sectors as well, but definitely in academia, is to try and find.

00:38:15 Speaker 2

Your community of people, and sometimes it is within your own team. You've got good mentors and so on. Sometimes it's a combination.

00:38:22 Speaker 2

You'll find the port elsewhere in the institution you might find support outside the institution, but wherever there is support, don't hesitate to take that support, because one thing that comes with also, you know this idea of being sidelined is really interesting because as minoritized scholars, we find ourselves being both slightly.

00:38:42 Speaker 2

Invisible, but also slightly hypervisor.

00:38:45 Speaker 2

Right. So you, you get asked to be on every panel and on every task force and on every and there's a burden that comes with that representation and.

00:38:53 Speaker 2

It takes a.

00:38:53 Speaker 2

Toll and it means we're spending a lot of hours doing this kind of work when others are publishing right. And so we have to be really aware of that. And I don't know that I have a good answer.

00:39:05 Speaker 2

With this about how to take care of yourself and in this context, but we just have to be aware that suddenly we become this expert through through a shared positionality, and then we get asked to take on all these extra burdens.

00:39:20 Speaker 2

For early career researchers, I think there's something to say about being slightly strategic as well, right? So wherever there's an opportunity to work with a more senior scholar, for example, who is already quite established in those topics that you're interested in, I think definitely take the the opportunity to do that.

00:39:40 Speaker 3

Co-author with.

00:39:41 Speaker 2

Your peers as well. I think that's really important. And even if you get rejections, I think we shouldn't be too discouraged in sending the kinds of things we write about into sort of the mainstream discourse and the mainstream sort of publishing content.

00:39:59 Speaker 2

But I think again, I think the more the most important thing I want to say here is that the cannon absolutely must change, right? It is not good enough to say. Here's a cannon. And here are all the things in the periphery that we're really interested in because as Charles Nelson said, these are the things that we should really be caring about.

00:40:19 Speaker 2

We should be looking at.

00:40:20 Speaker 2

At the world, not from the veil of ignorance, we should be looking at the world from the perspective of inequality of disadvantage of all sorts of injustices. That's where we should start from. So again, the cannon is not doing well enough. It's not doing its job. And again, those of us slowly, when we get to the position where we have the privilege, where we have those discussions.

00:40:42 Speaker 2

Where we are.

00:40:43 Speaker 2

Invited to have those discussions, there is definitely an own US on us to make sure that those cannons starts to look very different from what it has so far.

00:40:52 Speaker 1

Yes, can and definitely has to change as we have been discussing within the context of publishing, most of this conversation. I also just want to say that the two of you have been sharing some wonderful wisdom. It's been gold and I've been taking mental notes and actual notes. This is great stuff.

00:41:10 Speaker 1

So before we move on to the very last bit of today's conversation, I also wanted to open the floor to see whether you 2 had any questions for each other.

00:41:20 Speaker 3

Yes. Well, I would like to go first if that's OK. I have certainly a question where I got money because I'm I need.

00:41:26 Speaker 3

Kind of her work.

00:41:27 Speaker 3

And I wanted to know, I'm curious like that who are?

00:41:30 Speaker 3

The people that.

00:41:31 Speaker 3

You've relied on with regards to acting as sounding boards for the peer review of your own research outputs. If you have a group that you rely on, what are your your tricks or your people?

00:41:42 Speaker 2

Yeah, thank you. I mean, that's a really interesting question. I think it depends on what I'm working on. So there will be a handful of trusted colleagues whom I call friends really they're more friends than colleagues who unfortunately pretty much have to read everything that I write because I don't quite trust myself to send it.

00:42:02 Speaker 2

Anywhere before they've had, you know.

00:42:04 Speaker 2

Look, however, again, depending on what I'm writing on, sometimes I might send a paper to, say, a scholar who's a sociologist, with the caveat that this is a paper that I'm writing in bioethics. However, you know it makes use of the sociological concept. Can

you have a quick look and see whether you think what I'm saying is right, or at least not terribly wrong?

00:42:27 Speaker 2

And so on. So over the years, I've gotten less. I don't want to say precious. I've never. I was never quite precious about my work, but definitely feel less vulnerable about sending things.

