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Ableism in academic knowledge production

Zusammenfassung

Ableismus in der akademischen Wissensproduktion

Der Artikel greift die Forderung feministischer Disability-Forscherinnen nach Integration der Kategorie Behinderung und von Inhalten der Disability Studies in die Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung auf und beabsichtigt, Bilanz über den derzeitigen Stand und die Entwicklung dieser Integration zu ziehen. Anhand einer qualitativen Inhaltsanalyse werden Auszüge deutscher und US-amerikanischer Handbücher der Geschlechterforschung auf ihre Integration von Behinderung untersucht und auf den ihnen innewohnenden Ableismus hin überprüft. Berücksichtigt man die Forderungen der Wissenschaftlerinnen nach einer vollständigen Integration und einer daraus folgenden Transformation der Geschlechterforschung, so weist die Stichprobe nur geringe Zeichen von Veränderung auf und die Forderung muss aufrechterhalten werden.

Schlüsselwörter
Ableismus, Behinderung, Erkenntnistheorie, Feminist Disability Studies, Geschlechterforschung, Wissensproduktion

Summary

The article takes up feminist disability scholars' request for an integration of disability (theory) into women's and gender studies and intends to take stock of the status and development of this integration. By means of qualitative content analysis, excerpts of German and US handbooks of gender research are examined for their degree of integrating disability (theory) and for inherent ableism. Considering the scholars' requests of full integration and a subsequent transformation of gender research the sample shows only minor signs of change and the request must be upheld.

Keywords
ableism, disability, epistemology, feminist disability studies, gender research, knowledge production

1 Introduction

The integration of disability into feminist theory and practice has extensively been discussed by disabled feminists. At the focal point are questions concerning an expansion of feminist theory in order to incorporate claims of disability theory and what potential feminist disability studies could offer to transform feminism (Tremain 2013). Approaches to systematic investigations of the connections and relations between the categories disability and gender trace back to the 1980s. Androcentrism in disability research and the disability movement was criticized and demands were raised to take a greater account of women's living situations, socialization conditions, and perspec-

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tives (Fine/Asch 1981; Boll et al. 1985; Wendell 1989).[1] Further, the mainstream of women's and gender studies and the women's movement was criticized for ignoring the experiences of disabled women (Wendell 1989; Hermes 1994; Goodley 2014). Meanwhile, a number of publications have appeared that deal with the interactions and multiple discriminations of disability and gender from the perspective of disability studies, such as *Gendering Disability – Intersectional Aspects of Disability and Gender* edited by Jutta Jacob, Swantje Köbsell and Eske Wollrad (2010) or *Feminist Disability Studies* edited by Kim Hall (2011). Conversely, there are also studies that approach the subject from the perspective of women's and gender studies (Schildmann/Schramme 2019: 881).

In her article *Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory* (2017)[2], Rosemarie Garland-Thomson discusses whether feminist theory could widen its scope by integrating disability (theory) and vice versa. Her fundamental point is "that integrating disability as a category of analysis and a system of representation deepens, expands, and challenges feminist theory" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 334f.). The legitimacy of this demand can be derived from the commonalities between feminist and disability issues, such as reproductive technology, bodily difference, or the ethics of care, but also from parallels in emancipatory aims or shared theoretical foundations and debates (Waldschmidt/Schneider 2007: 13f.).

Although the inadequate consideration of disability by feminist theory has often been postulated and criticized, it has rarely systematically and empirically been analyzed. This article takes up Garland-Thomson's and other disability scholars' criticism[3] and by investigating selected articles in handbooks of women's and gender studies pursues the question whether disability perspectives have been integrated into academic knowledge production in the field. Further, it examines whether a change in its integration becomes manifest in the material for the period under investigation. Finally, the article goes beyond determining a degree of integration and considers the results under the rather novel perspective of ableism and its significance for academic knowledge production.

2 Theoretical Perspectives

The term "feminist theory" represents contested terrain and includes several "feminisms"[4]. For this investigation and in Garland-Thomson's text, unless otherwise

1 It could also be a rewarding enterprise to investigate how masculinity studies deal with such criticism, since they have been criticized even more for ignoring disability than women's studies (Goodley/Runswick-Cole 2013: 142).

