Feminist Discourses of Sexual Citizenship:
Creating Spaces for Women with Intellectual Disabilities

BY
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THESIS
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This thesis is dedicated to Robin, Leo, Niko, Diego, Marcelo, Rayne Ramona, and Gusto, my queer crip family; and to all of the critical feminist queer crip Fat and sex +++ folks everywhere.
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<tr>
<td>AAIDD</td>
<td>American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities</td>
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<td>ADA</td>
<td>Americans with Disabilities Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDSM</td>
<td>Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, Sadism and Masochism</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>DD</td>
<td>Developmental Disability</td>
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<td>DRM</td>
<td>Disability Rights Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCDA</td>
<td>Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
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<td>ID</td>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
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<td>SABE</td>
<td>Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered</td>
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SUMMARY

Feminism is essentially a movement of social justice for all women. However, women with disabilities in general, and women with intellectual disabilities (ID) in particular, are often invisible in feminist discourses. Traditionally, women and many other minority groups, including women with disabilities, have been excluded from citizenship and sexual citizenship. This thesis examines the invisibility of women with ID in third wave feminist textual citizenship and sexual citizenship discourses, and explores ways of creating spaces for women with ID within such discourses.

This research uses a critical discourse analysis methodology to examine key arguments made by third wave western feminist theorists around citizenship, sexual citizenship and “rape culture”. Specifically, this thesis explores themes such as: the deconstruction of the public/private divide; the challenging of the independence/dependence and equality/difference binaries; the privileging of wage work over care work; and feminist alternatives to traditional notions of universal citizenship. Additionally, themes of “rape culture” in third wave feminist anthologies are examined, including: sexual violence; the commodity model of sex; sex negativity; victim blaming; sexual consent capacity; and problematizing an emphasis on sexual vulnerability.

While largely invisible in the works examined, this thesis attempts to situate women with ID as citizens and sexual citizens within third wave feminist discourse. This research proposes the support of women with ID as citizens and sexual citizens via individualized, comprehensive, and life long sexuality education that incorporates feminist awareness of gendered oppression and an emphasis on sexual self-advocacy.
I. INTRODUCTION

A. **Background**

As part of a movement of social justice for all women, feminists have struggled to gain rights of citizenship and sexual citizenship for women of all ages, ethnicities, and sexualities, among a plethora of other identities. While disability has begun to enter feminist discourse generally (Garland-Thomson, 2002) women with intellectual disabilities (ID) remain largely invisible (Carey, 2009). According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), the definition of ID is “significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18” (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2011, para. 1) Intellectual disability is now the preferred term for what has historically been referred to as “mental retardation.” This thesis aims to situate intellectual disability and women with ID into greater feminist discourses of citizenship and sexual citizenship.

While the feminist theorists examined in this thesis claim citizenship for all women as a category, some of their notions regarding citizenship may serve to exclude and further marginalize women with ID. For example, feminist claims for women’s citizenship based on women’s capacity for independence equal to men’s inadvertently distances feminists from women with disabilities/intellectual disabilities who are often (inter)dependent upon others for everyday living. Still many other claims by these same theorists do not explicitly include women with ID, but lend themselves to such an inclusion with the additional analysis provided throughout this thesis. An example of this is the feminist call for honoring “difference” (Lister,
2003; Siim, 2000) and “particularity” (Young, 1989) when it comes to citizenship such that even groups who do not match traditional notions of a “citizen” can still be included.

People with disabilities, and especially women with ID, are excluded from sexual citizenship as well as from citizenship generally. As non-sexual citizens, women with ID experience high rates of sexual violence (Bell & Cameron, 2003; Kennedy, 2003; McCarthy, 1999; Murphy & O’Callaghan, 2004). Even though women with ID are frequent targets of sexual violence, they are excluded from comprehensive sexuality education that fosters defense skills, healthy boundaries, a sense of agency, privacy, and knowledge about sexuality that could contribute to their own self-protection and pleasurable sexual expression (Dukes & McGuire, 2009; Healy, McGuire, Evans, & Carley, 2009; Hingsburger, 1995). Ironically, such exclusion is often paternalistically argued as in the best interest of women with ID (Anderson, 2000; Hingsburger & Tough, 2002).

Fostering alternative notions of sexual citizenship offers the possibility of creating spaces for the sexual citizenship of women with ID. This in turn can increase access to sexuality information, and thereby decreased sexual abuse, healthier sexual identities, and even more nuanced notions of sexual citizenship (Anderson, 2000; Hingsburger, 1995; Hingsburger & Tough, 2002). As sexual personhood is reclaimed via sexual citizenship, the status of people with ID as easy victims of sexual crimes might also decrease, even as confidence as sexual citizens -capable of intention, desire, pleasure, and resistance- is increased. These proposals -creating space for the sexual citizenship of women with ID, increasing access to sexuality information, decreasing sexual abuse, and increasing sexual agency- are very much in line with feminist activism and theory. As a movement of social justice for women, it is therefore apropos to situate the plight of women with ID as sexual citizens into feminist discourse.
The aim of this thesis is to draw attention to the general absence of women with ID from feminist discourse around sexual citizenship as well as to explore ways of altering feminist notions of sexual citizenship such that women with ID might be included. The situating of women with ID within feminist discourse is one means of not only reaffirming women with ID as sexual citizens, but of fostering an opportunity for feminists to live up to the claim of including all women within feminist frameworks of social and reproductive justice. The notion of sexual citizenship will be explored through feminist citizenship and sexual citizenship theorists in order to call attention to the invisibility of women with ID in feminist discourses around sexual citizenship.

Historians say that we cannot judge past eras by the standards of the present. Similarly, it would be erroneous to judge the first and second waves of feminism on their exclusion of women with ID in retrospect. However, third wave feminism\(^1\), as the current wave of the feminist movement, can and should be held accountable in their discourses when it comes to women with ID. For this reason, this thesis focuses on the exclusion/inclusion of women with ID from third wave feminist textual discourses of citizenship and sexual citizenship. Discourse around sexual citizenship in third wave feminist texts will be examined in order to explore ways of expanding the feminist notions of sexual citizenship and to create space for the sexual citizenship of people -particularly women- with intellectual disabilities.

Disability affects everyone. Whether one is born with impairments or acquires them throughout life, the way that societies handle the inevitability of impairment will affect every one of us. While this thesis examines ID specifically, the broader implication of human vulnerability is really what is at stake. Similarly, broad notions of citizenship/sexual citizenship such as

\(^1\) With some debate, third wave feminism has been periodized as circa 1980 to present (Dicker, 2008).
belonging and participation in public life and reproductive justice are matters that each of us are variously affected by throughout our lives. By recognizing the infringement upon the citizenship/sexual citizenship rights of others, we work to protect our own. While this thesis focuses on the sexual citizenship of women with ID, the broader citizenship notions of belonging, power, status, and representation are ones that permeate the lives of people with and without disabilities alike.