00:42:37 Speaker 2

Doubt and asking for trusted constructive comments. I think that's always been very useful. But again, yes, there are a couple of people around me that I just stopped in the corridor and said you need to be.

00:42:50 Speaker 2

Reading this before?

00:42:51 Speaker 2

I can send it up please.

00:42:54 Speaker 2

How about you? Do you have your own community of people?

00:42:58 Speaker 3

Yeah, I think I'm the same and I think it's really interesting what you say about vulnerability around peer review. I used to take it very personally to begin with. So I had a hard time putting myself out there. But then I found a lot of strength in the.

00:43:10 Speaker 3

Your review, even the more drastic kind of violent peer reviews some friends. I don't know if I still call them friends, they are friends and colleagues, and I actually try to lean on a lot of my friends that are also law academics, but they're outside the medical law field, so they're less acquainted to some of the jargons sometimes.

00:43:30 Speaker 3

So they have very insightful comments from a more general perspective, because we all kind of take for granted that everybody understands what we're.

00:43:36 Speaker 3

Talking about, but that's not the case at all, so I can do that. I like also to have the perspective of scholars that are outside the discipline and unfortunately I do bore even

my family with my academic work. My husband has been a very strong peer reviewer of my first monograph for him. He suffered a lot through it, but it was worth it, I mean.

00:43:57 Speaker 3

Not only telling me that he did not understand certain concepts, but also the typos and all that stuff and all these things, although they seem very minor, quite important before submitting to a journal. So you learned that the, the, the hard way. But I thought it was quite a a friendly, a more friendly reviewer to begin with and.

00:44:14 Speaker 3

Going off to a more academic reviewer is always a smoother ride for me at.

00:44:18 Speaker 1

Least.

00:44:19 Speaker 2

I I also.

00:44:19 Speaker 2

I must say with people I trust, and I chose to me, I will often discuss an idea even before I finished my 1st draught or when I'm thinking of writing the first draught. And I say this is what's sort of going on in my head. What do you think about it? Does it make sense to you? And so on, but with?

00:44:35 Speaker 2

Very trusted people, of course.

00:44:38 Speaker 1

Yeah, absolutely. I feel bad for my friends and family that I'm going to be approaching after this conversation with the draughts and draughts of my writing. Great to now come back and wrap up the conversation about publishing that we've been having. I'd like to ask the two of you whether you have.

00:44:57 Speaker 1

Ever received any discriminatory comments or with someone you know has received any discriminatory comments from reviewers, and what advice you have for scholars who do?

00:45:08 Speaker 3

Well, this is a sensitive one, I would say, but I will say that I Co edited the collection with my colleague Dr Adrienne Non, who's absolutely wonderful. She's also at city, so now

might as well plug the books. I'll plug it. We wrote a book called Beyond The Virus not to this scenario. An international perspective on inequality raised by COVID-19. It's not just about the plug. It's also.

00:45:30 Speaker 3

To explain what happened at the proposal stage, so we were meant, of course, to address the comments of our peer reviewers and they were really good and they made very good suggestions and we really took the time to address them because they took the time to understand our project. So it's a book around inequalities raised by the pandemic.

00:45:46 Speaker 3

And we wanted to do this from a perspective of a diverse group of scholars from around the world, various disciplines and career levels, and of course, ethnicity. So we wanted to be inclusive across the board and we thought this transpired very much as an element of our proposal. So we have had three reviewers. The third one didn't seem to be fully on board with that.

00:46:07 Speaker 3

Idea. But in fairness there were valid kind of criticism that came out from that third review. But this person also bluntly suggested that we get rid of two.

00:46:16 Speaker 3

Readers, and it did not speak directly to the issues of geography, but they were suggesting getting rid of two women of colour, and I quote, because their subject were simply not a good fit. And so for us we were very astonished because these particular contributors were offering an interested sectional critical analysis in their respective field.

00:46:37 Speaker 3

So we thought this really spoke to a lack of open mindedness and we decided to include them because their perspective were important anyways. But we thought this is not an innocent suggestion on the part of the reviewer because we thought both of these abstracts were actually the strongest of all the contributions that we had received.