2 The text was first published in the *National Women's Studies Association Journal* in 2002 and since 2006 has been reprinted with small alterations in each subsequent edition of the *Disability Studies Reader*. It also appeared in *Feminist Disability Studies* by Kim Q. Hall and can be considered of great relevance and timeliness. Quotations are taken from the *Disability Studies Reader* (2017).

3 Internationally, disability studies researchers argue for a greater inclusion of the category of disability into feminist/gender and intersectionality theory/research (Wendell 1989; Meekosha/Shuttleworth 2009; Waldschmidt 2013; Goodley 2013).

4 Difference feminism, equality feminism, or postmodern feminism, i.e., to name commonly mentioned currents. For a short overview of feminist theorizing see Disch and Hawkesworth (2016).

explained, the term is used in a (de-)constructivist reading: "Feminist theory […] interrogates how subjects are multiply interpellated: in other words, how the representational systems of gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, and class mutually produce, inflect, and contradict one another" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 335). Disability is understood in a similar fashion: "[D]isability, like femaleness, is not a natural state of corporeal inferiority, inadequacy, excess, or a stroke of misfortune. Rather, disability is a culturally fabricated narrative of the body, similar to what we understand as the fictions of race and gender" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 336).

The article's perspective coincides with disability scholar's rejection of the medicalization of disability and the rehabilitative paradigm and considers disability a social construct (Schneider/Waldschmidt 2014: 132f.).[5] Further, it makes the attempt, like disability studies, to reverse the traditional scope and instead of investigating disability as deviation, interrogates (ableist) norms.

Ableism values able(-bodied)ness as superior and more desirable than disabledness and sets ability to represent a norm by negating and excluding disability and positioning it out of sight (Dolmage 2017: 7). In consequence, such valuing of certain abilities and devaluation of others leads to disablism, "the discrimination against the 'less able'" (Wolbring 2008: 252).[6] Also, ableism shares overlaps with other *isms*. Sexism i.e., is a form of ableism that favors so-called "male" abilities over "female" abilities or stabilizes the belief that women have deficient abilities.

Disregarding disability and the creation of fictional ableist norms can lead to exclusionary practices in academia and knowledge production. David Bolt speaks of a "multifaceted resistance that occurs in the academy" (Bolt 2015: 2) and even though "disability is relevant to most if not all disciplines […] there is a critical avoidance [and] this lack of informed engagement with cultural representations of disability is a manifestly academic form of Othering" (Bolt 2015: 2). Thus, excluding disability from academic thought can be regarded as a variant of *academic ableism* (Dolmage 2017).

According to Garland-Thomson "four fundamental and interpenetrating domains of feminist theory" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 337) can be identified and critical inquiries can be made by considering disability within these theoretical arenas. The domains *representation*, *the body*, *identity*, and *activism* prove useful as analytic frameworks but also overlap and "tend to be synchronic" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 337). For the purpose of this article, it seems reasonable to adapt this scheme for the analysis and accordingly look for disability's integration and transformative impact.

3 Material

Handbooks form the corpus of investigation since they can be regarded as representative collections of a field of knowledge (Fleck 1980: 158). US and German handbooks were selected in order to compare the discourse of a country in which disability studies is rel-

5 For in-depth discussions of disability studies and its main assumptions see Linton (1998) or Goodley (2017).

6 *Ableism* is not to be confused with *disableism*. For detailed discussions of the differences and uses of the terms see Wolbring (2008), Campbell (2009), or Goodley (2014).

atively established in academia (the US) (Garland-Thomson 2013: 915) and a discourse which has not yet reached comparable status in institutionalization or publications in the discipline (Germany) (Waldschmidt/Schneider 2007: 14). Consequently, national characteristics have an impact on the choice of material: In the US the institutionalization of women's and gender studies began earlier and has led to a greater variety of handbooks that are often more specialized and treat narrower thematic fields.[7] For this reason, the present study concentrates on handbooks with a focus on social sciences. This focus on social sciences naturally limits the scope of the research results. For the US, the *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender* (2006) and its second edition (2018) were chosen; for Germany, the *Handbuch Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung* (2010) and the *Handbuch Interdisziplinäre Geschlechterforschung* (2019) can be regarded as representative.[8] All four of them seem to exhibit enough disciplinary proximity to be comparable. Further, the articles were selected by thematic proximity to disability from a conventional perspective since a greater integration was assumed.[9]