B. **Methodology**

The central aim of this thesis is to investigate to what extent third wave feminist textual discourse about citizenship has positioned women with ID as citizens/sexual citizens. This research will examine how third wave feminist texts handle questions of women’s exclusion from citizenship generally, and how women with ID are situated within such discourses specifically. Similarly, this research also explores third wave feminist textual discourse of sexual citizenship generally, again examining the positioning of women with ID specifically. Finally, this thesis will explore the feminist notion of “rape culture” as a specific example in feminist sexual citizenship discourse where women with ID remain largely invisible, despite the pertinence of such discourse in their lives.

1. **Research questions**

Each research question will be analyzed in corresponding chapters, e.g. research question one will be analyzed in Chapter II; research question two in Chapter III; and research question three in Chapter IV. Each research question will build upon the analysis of the one before. Specifically, this thesis will address the following research questions:

i. **What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about citizenship?**
ii. What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability?

iii. What are some of the implications of third wave feminist textual discourse around sexual citizenship for women with ID?

2. **Method: Feminist critical discourse analysis**

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) comes out of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), whose practitioners are concerned with issues of power and language, and the way that power relationships are expressed through discursive texts (Locke, 2004; Weiss & Wodak, 2003). CDA examines the “talk and text” (Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2001) of ideologies by focusing on the expressions of power relations within discourses. FCDA is apropos for use in this thesis because feminist discourses about citizenship are being critically examined here for the power relationships that they exemplify between women with and without disabilities. In other words, FCDA is apropos for examining the ways in which feminists without disabilities make discursive textual claims for women in general that often exclude women with disabilities, especially women with intellectual disabilities.

Critical Discourse Analysis -and therefore Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis- comes out of the older methodology of Discourse Analysis, differing from its parent methodology in that it examines the use of language within historical, social, cultural and political contexts, rather than breaking down language use into discrete parts for analysis without taking such context into account. Contributing to this (inter)contextuality, FCDA adds the facet of gender to the critical analysis of discourse. FCDA rejects the positivist notion that science can ever be “value-free” (Schiffrin et al., 2001). As a methodology, CDA assumes that there are ever-present webs of power dynamics at work, functioning to create and recreate discourse in speaking and in
writing, and in turn, that discourse then affects ideology. FCDA is interdisciplinary (Lazar, 2005) lending it to the analysis of this thesis, which draws from the disciplines of Disability Studies as well as Gender and Women’s Studies.

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis was chosen as the methodology for this thesis because it is a lens by which to examine the textual intersectionality of identities, including disability, gender, race, a/sexuality, age, class, etc. The use of FCDA as a methodology involves holding discursive participants accountable for whom they include and exclude in their discourse. For example, if a Chicana feminist author claims citizenship for Latina women they are as independent and intelligent as men and white women, this has implications for women with ID -as well as for women with other disabilities- who are daily inter/dependent upon others, and whose very disabilities are defined by measures of “intelligence” and “independence”. FCDA offers a way to explore the implications of such textual discourse, to analyze not only what/whom is present, but what/whom is invisible as well.

3. **Note process and coding**

Selected texts were carefully read and coded for recurring themes within third wave feminist citizenship and sexual citizenship discourse as relates to women with ID. The coding of selected texts was guided by the research aims of this thesis and by the methodology of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). All texts were read critically through a feminist and Disability Studies lens, i.e. with gender and disability as central considerations. To read “critically” means that all texts were given a close read such that attention was paid to the implications of the author’s arguments and claims for women with ID; to the socio-cultural context of the authors/editors; and to connections between authors, arguments, and claims, also called “intertextuality”.
During this close reading of all texts, copious notes were taken in written form and later typed, outlining: 1) the author’s arguments, generally; 2) the author’s arguments in regards to citizenship and/or sexual citizenship specifically; and 3) possible implications of such arguments in regards to citizenship and/or sexual citizenship for women with ID in particular. After close reading and this note taking process (i.e. hand written notes, typed notes, argument outlines), all notes were then printed out and coded by hand. Specifically, notes were coded as: citizenship (C); sexual citizenship (SC); disability missing from analysis (DISA MISSING); disability present in analysis (DISA PRES); consent/consent capacity (CC); consent capacity as active yes (CC: ACTIVE YES); consent capacity as sexual agency (CC: AGENCY); reproductive rights (RR); reproductive rights as sexuality education (RR-SEX EDU); reproductive rights as privacy (RR-PRIVACY); sexual self-advocacy (SA); sex positivity (SP); sex negativity (SN); rape culture (RC); and pleasure (P). Coded notes were then divided into separate documents by theme and were then used to inform the analysis of feminist discourse in regards to the three research questions. For example, codes of citizenship (C) were primarily used in Chapter II; codes of sexual citizenship (SC) were primarily used in Chapter III; several codes informed Chapter IV as well as the thesis conclusion (e.g. RC; CC; CC: ACTIVE YES; CC: AGENCY; RR; RR-PRIVACY; SA; SP; SN; P); and several codes informed the thesis conclusion (e.g. DISA MISSING; DISA PRES; CC: AGENCY; SA; SP; P).

4. **Text selection**

All of the texts examined in this thesis were identified via both initial and ongoing literature reviews which were conducted during and influenced by three years of Disability Studies course work and one year of Gender and Women’s Studies (i.e. feminist theory) coursework. These literature reviews centered around topics of third wave feminism, feminist
notions of sexual citizenship, and sexuality education for people with ID. Texts were selected based on several criteria. First, the chosen feminist citizenship theorists had to all be writing within Western frameworks. The reason for this is that I myself am situated within a Western framework, and it is considered advisable by some researchers to start, “where you are” (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). By “Western framework” I mean my upbringing as an American citizen, my academic training within U.S. universities, and my background as a U.S. citizen of Anglo-European decent. More pragmatically, a focus on only Western feminist citizenship/sexual citizenship theorists was also necessary in order to narrow the scope of inquiry to a manageable project.

Secondly, the chosen feminist citizenship theorists had to be situated within the “third wave” of feminism, which, with some debate, has been periodized as 1980 onwards (Dicker, 2008). The reason for examining the more recent texts of third wave feminist citizenship/sexual citizenship theory is because, as historians argue, we cannot hold the past accountable for the contextualized knowledge of the present. As such, examining the lack of discourse around the citizenship of women with ID during first or second wave feminism, before, for example, the passage of the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, the 1999 Olmstead decision, or the People First Movement, would not be meaningful because such social movements and legislation highlighting disability issues had not yet happened.

