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Call for multidisciplinary contributions on:

**Disabilities: one characteristic among others.
A multifaceted approach to disability over the course of a person's life**

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The dossier will be coordinated by:

Laurence Joselin, researcher in psychology, INSHEA

Zineb Rachedi, lecturer in sociology, INSHEA

Mélissa Arneton, lecturer in psychology of education, INSHEA

and Séverine Mayol, researcher in public health, Nantes CHU

This call for contributions is specifically for researchers in anthropology, demography, economics, philosophy, psychology, learning science, communication studies, political science, and sociology.

Articles must be submitted before Monday, 21 September 2020

The rights of disabled people have been enshrined in the United Nations [*Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*](#), which entered into effect in 2008 and has been signed by more than 160 countries across the globe. Article 1 of the Convention stipulates that “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. According to this definition, disability is the consequence of the interaction between a person with specific needs and their environment.

Yet a person's *environment* contains a very large number of elements (living space, support techniques, public policies, etc.) that can have an influence on his/ her situation. Furthermore, well beyond the specific needs related to a potential impairment, each *person* is characterized by a number of elements that can also have a significant effect on their situation and the dynamics of their life course (gender, age, profession, personal history, etc.). Through cross-analyses of the many elements characterizing the environment and individuals, important knowledge has been built over the past decades. A seminal contribution has been Kymberle Crenshaw's work exploring the outcomes produced by the "intersection" or "overlap" of combinations of different features. The present call intends to gather contributions based on such productive approaches.

Intersectional research on American black women (Crenshaw, 1989) has highlighted the complex dynamics of the interplay of different identity elements, as well as the diversity of resources that can be mobilized by the individuals concerned. In parallel, from a dialectic perspective, the work of Danilo Martuccelli (2007) describes the articulation of the social mechanisms at play in the way that subjects shape themselves in an individuation process. In this call for contributions, we are not seeking to subscribe to a specific theoretical approach but rather to encourage the multidisciplinary consideration of situations leading to new ways of posing and addressing a question, or, in the words of Ange-Marie Hancock (2016), of considering "the diversity of formulations and interpretations that intersectionality [allows]".

While acknowledgment of individuals' impairments, and therefore the barriers and obstacles to their life course, is necessary to enable their full participation in society, it also tends to conceal the impact of the other features (gender, age, socio-professional category, migration, etc.) that influence their social experiences over the course of their life. By focusing on either individuals or situations, the most current approaches in disability studies have a tendency to correlate less social participation with the disability variable. As a result, scientific and operational elements may present misconceptions around entire facets of people's lives. Whatever the viewpoint which is considering from a capabilities', empowerment, autonomy, or self-determination perspective, people are regularly perceived exclusively from the prism of their disability. However, individuals are socially and psychically multiple, regardless of their disability. Considering this complexity is an epistemological factor in understanding and analysing human phenomena, particularly when the resulting ethical and pragmatic dimensions seek to inter-relate a human rights perspective with a perspective regarding the institutional responses to be provided to publics.

In this dossier, the *Revue Française des Affaires Sociales* wishes to demonstrate the richness of a multifaceted perspective in disability studies, using both qualitative and quantitative or mixed approaches to study, at different ages, the dynamic dimension of life experiences and social participation. Discussing the epistemological benefit of multifaceted approaches in disability studies from a critical viewpoint will also enrich the debate and foster a better understanding of the issues surrounding awareness of disability.

Three angles for studying the complexity of people's life courses can therefore be considered:

- the cross-analysis of characteristics (a disability and one or more other dimensions) and their effects on individuals;
- the way that these features are treated socially can result in stigmatization (Goffman, 1963) likely to generate social attributions and dominations;
- the resources that disabled people can use or create and how this can generate empowerment.

Understanding the effects of disability on life experiences is enhanced, for example, by a differentiated gendered and sexed approach (Baril, 2018; Ravaut and Ville, 2003). Furthermore, the development of knowledge on violence affecting disabled people shows a gender effect, but there is no systematic analysis of this at international level (Campos Pinto, 2016). In another field, studies on parenthood with disability make up a very small minority compared to studies on the same subject of the population as a whole. They moreover mainly concern women, and disabled fathers represent an angle that has barely been explored in the research. It would therefore be interesting to explore the traditional spaces of adolescence, parenting, or entry into working life, for instance, to gain insight into the phenomena at play. Likewise, little knowledge exists on the relationships between migration and situations of disability, both in France and internationally. Users at the intersection between multiple fields of intervention, be it disability, family, or migration, raise many questions with regard to the forms of support available to them (Cattacin and Domenig, 2015; Piérart, 2013; Straimer, 2010). For example, Piérart (2013) analyses the history of immigrant families in Switzerland, one member of whom is disabled; and Wang (2013) discusses how Chinese parents living in France use a service for disabled people (the *Maison départementale des personnes handicapées*, MDPH) less often than they could.