4 Method

Qualitative content analysis was chosen as a research method because it is an excellent tool for sorting greater amounts of data and looking for manifest as well as latent meaning in the material (Drisko/Maschi 2016: 85). Further, it is widely used for structuring and describing any form of text or communication and allows deductive and inductive coding (Mayring 2015: 85; Drisko/Maschi 2016: 106). A coding frame was formed inductively by openly coding the material and then was modified into codes and sub-codes on the basis of the complete material; deductively codes were then added to the code frame from disability theory. In addition to qualitative methods an inclusion of quantitative aspects is justified. The rare occurrence of a code as well as a particularly frequent occurrence in the material may be considered (Mayring 2015: 53; Drisko/Maschi 2016: 116). The code located most often in the material was "Interrelations between Categories/Intersectionality", while the most common subcode was "Femininity as Disabled"[10]. Finally, texts and codes were assigned to the four domains *representation*, *the body*, *identity*, and *activism*.[11]

7 In the US endeavors to introduce women's studies into universities began in the 1960s while the German women's movement made its way into academia somewhat later in the 1980s (Boxer 1998: 161; Hark 2005). For in-depth discussion of the German history of academic feminism see Hark (2005), for the US see Boxer (1998).

8 Even though both German titles also include articles from disciplines other than social sciences and present an interdisciplinary perspective, their authorship and choice of research is grounded in social sciences.

9 This includes articles on health, intersectionality, or disability.

10 Due to the historical importance of using disability, weakness, passivity or defectiveness to argue for the unequal treatment of women (and other groups) (Baynton 2016: 28), the code was applied if this concept was found in the material, not only if 'disability' occurred literally. Its conversion – the sub-code "Masculinity as Abled" – was only found half as often.

11 The texts could almost evenly be grouped into three domains, no text was categorized as belonging to *activism*. This will be addressed in section 5.4.
1) *Representation*: Kronenfeld (2006): *Gender and Health Status*

5 Analysis

In the following, statements, which were assigned to the appropriate codes and domains, will be discussed by specific examples.

5.1 Representation

According to Garland-Thomson representations of women and disability are often conflated. Beginning with Aristotle, who defined women as "mutilated males" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 337), she refers to more recent examples of representations of women as being disabled, such as Iris Marion Young, who writes that "[w]omen in sexist society are physically handicapped" (Young 2005: 42). The analyzed material frequently repeats this image. As an example of the ambivalent use of this image Mason's article *Gendered Embodiment* (2018) shall be presented here in more detail. Like Garland-Thomson she refers to Young's example of "Throwing Like a Girl" and discusses its effects on feminine embodiment (Mason 2018: 96). But, while revealing the inherent binary that leads to an unequal treatment of genders, she does not reflect feminist disability scholars' criticism of Young's passage:

> "Within feminist disability studies, the suggestion that 'woman' is disabled by compulsory heterosexuality and patriarchy is met with ambivalence. While the claim establishes an important conceptual connection between disability and gender, it also reflects (and risks perpetuating) dominant conceptions of disability as lack and deficiency, to the extent that it is accompanied by a desire to show that the association of women with disability is unjust to women. This association leaves in place, albeit unintentionally, the idea that disability is inherently contaminating and that certain bodily conditions themselves are disabling. Thus understood, justice requires a reclamation and revaluation of woman at the expense of disabled people." (Hall 2011: 3f.)

In other sections Mason reveals the historically constructed entanglement of femininity and disability: "Popular discourses [in the 19th century, N. C.] presumed that some degree of disability was inevitable for women, making them unsuited to vote or pursue an education, and subjecting them to male doctors' authority (Baynton, 2016; […] Garland-Thomson, 2002)" (Mason 2018: 100). She names disability scholars as source but does not fully reveal their arguments. The ableism e.g., that Baynton discloses in his text is omitted.