Lastly, the texts used in this thesis were chosen to represent feminist citizenship/sexual citizenship theorists from an array of Western democracies, including England (e.g. Ruth Lister, Jeffrey Weeks), the United States (e.g. Iris Marion Young, Allison Carey, Licia Carlson, Gayle

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2 The ADA of 1990 is a civil rights legislation making disability discrimination illegal; the Olmstead decision ruled that institutionalizing people with disabilities violates the ADA and established the notion of “least restrictive environments”; and People First is a movement of people with ID advocating for themselves.
Rubin), the Netherlands (Rian Voet), and France and Denmark (Birte Siim). Third wave feminist theorists and activists have often critiqued the second wave for narrowly defined standpoints, including a focus on feminism in the United States without considerations beyond the U.S. border; choosing theorists from a variety of different Western democracies for this thesis, rather than focusing on texts only from the United States, is a response to this critique. An obvious weakness to this approach is that what is gained in scope from an array of texts from various Western democracies, compromises depth (i.e. an in depth analysis of feminist citizenship/sexual citizenship theory from each country).

As Chapter II situates women with ID within feminist citizenship theory, Chapter III explores third wave feminist sexual citizenship theory and situates women with ID into this discourse. Jeffrey Weeks (1998, 2000) was chosen as a theorist because his work seems to have been crucial in developing notions of sexual citizenship. Weeks is therefore used in order to define sexual citizenship and outline some main debates around sexual citizenship. Cossman (2007) is included as a theorist because she also writes specifically about sexual citizenship and her theoretical background is firmly situated within feminist frameworks. Additionally, the main publication by Cossman that informs the analysis of Chapter III was published in 2007, situating it firmly within the third wave feminist time frame. Just as Weeks and Cossman set the stage for Chapter III by defining “sexual citizenship”, Gayle Rubin (1989) is included because of the clarity with which she has described who are and who are not considered sexual citizens within western societies.

While Weeks, Cossman, and Rubin define and delineate the boundaries of sexual citizenship and sexual citizens, Sherene Razack (1998), Licia Carlson (2010), and Allison Carey (2009) bring in questions around ID into feminist discourses. While their works being examined
in this thesis are not about feminism per se, they were chosen because Razack, Carey, and Carlson are all writing about ID within feminist frameworks during the third wave, as is evidenced by their publication histories and self-descriptions.

Razack’s *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in the Courtrooms and Classrooms* (1998) brings in some analysis around the intersectionality of oppression as regards race, gender and disability/ID. While the focus of this thesis is not racial oppression, it is absolutely imperative to account for race-gender-disability oppression and intersectionality, as Razack’s work does. Razack’s work is a feminist analysis of intellectual disability and issues regarding sexual citizenship in courtrooms- an environment that is often most perilous for the status of women with ID as excluded sexual citizens.

Carlson’s *The Faces of Intellectual Disability: Philosophical Reflections* (2010) examines how representations of people with ID have either been absent from philosophical discourse or else exploited in order to make philosophical claims that primarily benefit citizens without intellectual disabilities. Carlson’s work examines the silence, exclusion, and exploitation of people with intellectual disabilities by philosophers and in philosophical discourse from a feminist perspective. This is exactly what this thesis aims to do when examining feminist citizenship and sexual citizenship theory, e.g. to illustrate the exclusion, and exploitation of women with ID in feminist arguments. In other words, just as Carlson seeks to place women with ID within philosophical discourse, this thesis attempts to situate women with ID in feminist discourse. Finally, Carey in *On the Margins of Citizenship: Intellectual Disability and Civil Rights in Twentieth-Century America* (2009) specifically examines the citizenship status of people with ID from historical and feminist perspectives, making Carey’s book central to a thesis on citizenship and intellectual disability such as this.
The texts consulted for Chapter IV were chosen based on several different criteria. First, as with all the feminist texts examined in this thesis, all of the texts in Chapter IV are situated within the third wave of feminism, i.e. circa 1980 and beyond. Chapter IV situates women with ID within a particular feminist concept that is central to feminist sexual citizenship discourse – “rape culture”. Rape culture is explored in Chapter IV as a specific theme within feminist sexual citizenship discourse; a discursive theme which is very pertinent to women with ID as sexual citizens, and yet in which women with ID remain invisible.

In order to expand beyond the boundaries of academia, several third wave anthologies by non-academic writers and activists have also been included in Chapter III (Berger, 2006; Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993; Findlen, 1995; Friedman & Valenti, 2008; Hernández & Rehman, 2002). In this same vein, several non-academic texts that deal with central feminist concepts of rape culture have been included (Clare, 1999; Muscio, 1998). Several texts by Disability Studies scholars dealing with ID (Braddock & Parish, 2001; Gill, 2009) and disability and sexuality (Siebers, 2008) have also been included in order to more firmly anchor this chapter’s arguments within frameworks of disability theory, including some history of disability, in addition to feminist theory.

Writings by sexuality educators, Orieda Horn Anderson (2000) and Dave Hingsburger (Hingsburger, 1995; Hingsburger & Tough, 2002), have been included in Chapter IV because Anderson and Hingsburger have built careers as sexuality educators working specifically with people with ID, and therefore, have a plethora of stories that exemplify the consequences of rape culture for the sexual citizenship of people with ID. Finally, the works of several researchers and academics have been included because they contain information about rates of sexual violence experienced by people with ID in a rape culture and the legal responses of service providers and
families via “consent capacity instruments” (Bell & Cameron, 2003; Hill Kennedy & Niederbuhl, 2001; Kennedy, 2003; Lyden, 2007; McCarthy, 1999; Murphy, 2003; Murphy & O’Callaghan, 2004).

C. **Chapter Overview**

Chapter II explores feminist notions of citizenship in general in order to set the stage for Chapter III in examining sexual citizenship specifically. Chapter II examines how several key third wave feminist theorists have engaged with and challenged hegemonic notions of citizenship. For example, the citizenship concepts of the public-private divide, the independence/dependence and the equality/different binaries, and the traditional notion of a “universal” citizen are examined (Lister, 2003; Siim, 2000; Voet, 1998; Young, 1989). Chapter III explores how several key feminist theorists have engaged with and challenged hegemonic notions of sexual citizenship. Specifically, works by the theorists Jeffrey Weeks (1998), Brenda Cossman (2007), Gayle Rubin (1989), Sherene Razack (1998), Licia Carlson (2010), and Allison Carey (2009) are examined.

As Chapters II and III examine feminist notions of citizenship and sexual citizenship and seek to create spaces for women with ID in such discourses, Chapter IV continues to examine notions of sexual citizenship in third wave feminist textual discourse through the particular feminist sexual citizenship concept of “rape culture”. Rape culture is a feminist concept that describes patriarchal systems permeated by sexual violence against women. Specifically, Chapter IV examines possible implications of textual feminist discourses of sexual citizenship around rape culture for women with ID, and continues to situate women with ID as sexual citizens within these discourses. Rape culture is a main theme in feminist sexual citizenship discourse and is crucial to third wave feminist notions of sexual citizenship because any arguments for the
sexual citizenship of women -including women with ID- are made within the frameworks of the rape culture at large. The aspects of rape culture that are explored in Chapter IV include: the rape culture manifestation of sexual violence; the rape culture notion of sex as a commodity; sex negativity that fosters and perpetuates rape culture; the problematizing of sexual victimization in a rape culture; and issues surrounding consent.

