

## Book Review

YOUNG

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**V. Vasudevan, N. Gross, P. Nagarajan and K. Clonan-Roy (Eds.), *Care-based Methodologies: Reimagining Qualitative Research with Youth in US Schools*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, 280 pp., \$128.00 (Hardback); \$108 (Ebook). ISBN: 9781350215597.**

*Care-based Methodologies: Reimagining Qualitative Research with Youth in US Schools* is a new and welcomed handbook for ethnographic methodologies in educational and youth research. The main argument and mission of the book are to make ethnographical research more humane and just and to trouble the past and present power structures in both research and contemporary schooling. The book introduces research methodologies that emphasize cooperative and interactive relationships between participants in research.

As the title of the book suggests, it offers new tools for doing care-based research with youth. I will start by unpacking two keywords and concepts of the book: care and with. *Care* here means being there for students and understanding their position in a school environment that can be dehumanizing and dominant. It is a concept that is hard to explain completely in one sentence, it is rather an umbrella term that runs through the book. An important aspect of care is to confront people as people with love and care and to dissolve the traditional *a priori* positions of both researchers and the research objects. In short, engaging in research is to engage with human beings rather than pre-given objects of research. Students are confronted with consideration and respect for their positions, everyday activities, and feelings. Another key theme in the book is *with*. Youth and their communities are, thus, considered equal actors and participants in the research project. The authors of the book all have different experiences and credentials, ranging from professors to younger researchers with different backgrounds.

The book consists of 15 chapters which provide an inside look at what care-based research looks like in practice. The chapters are situated in American nondominant schools in which inequality and racism are structurally inbuilt. To frame the inherent problems, the theoretical framework in the book is cross-disciplinary, mostly drawing from a feminist theory, decolonization, and critical race theory. The care-based methodology (CBM) is closely linked to the everyday practices of both researchers and youth. The concept of methodology is distinguished from the concept of method



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in this book (pp. 6–7). Whereas the methods mean the tools of research such as interviews, observations, and narrative inquiry, the methodology is a wider concept that includes theoretical and philosophical considerations. CBMs evolve with the everchanging situations and encounters faced within fieldwork. In other words, theories and methods are not static concepts for a researcher to harvest objective truth from the research objective, like schools and communities here. Rather, the researcher needs to adjust to different scenarios, and so do the methodologies. The roots of the research are in the philosophy of praxis, which can be traced to Karl Marx's famous 11th Feuerbach thesis: "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways; the point is to change it" (Marx, 1963, p. 69). In other words, CBMs are an intervention, where the voice is given to the oppressed and their marginalized position for a better future.

The book is divided into four parts. Next, I will describe the themes with a few examples. The first part troubles the given roles and subject positions and emphasizes the active participation of the researcher in the youth's everyday life instead of static observation from distance. The reflection of the researcher plays a crucial role in how to participate, act with care, and bring pedagogical aspects to research. This is part of the nature of the philosophy of praxis which is not only about observation and collecting data but to help build better futures for the youth.

The second part of the book emphasizes the collaboration between researchers and youth. This is rooted in Freirean pedagogical insight that dismantling the hierarchy between teacher and the student, and which here, also applies to researcher and research, helps create a situation where both can learn from each other (p. 61). Chapters in this part illustrate how students are co-researchers.

The third part is about tensions, subject positions, hardships, and facilities of CBMs. The chapter about intervention in research by Kathrine Clonan-Roy demonstrates the difficulties of positioning and responsibility of the researcher when engaging in deeply emotional and vulnerable issues such as violence and self-harm. Herewith, even though the researcher is committed to caring and transparency, structural constraints still might harm the built relationship with youth. The chapter by Nora Gross reflects upon the tensivity of creating relationships but also makes a sharp remark about the scarcity of resources and facilities which are essential for creating an environment for care. Here the more "structural" view of the inbuilt hardships comes into the forefront.

Part four opens the challenge of university training in care-based methodologies and working with different institutions and communities. In chapter 13, Stephanie Masta and Ophélie Alyssa Desmet demonstrate how care could be implemented in the teaching of qualitative research, which is often neglected in training.

As demonstrated above, the chapters open a wide range of different scenarios and ways to engage with care in doing research with youth. This is the strong point of the book, even though there is an abundance of methods, situations, and theoretical thoughts running through the book, the bottom line is loud and clear: to implement care means to reflect on the situations at hand, and to see the humanity behind the racialized, marginalized, and commonsensical veil. The chapters demonstrate the use of different methods under CBM, which are participatory observation, interviews, data collection, and joint analysis of the data with youth, etc. The chapters also

illustrate the importance of commitment as the research is long term in nature. The research can last for many years which requires close companionship and trust in both directions.

The objective of CBMs is to troubleshoot the hierarchies of past research. However, the line between research and care sometimes gets blurred and it made me ask what kind of information this methodology provides for the struggle for more just and humane school life. Here the epistemological view is mostly subjective, drawing from the reflection of researchers and the everyday affections of the youth. Sometimes reading, I felt that more emphasis could be given to “historical structures” of political and economic constraints which pave the way for marginalization, but of course, there is a quantity of literature to use in alignment with this book. However, the objective of the book is to provide an understanding of the delicate situations of vulnerable and marginalized communities for social change, and in that, it does a great job. As an end note, as the book’s authors acknowledge, given the contentious times around the world with the rise and stabilization of far-right populism, climate change, and tightening global tensions, it is crucial to implement deeply democratic practices and ideals of care into research and, thus, to the school world.

## Reference

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