Pauli/Hornberg (2010): *Gesundheit und Krankheit: Ursachen und Erklärungsansätze aus der Gender-Perspektive*
Mason (2018): *Gendered Embodiment*
Wattenberg/Lätzsch/Hornberg (2019): *Gesundheit, Krankheit und Geschlecht: ein gesundheitswissenschaftlicher Zugang zu Einflussfaktoren und Versorgungssystem*

2) *The body:* Zimmerman/Hill (2006): *Health Care as a Gendered System*
Schildmann (2010): *Behinderung: Frauenforschung in der Behindertenpädagogik*
Keith/Brown (2018): *Mental Health: An Intersectional Approach*
Schildmann/Schramme (2019): *Behinderung: Verortung einer sozialen Kategorie in der Geschlechterforschung und Intersektionalitätsforschung*

3) *Identity:* Lenz (2010): *Intersektionalität: Zum Wechselverhältnis von Geschlecht und sozialer Ungleichheit*
Robinson (2018): *Intersectionality and Gender Theory*
Degele (2019): *Intersektionalität: Perspektiven der Geschlechterforschung*

"While historians have not overlooked the use of disability to deny women's rights, they have given their attention entirely to gender inequality and not at all to the construction and maintenance of cultural hierarchies based on disability. […] just as it was left unchallenged at the time, historians today leave unchallenged the notion that weakness, nervousness, or proneness to fainting might legitimately disqualify one for suffrage. Disability figured not just in arguments *for* the inequality of women and minorities but also in arguments *against those* inequalities." (Baynton 2016: 28, emphasis in original)

Finally, in the closing remarks of the article Mason makes direct reference to feminist disability studies and mentions ableist perspectives:

"Feminist disability perspectives note that the stigma borne by people framed as 'dependent' – usually women, disabled people, and other objectified bodies on the margins – is premised on the unrealistic expectation that everyone, at all times, must be independent and self-sufficient, an impossible standard for anyone who has ever been a child, been sick, or who will grow old (Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Garland-Thomson, 2002)." (Mason 2018: 105)

The quotation shows an awareness of positions beyond the ability/disability system, but these are only included by the end of text, as possible additional perspectives, not as a theoretical base to start from. Still, this article forms one of the most "progressive" examples of integrating disability in the material. Widely, the other texts from the representation section keep to binaries. The articles on gender, health and disease especially draw on male/female dualisms as well as on the ability/disability binary.[12] Some texts understand gender as a social construction, but disability remains stable in the realm of physiology. Disability studies criticize medical model representations for their deficit-oriented perspective, which support certain types of ableism (Wolbring 2012: 253) and go beyond images of physiology as causal for disabilities.

"Compared to other areas of gender sociology, health is one in which issues of gender as a social construct and sex as a physiological construct intersect to the largest extent. Clearly, physiological differences between men and women play a role in health status. Moreover, some of the major life events that also relate to health have a physiological basis (childbearing, menstruation, menopause)." (Kronenfeld 2006: 459)

Summarizing, it can be inferred from the selected examples that part of the US discourse in the material has undergone a change between its 2006 and 2018 handbook editions. Mason's article may not fully include disability research but widens the perspective.

5.2 The Body

Transitions between the domains of *representation* and *the body* are fluent since the imagery of disabled bodies very much mirrors representations of disability. Garland-Thomson refers to (female) bodies that due to the establishment of norms become disciplined bodies which again attempt to achieve an unattainable (ableist) norm, through cosmetic surgery (Garland-Thomson 2017: 339f.), the ideology of cure, or the elimination of cure in the first place by tackling reproductive issues (Garland-Thomson

12 The definitions of which conditions are considered disabilities or chronic diseases, are complex and disputed since disability is a complicated and multidimensional concept. For an overview see Altman (2001).

2017: 342). Cosmetic surgery or reproductive issues[13] are hardly mentioned in the material, but it shows congruency with discourses on norms or discipline when critically referring to women's medicalization and pathologization: "Medicalization solidifies medical authority over events and behavior: physician advice is either required or advised, and physicians are granted authority to determine whether the parameters of the event or behavior are 'normal' or 'pathological'" (Zimmerman/Hill 2006: 488). Yet, it does not go as far as to fundamentally question concepts of disease. This applies for both texts on health in this domain.

Different than the above, the articles on disability by Schildmann (2010) and Schildmann/Schramme (2019) from the German sample critically reflect the concept of 'normality':

> "The category of disability – in itself again strongly hierarchically subdivided – is also arranged in a binary. Its antithesis is 'normality', a social power and discourse strategy that was established in the 19th century […] and structurally aims at and demands a social orientation of people towards the middle of society, the social average. Like gender, normality and deviation/disability complement each other and stabilize a structure of One and the Other, whereby the One (the normal) can largely only be understood from the way it defines and treats the Other (deviation/disability)."*[14] (Schildmann 2010: 655)