While a plethora of research indicates that people with ID experience very high rates of sexual abuse and violence, this thesis does not focus on such abuse rates. The reason for this is that the aim of this thesis is not to perpetuate representations of women with ID as victims ("survivors") of sexual violence, but to create spaces for women with ID within feminist discourses and to discursively reinforce women with ID as capable of claiming sexual citizenship when supported via life long, comprehensive, individualized sexuality education and sexual self-advocacy. In other words, this thesis does not seek to ruminate on the sexual victimization of women with ID, but moves beyond those facts to the possibilities of resistance. The concluding chapter of this thesis will more closely tie in some of the ways that women with ID can be situated within feminist discourses of sexual citizenship as active agents capable of resistance, especially via sexual self-advocacy by women with ID themselves.
II. FEMINIST APPROACHES TO CITIZENSHIP

A. Introduction

Citizenship is a highly contested concept and is rooted in historical and philosophical traditions. Obtaining citizenship means obtaining access to socially and legally sanctioned privileges, also known as rights. Citizenship can be defined as the belonging and participation of citizens in a society, and it includes rights as well as obligations for individuals (Cossman, 2007; Weeks, 1998). This chapter will examine claims about citizenship by several key feminist writers (Lister, 2003; Siim, 2000; Voet, 1998; Young, 1989). While these theorists claim citizenship for all women as a category, some of their notions regarding citizenship may serve to exclude and further marginalize women with intellectual disabilities (ID). Still many other claims by these same theorists do not explicitly include women with ID, but lend themselves to such an inclusion with the additional analysis provided throughout this chapter.

This chapter explores feminist notions of citizenship in general in order to set the stage for Chapter III in examining sexual citizenship. Specifically, this chapter addresses the first research question, as found in the thesis introduction: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about citizenship? To explore this research question, this chapter examines how several key third wave feminist theorists have engaged with and challenged hegemonic notions of citizenship. For example, the citizenship concepts of the public-private divide, the independence/dependence and the equality/different binaries, and the traditional notion of a “universal” citizen are examined (Lister, 2003; Siim, 2000; Voet, 1998; Young, 1989).

B. Ruth Lister

Like many feminist theorists, Ruth Lister (2003) argues that citizenship has been constructed with underlying assumptions of the male citizen. This citizen-as-male construction in
modern Western societies has its roots in Greek notions of the *polis*. The assumption of citizen-as-male has continued to be (re)invented since ancient times as well as through more modern historical upheavals such as the French and American Revolutions. Lister argues that the assumptions of the male-as-citizen infuse all present day notions of citizenship. These underlying notions comprise all institutional infrastructures including the modern dichotomies of the separation of the public-private spheres; the reverence for wage work and the lack of value for care work; the privileging of the ethic of justice over the ethic of care; the privileging of the independence/dependence binary over the concept of interdependence; basing rights on equality verses difference; and the assumption of the importance of generalizable universalism in citizenship, rather than the recognition and accommodation of plurality. Lister’s problematizing of these binaries and some of the implications for women with ID are described below.

1. **Challenging the public-private divide**

As are the assumptions of citizenship itself, the division of the public and private spheres has its roots in Ancient Greece, as well as Enlightenment philosophy and the later discourses of the French and American Revolutions. This division assumes the privileging of the public sphere where men dominate over the private sphere to which women are relegated. In Greece, women, like slaves, were essentially the property of their husbands, and had no autonomy or representation outside of that association. Feminists like Lister (2003) argue that men have been able to dominate and assert their alleged “independence” in the public sphere due to the work of “dependent” women in the private sphere: “Men’s independence is built on the freedom from the caring responsibilities that contribute to women’s dependence” (p. 110). Thus, only through the dependence of women, and their relegation to the private sphere, have men been able to assert the power of self-actualization and dominance in the privileged public sphere.
Similar to the general category of women, women with ID have historically been relegated to the private realm, shut away in the homes of their families or sent away to institutions. Indeed, more than a few women without ID have historically in the United States been classified as “feebleminded” in order to justify sending them away to institutions, as with unmarried women who had more than one child out of wedlock (Braddock & Parish, 2001; Trent, 1994). Once locked away into the private realm of institutions, women with ID have existed outside of various citizenships, with the rights and privileges that go along with them (e.g. to vote; to marry; have a family; make decisions for themselves; care for others; work; etc.).

Although women with ID have gained a physical presence in the public realm due to deinstitutionalization, they remain largely invisible. While many women with ID are now living in community settings, the force of “internalized oppression” (Bartky, 1990) that constitutes institutional life could conceivably lead many women with ID to hold back in public realm participation, due as much to the risks of community life as to the lack of experience in and supports for such participation. Additionally, while women with ID may currently be living more in community settings as opposed to institutions, their participation in various forms of public life (e.g. dating, voting, working, activism, etc.) is often mitigated by service professionals questioning their competency, medical professionals undermining their rights to gynecological exams and birth control, guardians and family members sharing decision making sparingly, etc. (Anderson, 2000; Hingsburger, 1995; Hingsburger & Tough, 2002). To have one’s competency so ubiquitously challenged can hardly be encouraging for women with ID seeking greater participation in the public realm.

Women with ID, like women without, therefore also stand to benefit from the feminist challenge to the public-private divide in various citizenships. Feminist support for women with
ID in entering the public realm as citizens could help to mitigate the forces of exclusion that women with ID face from service professionals, family members, policy makers, medical professionals, educators, guardians, etc., who might try to keep women with ID from participating as citizens for various reasons (e.g. for their own safety and well being). Additionally, the argument by feminist theorists for the inclusiveness of all women in the struggle to deconstruct the public-private divide would be more genuine were considerations of women with ID also present.