00:46:54 Speaker 3

So it's not openly discriminatory, it's not prejudice, but it speaks the underlying nature of this issue in academia, the structural issues of what we view as excellent. We could even extend this conversation to the ref. We won't go there, but what do we view as excellence in this field or in law?

00:47:14 Speaker 3

Or in academia in general is quite problematic as we've highlighted so far. So it speaks to a very.

00:47:20 Speaker 3

The classic view of the academic in the Ivory tower and not really looking at other disciplines and dialogue and perspective. So that's the example I wanted to share.

00:47:30 Speaker 2

I think that's that's such an important and interesting anecdote because again, I haven't faced any direct discriminatory comments, but I hear this all the time about people who propose books. But this is not quite the right time. You're not quite the right person to be doing this. Those kinds of responses.

00:47:48 Speaker 2

That are very common and this really speaks to the importance both in terms of books, but also in journal editorials, to have a strong set of editors who really understand what they're doing because ultimately you are going to get peer reviews that are not great and you have to.

00:48:05 Speaker 2

Have.

00:48:06 Speaker 2

The knowledge and the strength.

00:48:07 Speaker 2

To make those decisions to say no, actually those comments are problematic or we're just gonna disregard those comments or we're going to make those decisions because sometimes I think editors should ever take a step and say, actually those reviews comments you can disregard or we're not even going to put them in your review because they're just clearly.

00:48:25 Speaker 2

They don't know what they're talking about, and they're clearly being biased and prejudice, and you shouldn't have to read them at all.

00:48:32 Speaker 1

And can I ask whether in instances like that it's possible to give feedback to the reviewers themselves, and to perhaps find ways to ensure that they will not continue to act in similar ways moving forward?

00:48:46 Speaker 3

So we didn't feel like we were in a position to tell off the.

00:48:48 Speaker 3

Reviewer, but we certainly.

00:48:50 Speaker 3

Made the point that when we restructured the book and the outline, because that reviewer also made very valid comments around the structure of the book and the way was flow.

00:48:59 Speaker 3

Way, but when we restructured and re outlined the book, we made sure that these contributions were very much highlighted as being included. So we responded saying the actually some of the strongest one and they are important because of these reasons. So we had outlined why each chapter was essential for us. But we reinforced the importance of these particular.

00:49:21 Speaker 3

Contributions because they were essentially really one of the strongest ones where we were really lucky to have those contributors come forward to offer chapter.

00:49:28 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:49:29 Speaker 1

It just shows how much you can do by using your power as an editor or as being part of the editorial board. And it was quite uplifting Sabrina to hear how you handle that situation. So thank you for giving us that hope, an example of how one must proceed in situations like that.

00:49:47 Speaker 1

It has been an absolute pleasure. Thank you so much for being a part of this podcast and for sharing all your wisdom and experience with us.

00:49:54 Speaker 2

Thank you so much. Thank you for having us. It's been really interesting and a lot of fun, and I've learned so much from your perspective, Sabrina as well. Thank you for your time.

00:50:04 Speaker 3

The same for me. It was such a pleasure to have this conversation with you both. Thank you so much.

00:50:08 Speaker 3

For having us.

00:50:19 Speaker 1

In today's podcast about inclusivity in publishing, we talked about a range of different topics. We touched on power dynamics involved in knowledge dissemination in.

00:50:29 Speaker 1

Anaemia, structural barriers that exist when thinking about inclusivity in publishing, the behind the scenes work, and networking that go into publishing.

00:50:40 Speaker 1

Kinds of discrimination in the publishing world, the importance of different forms of community and structural support in going through the publishing journey and action points for changing the publishing game for the better.

00:50:54 Speaker 1

Coming out of this conversation, I am mindful of how important it is to be kind to ourselves when trying to publish work because we are working with the ring system.

00:51:05 Speaker 1

I'm also trying to further my thinking in terms of the different ways in which we can all support ourselves each other and marginalised academics and topics to change the status quo.

00:51:19 Speaker 1

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00:51:37 Speaker 1

Network.