The idea of disability or chronic illness as a problem that must be solved or cured because it is considered a tragedy is implicit in most of the material. The texts on health from the arena of the body as well as from the arena of representation do not consequently question that concept, no matter if choosing one of the more recent texts or referring to the handbooks from 2006 or 2010. Also, it is found throughout the German and the US material. In their article on mental health Keith and Brown state: "We focus on distress and disorders because they are socially and economically burdensome to sufferers and society" (Keith/Brown 2018: 132). Here, mental disabilities[15] are not only portrayed as tragic for the individual "sufferer" but also as "burdensome for society", a wording that bears traits of eugenic rhetoric (Bengtsson 2018: 420). It further contains neoliberal-ableist appellations of the self-caring individual, who is regarded as a strain for the public good, if s/he does not take on personal responsibility and fails the capitalist imperative to stay fit and healthy, thus becoming dependent on public welfare.

Also, both earlier editions of handbooks display presentations of disability as a tragedy and the assumptions of the individual/medical model of disability form a recurring pattern: "Mental disorders[16] and neuropsychiatric diseases […] already account for a considerable proportion of the 'Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs)', i.e. the

13 Reproductive issues are integrated into both German handbooks as separate chapters but not in the US handbook editions and were therefore not considered here.

14 Quotations from German texts that were translated by the author are marked with an asterisk (*).

15 By including mental disabilities into the analysis of the body section I follow disability studies' understanding of embodied difference, which as an unspecific collective term "describes the manifold physical, mental and psychological conspicuousness, which all have in common that they can only be expressed and perceived through the body"* (Waldschmidt 2006: 15).

16 Whether 'mental illness' should be referred to as a disorder or if it can be seen as a source of pride is cause for debate: "Mad Pride discourse rejects the language of 'illness' and 'disorder,' reclaims the term 'mad,' and replaces its negative connotations with more positive understandings. It reverses the customary understanding of madness as illness in favor of the view that madness can be grounds for identity and culture" (Rashed 2019: 151).

life years lost in relation to life expectancy due to illness and premature death"* (Pauli/Hornberg 2010: 634f.). Here, the wording "life years lost" suggests that living with a disability or a "mental disorder" automatically means a loss in quality of life. The uncritical use of the DALYs in this context is notable since there are several issues to discuss for this concept. One of them is that

> "DALYs are based on health experts' perceptions of the level of well-being associated with various conditions, not on the reported experience of people who have a disability. […] The rationale for excluding people with disability from the DALY rating process was that they typically overstate their quality of life relative to how nondisabled people perceive it to be and that the perceptions of the latter are more appropriate to use." (Grosse et al. 2009: 200)

Another phrase from the US sample says: "Men often die from a health problem while women live on but with a serious disability, so that it is much less clear that women achieve a higher quality of life as regards overall health status than it is that they live more years than do men" (Kronenfeld 2006: 464). This reads as if an impairment affected life so negatively, that it cannot be concluded that living with a disability is a gain in comparison to dying earlier without one. This resonates ableist attitudes like the "implicit belief that being disabled is negative and to be avoided at all costs" (Dolmage 2017: 7).

In the whole section only one article in the US sample explicitly includes non-ableist positions: "[D]isability scholars argue for the value of bodies that are sick, broken, or disabled – bodies that may need care, but which may not need or want a cure" (Mason 2018: 105).

5.3 Identity

Garland-Thomson explains her choice of the domain *identity* with the continuing self-criticism of the identity category of woman by feminism. She also sorts intersectionality theory to the domain:

> "The third domain of feminist theory that a disability analysis complicates is identity. Feminist theory has productively and rigorously critiqued the identity category of woman, on which the entire feminist enterprise seemed to rest. Feminism increasingly recognizes that no woman is ever only a woman, that she occupies multiple subject positions and is claimed by several cultural identity categories" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 344).

Intersectional analyses here would commonly be understood to explore the intersections of the – socially constructed and relatively stable – categories gender and disability. Therefore, the concept is, by definition, central for the present analysis, as it generally is of high relevance for gender and women's studies.