2. **Privileging wage work over care work**

Alongside the private/public divide, Lister argues that wage work has been privileged over care work. Through discourse and practice, wage work has been designated as part of the public (read male) realm while care work has been designated as part of the private (read female) realm. This division and privileging has led to “two modes of moral reasoning”: the “ethic of justice” and the “ethic of care” (Lister, 2003, p.101). The ethic of justice involves using the characteristics of rational reason, impartiality and fairness as a baseline for value and judgment. Conversely, an ethic of care involves the baseline characteristics and values of emotional empathy, contextualization, and compassion. As Lister summarizes:

The moral reasoning associated with an ethic of care is contextual and particular in that it emphasizes the responsibilities that stem from specific relationships in concrete circumstances and it addresses the specific needs through a process of empathy and the ‘activity of care’. In contrast, the dominant ‘masculine’ ethic of justice takes as its reference point the universal, abstract dictates of fairness and impartiality, the formal rules that derive from them and the rights they entail (2003, p. 101-102).
The privileging of wage work over care work as a primary means of gaining access to citizenship has some negative implications for women and people with disabilities in general, and for women with intellectual disabilities in particular. Women still earn less than men on average for the same kind of work\(^3\) and people with disabilities earn less than people without (Smith & Gilmore, 2007). The privileging of wage work interacts with gender and disability in such a way that people with disabilities in general experience higher rates of unemployment than people without disabilities, and women with disabilities experience still higher rates of unemployment than men with disabilities (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). This means that access to citizenship statuses via wage work will be very difficult for people with disabilities, for reasons often outside of their control (employer discrimination, inaccessible buildings and procedures, lack of employment supports, etc.).

While there are less data about the wage gap disparities between men and women with intellectual disabilities\(^4\), it is clear that women with ID face significant barriers to wage earning employment e.g. the interaction between prejudice, stigma and the effects of impairment. As such, notions of citizenship that emphasize wage earning for membership will necessarily exclude women with ID, as well as women in general. As far as women remain yoked to the private realm of care work, as Lister (2003) argues, and citizenship status is tied to wage earning in the public realm, this exclusion will continue. Lister’s call to equalize the valuing of wage work and care work, and the corresponding ethic of justice and ethic of care, could benefit

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\(^3\) For real wage examples of this in higher education, see the American Association of University Professors online, “The Chronicle”, “AAUP Faculty Salary Survey” (http://chronicle.com/stats/aaup/, retrieved January 3, 2011). While academics take pride in awareness of social inequality and oppression, men still make more in most position at most institutions.

\(^4\) For data regarding various aspects of disabilities and employment, see Cornell University’s Employment & Disability Institute site, “Disability Statistics” (http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/disabilitystatistics/reports/acs.cfm).
women with intellectual disabilities who continue at present to be excluded from both the public and wage earning realms. The more equal privileging of care work alongside wage work could create space for the citizenship of both women with and without ID, for example, by extending the privileges of citizenship to women who are care givers for aging parents, their children and other people’s children, other family members, and/or non-family members while in paid positions that make above and beyond minimum wage and offer appealing benefits.

3. **Troubling the independence/dependence binary**

Lister argues that independence has been “constructed as a prerequisite of citizenship today” (2003, p. 106). Since the characteristic of independence has been historically attributed to men as agents of the public realm, while women have been constructed as lacking agency and being dependent in the private realm, an emphasis on independence arguably excludes women. Rather than shifting the assumptions of “independence” over to the valuing of “dependence”, Lister proposes to weaken the binary and to instead develop an assumption of “interdependence” (2003, p. 109). Lister seeks to unmask the power dynamics that privilege independence over dependence and to replace them with a dynamic that values the interdependence of all people throughout the life span. Various disability communities and self-advocates have also long made the call for a valuing of interdependence rather than independence (Carlson, 2010; Siebers, 2008). For example, Disability Studies scholar Tobin Siebers (2008) calls for an ethic based on the human condition of “fragility, vulnerability, and disability” (p. 180) and Lennard Davis (2006) calls for a “dismodernist ethic” based on dependency, interdependency, impairment and the acknowledgment that all human beings are, “wounded” (p. 239).
4. **Collapsing the binary of “equality” versus “difference”**

Lister also deconstructs the binary of “equality vs. difference” (2003, p. 96). Lister points out how feminist claims to “equality” have tended to minimize or even seek to erase differences between men and women. Arguments for the equality of men and women as a means of claiming citizenship status becomes problematic for women with ID when the rhetoric of equality minimizes differences related to the impairments associated with various intellectual disabilities. There is a risk in claiming equality if it means minimizing differences and thereby negating necessary supports that women with ID need for citizenship.

Lister (2003) argues that while “maternalist discourse” has claimed that women are morally superior due to their roles as carers for children, the elderly and people with disabilities, such a claim oversimplifies the realities of both men’s and women’s lives. Women cannot rely only on their status as mothers and carers in order to claim citizenship for the obvious reason that not all women are mothers and/or carers. For women with ID who have historically been subject to forced sterilization and the removal of their children from their care, claims to citizenship based on being a mother would also be limiting.

Claims like that of maternalist discourse reduce all women to an “essential” sameness that is an illusion. However, to ignore the biological capacity of women to have children and the social implications of that capacity places the onus for all care giving and responsibility on the shoulders of women, yoking the representation of women still tighter to the private realm of dependency. To claim that men and women are totally the same and therefore equal risks overlooking the reality that women consistently tend to carry the responsibilities of the primary carers. At the same time, to claim that women are “essentially” different from men because of maternal instincts is to relegate women to the private realm of family, bodies and dependency.
Therefore, Lister argues to “collap[se] the dichotomy” (2003, p. 97) and to view equality and difference not as binaries, but as assumptions that can complement one another. Such a collapsing of the equality/difference binary could create space for the citizenship of women with ID if it allowed for equality of access to the rights of citizenship, even as it fostered the necessary supports needed by women with intellectual disabilities to exercise those rights. For example, equality of citizenship could be extended to women with ID by not putting policies in place that automatically exempt one from being eligible to vote because of an intellectual disability. At the same time, difference could be respected by allowing service providers to use agency funding to provide tailored supports to women with ID in understanding the electoral process and candidate platforms, and in actually getting to polling places i.e. support for their participation as citizens.

5. **Challenging “universalism”**

Finally, Lister challenges the traditional “universalist” assumptions of citizenship and seeks to unify the “universal” with “the particular” via what she terms “a differentiated universalism” (2003, p. 68). Lister points out that “women’s long standing exclusion from the theory and practice of citizenship...has been far from accidental” (2003, p. 68). The idea that concepts of citizenship today are “gender-neutral” is a fallacy. Citizenship is a highly gendered and historically constructed concept that presupposes a male citizen at its center. To treat citizenship as based on “universal” principles that are gender-neutral blatantly masks the exclusive assumptions of modern citizenship concepts. Indeed, the Ancient Greek model of a citizen from which western notions of citizenship arguably derive, was a Greek, male soldier, while women and slaves were relegated to non-citizenship and even non-personhood. This same kind of argument might be extended to disability, in that western notions of citizenship are not
“ability-neutral” and that the traditional citizen has been considered not only male but physically and intellectually non-disabled as well.