By providing a segmented image of people's situations, scientific analyses can contribute to designing and implementing practices, devices or, more generally, social policies that conceal the diversity of life experiences and combinations of dimensions on the individual level, even though existing quantitative databases enable detailed descriptions by subcategories of publics. It is by specifically analysing situations at the intersection of the publics generally investigated by policy makers that we can go beyond descriptions and reveal new issues. For example, in 2016 France's *Défenseur des Droits* (national ombudsman office) published a report on the employment of disabled women. Focusing on a public combining two features influencing access to employment, the authors emphasize the fact that "women with disabilities encounter difficulties and discrimination in access to employment and in their career, because they are women and because they are disabled. But they also encounter specific inequalities and discriminations combining gender and disability" (Rapport Défenseur des droits, 2016: 6). The importance of studies carried out in an approach considering overlapping situations therefore lies in the awareness of the particularities resulting from the combination of several characteristics.

We can for example inquire on the effect of multiple features of the support provided to disabled people. To what extent are these combined features detected and taken into account? Moreover, to what extent do these features induce discriminatory treatment (whether positive or negative) by social policies? What does this look like in health and social policy, with regard not only to the organization and structuring of services and devices, but also to the practices of both users and professionals? For example, how are elderly people with intellectual disabilities assisted by a French employment assistance service (*établissement et service d'aide par le travail*, ESAT)? How are individual features, such as situations of multilingualism or gender, involved in constructing the diagnosis of special-needs students?

Regarding to the training and employment of young people and adults with disabilities, although many questions are raised, the consideration of socio-economic variables remains fragmentary. A few studies nevertheless agree on the risks of vulnerability, especially when the young person or adult is disabled (Défenseur des droits, 2017). While some studies show social treatment of situations of disability that differ, based on the individuals' socio-economic features (see, for example, Garcia, 2013 on the recognition of dyslexia as a function of parents' resources; and Eideliman, 2009 on the likelihood of being recognized and monitored in the case of a mental disability), others also shine light on the importance of the local level. At this level, "social magistracies" are allowed to evaluate situations and assign rights on a case-by-case basis, in particular in the domain of the professional integration of publics at risk of unemployment (Astier, 1997; Bureau et al., 2013). A study calling for the deconstruction of the category "disabled workers" compared requests for recognition of disabled employee status (RQTH, *reconnaissance de la qualité de travailleur handicapé*) in two French *départements* (Bertrand, 2014). It highlighted the significant differences in professionals' way of organizing, managing, and responding to these requests, while showing the heterogeneity of the applicants' characteristics, some of which can surprisingly turn into resources, and vice versa. To what extent do the responses that given to applicants consider both their individual features and those of the territory? With respect to education and to inclusive society, we could also look at the inclusion of children with one or multiple disabilities in an ordinary school environment. How are all of these dimensions combined to give substance to inclusion?

Using a multifaceted viewpoint to explore the singularities of being a child and becoming an adolescent or an adult with disability entails consideration of the resources available for and used by people themselves in a given society. Taking their words and their life experiences into account calls into question the maintenance of a dominant norm of individual autonomy, both in professional practices and in political choices (e.g. Parent, 2017). Disability studies in particular have contributed to critical analysis of the consideration of differences and the way that words and life experiences are understood (Garland-Thomson, 2005). An empirical analysis of phenomena that follows the words of disabled people themselves as closely as possible, from the angle of their multiple identity dimensions, could further our understanding of singular individual involvement in demanding, acquiring, and exercising human rights, as demonstrated by research

on self-determination (Engel and Munger, 1996) or on women's associations in a situation of handicap with respect to their peers (Masson, 2013). For example, to what extent does the gender of peer helpers influence their relationships with professional teams? Do disabled people who are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants experience particular limits on their participation? How do people with multiple identities, one or all of which place them in a situation of real or supposed domination, experience daily life? In access to rights or at-home assistance relationships, for example, do people experience multiple and cumulative discrimination?

The viewpoints mentioned here are only suggestions and should not limit authors in proposing articles that put disability and one or several other social characteristics into perspective. These avenues for analysis can furthermore be developed and interconnected through cross-analyses, and the angles proposed can coexist within a single article proposal. The article's perspective can vary based on the author's or authors' discipline, while presenting the framework and context in such a way as to allow a multidisciplinary readership to understand the issues of the analysis. In the articles, particular attention will be paid to mentioning the implications (whether epistemological, conceptual, methodological, ethical, or pragmatic) of the consideration of interrelated dimensions in the life experiences of disabled people.

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Additional information on the contents of this call for contributions can be obtained from the coordinators at the following email addresses:

laurence.joselin@inshea.fr

zineb.rachedi@inshea.fr

melissa.arneton@inshea.fr

severine.mayol@externes.sante.gouv.fr

Any authors who wish to propose an article on this topic for review must submit it accompanied by an abstract and an author overview.

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at the following email address:

rfas-drees@sante.gouv.fr

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