Intersectionality has been said to be "the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far" (McCall 2005: 1771; Risman 2004: 442; Schildmann/Schramme/Libuda-Köster 2018: 883), but this view is controversially discussed among intersectionality scholars. Critical positions argue that claiming intersectionality for (*white* academic) feminism represents an appropriation with serious consequences as "it downplays the centrality of race in the

advent of intersectional thought and activism, while concurrently obscuring the formative tensions, both historical and contemporary, between feminism and women of color in the shaping of intersectionality" (Bilge 2013: 413). Besides criticism of neglecting the paradigm's origins intersectionality research is likewise criticized by disability scholars for not considering the category of disability (Raab 2007: 135; Meekosha/Shuttleworth 2009: 62; Erevelles/Minear 2010: 128; Goodley 2014: 636; Baldin 2014: 50). Schildmann, Schramme and Libuda-Köster (2018) have reviewed how German intersectionality literature treats disability: "A review of the main publications shows that most German authors of general intersectionality research have not yet considered disability as a relevant category"* (Schildmann/Schramme/Libuda-Köster 2018: 31f.). As noted above, the critical discussion which categories should be considered relevant is not limited to disability researchers but reflects a central dilemma of intersectional approaches (Walby/Armstrong/Strid 2012: 232, 237).

Regarding the handbooks that were the focus of this analysis, it was interesting to see that both German handbooks include a chapter on intersectionality, while, surprisingly, the 2006 edition of the *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender* does not. This seems unusual considering that the concept 'originated'[17] in the US and was identified as a "travelling theory" (Knapp 2005).

Hence within the three articles on intersectionality, disability is hardly mentioned. If considered at all, it comes up in enumerations of categories:

"Intersectionality theorists, lay and academic, are still teaching the fundamental lesson that racial and ethnic minorities can simultaneously be women, gay, disabled, or trans and that their lived experiences and oppression intersect across systems of racism, sexism, heteropatriarchy, ableism, and cissexism." (Robinson 2018: 76)

While this holds true for all articles on intersectionality in the sample, this kind of enumeration of categories hardly occurred in any of the other texts. Just one more text was marked with the code 'Disability in Enumerations'. Mason's article on gendered embodiment includes disability in an enumeration – in the context of intersectionality: "[T]he dynamics of objectification and feminization are further complicated when we consider their intersections with other characteristics such as ability/disability, race, and sexuality" (Mason 2018: 102). The fact that literature on intersectionality frequently discusses what Judith Butler refers to as the 'etc. problem' might serve as explanation: "The theories of feminist identity that elaborate predicates of color, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and able-bodiedness invariably close with an embarrassed 'etc.' at the end of the list" (Butler 1990: 143). This also applies for Ilse Lenz' text when she discusses the difficulty of intersectional approaches in general to perform a selection of relevant categories and refers to Butler:

"Philosopher Judith Butler also made it clear in her critique of intersectional identity categories that they function according to the pattern of 'class, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.'. But behind the 'etc.' there are new, unnamed exclusions, such as age, disability and other differences"* (Lenz 2010: 159).

17 In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term 'Intersectionality' but the idea of multiple systems of subordination is of earlier origin and often traced back to Sojourner Truth's famous speech at the Women's Rights Convention held in Akron, Ohio (1851) posing the question "Ain't I a Woman?" and the writings of the Combahee River Collective (2002 [1981]).

Disability obtains a marginalized position in the hierarchy of categories here. Other '(master)-categories' such as class or race are frequently alluded to in the material on intersectionality.[18] Further, a marginalization of disability can be even more critically rated when regarded as a 'social structure'[19] as Schildmann, Schramme and Libuda-Köster (2018: 72) do. This does not apply for Lenz' article; she assigns disability to general categories of difference (Lenz 2010: 159).

Nancy Hirschmann goes beyond social structure in her argumentation and assigns a crucial position to disability within intersectionality theory:

"[D]isability is more than simply another 'case' to be added to intersectionality, or another intersection with gender and sexuality […]. Disability, however, presents intersectionality within intersectionality. […] On a simple level, if gender and sexuality studies is interdisciplinary because its subjects are themselves already intersectional, and if disability studies is as well, then the intersections between these fields, and between disability and gender and sexuality, are intersections of intersections." (Hirschmann 2012: 401)

To illustrate this, one may consider the medicalization of homosexuality, which not too long ago was liable to legal prosecution, a mental disorder, and later a mental disturbance listed in the ICIDH until 1993 (Hendriks 1999: 186).

5.4 Activism

Activism is commonly understood to refer to interventions or activities that aim at initiating social change. Instead, as an alternative definition for integrating disability to the arena of *activism* Garland-Thomson suggests "academic tolerance" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 348).