Lister points out that “It has been one of the major contributions of feminist scholarship to illuminate the way in which the civic-republican conception of the citizen was ‘aggressively male’, so that the exclusion of the female...far from being an aberration, was integral to the theory and practice of citizenship” (2003, p. 70). With a male-citizen at its center, modern, Western ideals of the belonging citizen presupposes not only a male, but an abstract universal person who is rational, relying primarily on reason, impartial to emotions, concerned with public spaces and discourses rather than private ones, “independent, active, heroic and strong,” and, “holding up the realm of freedom, of the human” (Lister, 2003, p. 71). In contrast to these acceptable characteristics of an abstract citizen, a non-citizen female is “particular, embodied, rooted in nature, emotional, irrational, subject to desire and passion; unable to apply standards of justice; partial, preoccupied with private, domestic concerns, dependent, passive, weak, maintaining the realm of necessity, of the natural and repetitious” (Lister, 2003, p. 71).

According to many of these characteristics, a woman with ID is also excluded from citizenship when her body/mind are too “particular”, and if her impairments force her attention to be “preoccupied” with the private e.g. when requirements of systems like vocational rehabilitation and meetings with life skills service professionals take up too much personal time, energy and resources, leaving little left for participation as a public citizen.

6. **Lister conclusion**

Through the works of feminist citizenship theorist Ruth Lister (2003), this section has explored the first research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about citizenship? Lister proposes a deconstruction of the male-citizen norm of
citizenship and a replacement of it with a pluralism of many different identities— not just White, able-bodied, young male-citizen, but Black, Hispanic, disabled, elderly, transgendered, and female-citizens as well. Such a proposal to deconstruct the male-citizen norm could create spaces for the citizenship of women with disabilities both as women and people with disabilities. Lister challenges the traditional notion of a division between the public and the private, arguing that women and men should not be relegated to either realm so that women occupy primarily the private and men primarily the public realms. Such a deconflation could be of benefit to women with ID who have historically been relegated to the private realm of institutions, and continue to be somewhat segregated in group home settings, within communities, and yet existing more parallel to them rather than meaningfully integrated and included.

Lister (2003) also argues against a privileging of wage work, which has traditionally been considered men’s work, rather than privileging of care work, which has traditionally been considered women’s work. Privileging care work alongside wage work could be meaningful for women with ID, who do not claim citizenship status where they have been excluded from wage work, and also because women with ID are often supported by women care givers, whose quality of care/support work is compromised where it is seen as less important than wage work. Additionally, the valuing of care work as a means to citizenship could create spaces for women with ID who do care work, e.g. supporting aging parents, their own and other people’s children and family members, non-family members in paid positions, etc.

Lister (2003) argues for a deconstruction of the independence/dependence binary and the replacement of it with a notion of interdependence, which some Disability Studies scholars have

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5 Although Lister (2003) continually makes claims that the “universal”, the “particular”, “equality”, and “difference” do not need to be treated as irreconcilable binaries, she does not give examples of how collapsing these binaries might look in an everyday political situation.
also called for (Davis, 2006; Siebers, 2008; Wendell, 1996). Lister also calls for replacing the assumed importance of universal notions of citizenship with notions of citizenship that call for the recognition and accommodation of plurality. Pluralism here also means that many different as yet non-citizen identities could unify around the theme of a common exclusion from the traditional male-citizen model of citizenship, e.g. women with disabilities, women with ID, feminist activists, and feminist academics could all unite together to claim citizenship as women.

Finally, Lister (2003) calls for rights based both on equality, i.e. women and men are the same and therefore equal, as well as rights based on difference, i.e. women and men are different and therefore need different rights in order to access privileges of citizenship. The dual call for rights based on equality as well as difference is particularly meaningful for women with ID, who require both equal rights of citizenship that are the same as people without disabilities, as well as different rights in order to access citizenship in ways that are different from people without disabilities. Although there is room in much of Lister’s feminist citizenship alternatives for women with ID, women with ID remain invisible.

C. Iris Marion Young

Iris Marion Young (1989) also argues against universal citizenship. Young points out that the modern Western notion of citizenship is historically contextualized, with its roots in the Ancient Greece polis and the Enlightenment philosophies such as Hobbes and Locke. Young describes “universality” as based upon “laws and rules that are blind to individual and group differences” (1989, p. 250). She draws attention to how many marginalized groups of the 19th and 20th century have struggled for access to legal citizenship with the assumption that social citizenship would follow. As this has not happened, these groups are now examining why this might be; Young’s speculations about why this might be are described below.
1. **Challenging universalist assumptions of citizenship**

As does Lister (2003), Young (1989) explains the continuing marginalization of groups from citizenship as a result of the universalist assumptions underlying citizenship. Young delineates how the modern, Western concept of citizenship is based upon characteristics associated with the male-citizen and “masculine experience: militaristic norms of honor and homoerotic camaraderie; respectful competition and bargaining among independent agents; discourse framed in unemotional tones of dispassionate reason” (1989, p. 253). These characteristics are in contrast to the “embodiment, dependency on nature, and morality that women represent” (Young, 1989, p. 253). In this way, Young claims that citizenship became conflated with universality, the public realm, and masculinity/the male-citizen, while the private has been conflated with the particular, the private and femininity/women.

Thus it is, Young (1989) claims, that the very assumptions of citizenship today are based upon notions that necessarily exclude women, as well as other marginalized groups deemed too passionate, emotive, wild, or in some other way too particular and not universal enough. This includes groups such as Blacks\(^6\), Indians, Mexicans, and people with disabilities, in addition to women (Young, 1989). Young argues that citizenship based on universality is false, because the assumed “universal” is actually based not on universal traits or agendas of all people, but on the “white male bourgeoisie conceived republican virtue as rational, restrained, and chaste, not yielding to passion or desire for luxury” (p. 254-255). To remedy this, Young proposes to give precedence not to an idealistic and exclusive notion of “universal” that is anything but universal, and rather to cultivate a, “differentiated citizenship” (p. 258) as described below.

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\(^6\) Young’s capitalization of “Black” and “White”, “Indians” and “Mexican” is to denote political categories more than a coherent group identity; Lister (2003) does this as well.
2. **Differentiated citizenship**

A differentiated citizenship, according to Young, includes “providing institutionalized means for the explicit recognition and representation of oppressed groups” (1989, p. 259). “Institutionalized means” includes: quotas of representation in government like those of affirmative action policies; self-organized meetings in order to gain empowerment through the sharing of “collective experience and interests in the context of the society”; the institutionalized opportunity to share or “voice” the group’s policy proposals; and final veto power in all decisions that directly affect such groups (Young, 1989, p. 261). Most importantly, Young claims that only “social groups” should be able to claim and exercise this “differentiated citizenship”; while groups by “aggregate” and groups by “association” should not (1989, p. 266). The difference between these three kinds of groups is described below, in addition to some of Young’s other definitions.