"A specific form of feminist academic activism I elaborate here can be deepened through the complication of a disability analysis. […] What I mean is the intellectual position of tolerating what has been thought of as incoherence. As feminism has embraced the paradoxes that have emerged from its challenge to the gender system, it has not collapsed into chaos, but instead has developed a methodology that tolerates internal conflict and contradiction." (Garland-Thomson 2017: 350f.)

18 The lowest number of mentions of 'race' was found in the text by Degele with twelve mentions (Lenz 19 mentions) and 35 mentions in Robinson's text. This might result from the concepts' roots in Black feminism and its North American background, but also the word 'class', which has been critiqued to be marginalized in intersectionality research (Walby/Armstrong/Strid 2012: 236) was located 36 times in Robinson's text (Degele eight, Lenz 24), while disability is only mentioned once by Degele and Robinson and three times by Lenz.

19 Nancy Hirschmann arguing for disability as social structure writes: "Disability intersects with all vectors of identity, since disability affects people of all classes, races, ethnicities, and religions, male and female, straight and gay" (Hirschmann 2012: 397). Further, it is the only category which can become universal: "In nearly no other sphere of existence, however, do people risk waking up one morning having become the persons whom they hated the day before" (Siebers 2008: 26). Applying Risman's arguments for gender as a social structure, one must agree with disability as a social structure as well: "Each categorical inequality […] that is deeply embedded in society can be conceptualized as a social structure. Bonilla-Silva (1997) has made this argument persuasively for conceptualizing race as a social structure. He argued that race is a social structure that influences identities and attitudes but is also incorporated into how opportunities and constraints work throughout every societal institution" (Risman 2004: 444).

With this argument she claims that *activism* could also consist of an academic integration of disability which needs readiness for "academic tolerance" and will consequently lead to a transformation of feminist theory that will "strengthen the critique that is feminism" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 351). If we stick to Garland-Thomson's requests and understand integration of disability (theory) as "achieving parity by fully including that which has been excluded and subordinated" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 334) and transformation as "reimagining established knowledge and the order of things" (Garland-Thomson 2017: 334), then we must conclude for the current analysis that hardly any of the texts, besides the chapters on disability from the German sample, fully meets this requirement.

6 Conclusion

The analysis leaves us with a divided picture for the integration of disability. Only few texts, such as the articles on disability (Schildmann 2010; Schildmann/Schramme 2019) and gendered embodiment (Mason 2018) critically reflect and integrate disability theory. Most texts from the sample, even though referring to the social construction of gender, fall short of also regarding disability as socially constructed and historically contingent. While gender (and sometimes sex) has made its way out of the realm of biology, disability still is widely understood as a (physical) defect and deviation from a fictional norm. In failing to take a critical position towards such norms, entry points for discriminatory practices are left open. These discriminatory risks may unfold on an intersectional basis, since "[a]bleism has also long been used to justify hierarchies of rights and discrimination between other social groups, and to exclude people not classified as 'disabled people'" (Wolbring 2008: 253). In awareness of ableism's function as an "umbrella ism" (Wolbring 2008: 253) one cannot leave its underlying assumptions intact without paving the way to neoliberal-ableist thought. Consequently, feminism (or the excerpt of knowledge production that was consulted here) – again – could be criticized for a "dangerous flirtation with capitalism" (Eisenstein 2005: 488; Fraser 2009), since the neoliberal logics of an adult worker model in the end only distinguish hyperproductivity from assumed non-productivity.

> "The contemporary world is witnessing a new 'abled,' signifying an unencumbered worker who is a master of economic possibility and available for further corporeal enhancement as the economy or workplace requires it. Increasingly, ability and abledness assume an independent, unencumbered self. This hyperproductive, gender-neutral employee has replaced the gendered rhetoric of the main (male) breadwinner. This worker is the übercitizen who is mobile, portable, available 24/7, 365 days a year." (Campbell 2015: 13)

This gender-neutral worker in the end conceals existing gender differences such as any other deviations from the image of a "species-typical" human (Wolbring 2008). An integration of disability studies into gender research offers a visualization of such voids and can help to productively develop links between limitations, dependency and care. Further, integrating disability theory could expose ableism and other discriminatory practices at the same time. And if the transformation of academia is one of the missions

feminism still fights for (Boxer 1998: 59; Hark 2005: 78), integrating disability theory and criticism of (academic) ableism could prove a promising starting point.

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