In her analysis, Young (1989) describes various terms including “social groups”, “aggregate” groups, groups by “association”, “oppression”, and “privilege”. Young’s definitions of these terms are explored here because women with ID qualify as a “social group” in requiring differentiated citizenship according to her criteria. Young describes a “social group” as an affinity with other persons by which they identify with one another, and by which other people identity them” (1989, p. 259). This affinity includes a shared history, shared “mode of reasoning”, shared way of expression and shared way of perceiving the world. According to these criteria, women with ID are arguably a social group requiring differentiated citizenship because they are beginning to identify with one another via self-advocacy movements. Similarly, women with ID meet Young’s criteria for being a social group requiring differentiated
citizenship because they have historically been identified as a category of people with a shared history of oppression (Braddock & Parish, 2001; Carey, 2009; Carlson, 2010; Trent, 1994).

Young (1989) draws a distinction between groups by “aggregate” and “association”. A group by “aggregate” is “any classification of persons according to some attribute” (Young, 1989, p. 259). Attributes used to classify “aggregate” groups are many and arbitrary, such as Young’s examples of eye color, the kind of vehicle one drives, skin color, age, or genitals (we might add to this list as well gender, physical disability, and intellectual disability). Young defines a group by “association” as “a collectivity of persons who come together voluntarily” (1989, p. 260). The key here is that “social groups” are bound together by common identities -whether self perceived and/or put upon them by others- while groups by “aggregate” are defined by arbitrary traits and groups by “association” are marked by their voluntary nature. According to Young’s distinctions, it is clear that people with intellectual disabilities -and especially women with ID- qualify as a “social group” eligible for “differentiated citizenship”, i.e. quotas of representation, self-organization, institutionalized opportunities for voicing their perspectives, and final veto power in decisions that directly affect them.

3. **Distancing: Claiming citizenship by marginalizing others**

Young (1989) also draws attention to the tendency of groups to define themselves by “despising or excluding others whom they identify as other, and whom they dominate and oppress” (p. 260). This kind of distancing happens between oppressed social groups when one group tries to claim rights of citizenship for themselves that leads to further marginalization for another group. For example, women can make claims to citizenship by emphasizing how women are just as intelligent, independent, and competent as men. Such an argument may inadvertently further distance from citizenship those people not deemed intelligent, independent, and
competent enough, i.e. women, people with disabilities in general, and women with ID in particular.

This kind of distancing also happens between groups of people with disabilities when one group tries to gain rights of citizenship at the expense of others. A group of people with physical disabilities might seek to establish or affirm their status as citizens by making similar claims to citizenship via intelligence, independence, and competence. For example, a woman with a physical disability might say “I have a physical disability, I’m not stupid”; “I’m deaf, not dumb”; or “I have a chronic illness, I’m not a moron”, “imbecile”, “retarded,” etc. In this way, intellectual disability remains a major category from whom marginalized groups such as women without disabilities, people of color, and people with physical disabilities continue to distance themselves in order to claim citizenship for themselves. This thesis argues that feminists and feminist theory arguably participate in such distancing from ID as well.

4. **Definitions of oppression and privilege**

In addition to drawing distinctions between these groups, Young (1989) gives working definitions of “oppression” and “privilege”. Young argues that a group is oppressed when one or more of the following occur to “all or a large portion of its members”: if the benefits of the group’s work goes to others and does not benefit them; if the group is excluded from major activities of the society (e.g. the work place); if the group lives under the authority of others with little autonomy and even less authority over others; if the group is stereotyped and yet their experience and situation is invisible in the society in general; and the group experiences violence and harassment based on their perceived status. Young terms these conditions of oppression exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism. Conversely, groups in a society have privilege when they “behave as though they have a right to speak and be
heard, that others treat them as though they have that right, and that they have the material, personal, and organizational resources that enable them to speak and be heard in public” (Young, 1989, p. 262). It is clear from Young’s operationalizing of oppression that people with disabilities in general, and women with ID in particular, experience oppression in the forms of exploitation, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism.

5. **Young conclusion**

This section has explored the work of feminist citizenship theorist Iris Marion Young (1989), in seeking to examine the first research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about citizenship? Women with ID meet Young’s criteria for a “social group” that has been oppressed via exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism; a group whose members have begun to self identify with each other and whom others have long classified as a group. That some groups seek to claim citizenship by distancing from people with intellectual disabilities may be taken as further evidence of the oppression that people with ID experience and their condition as a “social group” in need of “differentiated citizenship” that takes both difference and sameness into account (Young, 1989).

Although intellectual disability is not specifically included in Young’s analysis, replacing universal notions of citizenship with Young’s alternative feminist notion of “differentiated citizenship” could potentially create spaces for the citizenship of women with ID by accounting for sameness and differences between citizens (1989). Replacing universal notions of citizenship with Young’s proposed differentiated citizenship is similar to Ruth Lister’s (2003) call to deconstruct the male-citizen norm of citizenship and replace it with a pluralism of many different identities.
Young’s (1989) proposal of a “differentiated citizenship” creates space for the citizenship of women with ID as people who stand to benefit from “institutionalized means” of gaining access to citizenship privileges. Examples of such institutionalized means of creating spaces for women with ID as citizens include quota representation in government; group self-organization for the purpose of group member empowerment, support and the opportunities to have a voice; and final veto power in all decisions that directly affect such groups. Women with ID could benefit from such quotas alongside other marginalized groups, as long as such representation includes meaningful supports (e.g. personal assistants, coaches, etc.) to guard against the tendency of such participation to lapse into mere tokenism. Also, there may be some limits to certain aspects of Young’s proposed differentiated citizenship for women with ID. For example, final veto power in policy that affects women with severe ID who are unable to communicate about complex topics may not be meaningful. Therefore, to base citizenship on one’s ability to participate in government representation, self organization and vetoing policy may still exclude some women with ID from citizenship.

D. Birte Siim

Siim (2000) examines the citizenship of women in France, Denmark, and Britain. Siim explores whether or not there is a trend in European countries towards a “convergence of women’s social and political citizenship” and a “dual-breadwinner model” of citizenship where both women and men participate as citizens both in the public and private realms (2000, p. 23). As does Marion Young (1989), Siim notes how women in democracies have often gained certain rights of citizenship, such as the right to vote, only as a result of their status as mothers and potential mothers (2000). Siim calls for a rejection of claims to citizenship for women based only on their roles “as mothers”. Her grounds for this rejection is for the obvious reason that not all
women are mothers, and also because “there is a difference between the mother-child relation, which rests on intimacy, inequality, and exclusivity, and the relation towards fellow citizens, which rests on equality, distance, and inclusivity” (Siim, 2000, p. 35). Citizenship status based on women’s roles as mothers would be problematic for women with ID who often face barriers to their having children, including those put up by family members, service providers, policy makers, etc.

1. **“Maternalist” versus “women-friendly” citizenship**

   Siim (2000) distinguishes between “maternalist policies” that assume the inherent mothering/caring abilities of all women, and “women-friendly” policies that are “favourable to women in their multiple roles as parents, workers and citizens and that do not subsume women under their roles as mothers” (p. 17). Siim’s exploration of this policy divide is indicative of the feminist dilemma of whether or not to emphasize the equality of women with men or the differences between men and women because “men and women have different lives and different bodies” (2000, p. 14). Siim’s proposal of citizenship status for women based on “women-friendly” rather than “maternalist policies” would benefit women with and without ID where their citizenship status is not contingent upon their roles as mothers that they may or may not have the opportunity to be.

2. **“Equality” and “difference”**

   The question of focusing on equality verses difference is a similar to the conundrum Lister (2003) points out in her chapter, “Beyond Dichotomy”. The feminist dilemma that both of these feminist theorists point out is the question of whether or not to claim citizenship for women based on women’s equality -or similarities- with men or on women’s differences -or peculiarity- relative to the assumed male-citizen (Siim, 2000). Siim’s own
research of women and citizenship in Scandinavia indicates that both men and women “have a plurality of political roles and identities and that women’s politics are not and should not be based primarily on their experiences as mothers” (2000, p. 41). So while citizenship for women must include accommodations of some women’s roles as mothers - in other words, must base citizenship status on women’s difference or “peculiarity” from men- there are still many other statuses of “equality” upon which to base women’s citizenship. For example, citizenship may be granted to women based on human rights arguments (Turner, 2006). In other words, citizenship status may be extended to women with and without disabilities - including intellectual disability - based on arguments of both equality and difference.

3. **Dichotomies: Public/male/wage work and private/female/care work**

   Siim argues that studying citizenship can shed light on some of the dilemmas of modern democracies, such as the questions regarding the balance between individual liberty and state intervention, rights, and obligations of citizens, and the tension between political unity and the “right to cultural diversity and difference” (2000, p. 24). Like Lister (2003) and Young (1989), Siim acknowledges the roots of modern democracies in the Enlightenment philosophers with the structural assumptions of a male-citizen. Siim claims that the frameworks of citizenship have historically emphasized the public realm of wage work, where men have tended to dominate. In contrast, “feminist frameworks have emphasized the interdependence between wage work and caring work” (Siim, 2000, p. 14).

   It is important to note that some womanists⁷ are critical of the assumption that women have been relegated to the private sphere of care work and out of the public sphere of wage work (Hernández & Rehman, 2002; hooks, 1984). Lister (2003) points out that many Black women

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⁷ A term used by many woman of color instead of “feminist” or “feminism”, which has been argued as a movement predominately for white women.
“have long known economic independence, albeit typically in low-paid employment” (p. 108). Even with extending citizenship to women beyond the traditional qualifier of “wage work” to include “care work”, this argument does not bring women into the realm of citizenship who are not engaged in either. This may be problematic for women with ID who are largely absent from the wage-earning realm, and play a largely unknown role in care work.

The norm of the male breadwinner in the public realm of wage work necessarily relegates women to homemaking and caring in the private sphere. The assumption of this norm affects policy such as the levels of “social service provisions, particularly in regard to childcare; and the nature of married women’s participation in the labour market” (Siim, 2000, p. 14). Siim points out that feminists do not accept the private/public divide because the power relations operating in the public realm transpose themselves onto the relations in the private realm as well.

Even though feminists agree on the rejection of the public/private divide, they do not agree on its amelioration (Siim, 2000). While the public/private realms have historically been conflated with male/female identity respectively, the challenge “for feminist theory and politics is how to transform citizenship in a way that uncouples the division between the public/private spaces from the gendered division between man and woman” (Siim, 2000, p. 33). In other words, the challenge is to de-conflate the public/male/wage work and the private/female/care work dichotomies. Deconstructing these rigid binaries could benefit both men and women with and without disabilities -and especially women with intellectual disabilities- by providing space for people to live within the realms most suited to them individually.

4. **Quota systems, structural barriers, and individual agency**

Siim (2000) critiques the proposal of “quota systems” as a means of obtaining equal representation for women because such systems do not address the underlying social and
institutional power disparities between women and men (p. 38). Such a critique is in contrast to Young (1989) who presents quota systems as one valid solution to problems of “social justice” (p. 250). Siim is also critical of an emphasis on women’s agency when such an emphasis overlooks the institutional and “structural” barriers that individual agency alone cannot overcome (2000, p. 41). This is a salient argument for people with disabilities as well: it is critical that an emphasis on the individual agency of people with disabilities be paramount only in tandem with systems change going beyond the individual level.

Siim’s call to account for “structural” barriers is one that is critical for enacting justice for people with disabilities, such as in removing architectural (e.g. stairs), attitudinal (e.g. disability discrimination), and policy (e.g. standardized testing) barriers (2000). However, quotas can also be one means of gaining access and breaking down “structural” barriers for people with disabilities and other minority groups. Quotas can be a means of initially getting a variety of people into positions of power and decision making such as local, state and national government. Therefore, quotas can be of benefit to people with disabilities, and Siim’s rejection of them in light of her simultaneous call for the removal of “structural” barriers is not entirely clear. To be meaningful for women with intellectual disabilities, the use of quotas as a means of accessing citizenship must be in tandem with individualized supports, such as support staff, Simple English texts, etc.

5. **Siim conclusion**

This section has explored the work of feminist citizenship theorist Birte Siim (2000), in seeking to examine the first research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about citizenship? Siim concludes that women, like men, have a multiplicity of interests and identities, all of which are more “constructed rather than pre-given.”
Siim calls for feminist theory to continue to expose the assumptions of the universal male-citizen in modern concepts of citizenship. Siim’s vision of citizenship has “women at the center” (2000, p. 149) in contrast to the traditional focal point of the male-citizen, such a shift in focus could benefit women with and without ID.

Feminist theory must continue to deconstruct the division between the public and private, as well as the political and institutional discourses that conflate women’s citizenship with the private realm of care work, or else extend citizenship to women only under the assumption of women’s roles as identical to men’s (Siim, 2000). It is unclear how such a deconflation of the public realm/wage work/men and private realm/care work/women would benefit women with ID who have historically been excluded from citizenship in both realms. However, such a deconflation could potentially benefit women with ID as citizens if they are specifically taken into account throughout such considerations and deconstruction of these binaries. For example, women with ID would have greater citizenship access in the face of such binary deconstruction if spaces were created for them as both valued wage earners and possible mothers/care givers.

Despite her acknowledgment of the limitations of women’s agency as a means to greater social and political participation, Siim (2000) proposes to make women’s agency a central part of her new vision of citizenship. The caveat is that women’s agency must be combined “with the notion of political power” (Siim, 2000, p. 154). This focus on individual women’s agency in combination with an awareness of “political power” is the essence of self-advocacy for people with ID (which is discussed in the conclusion of this thesis). Therefore, through self-advocacy, women with ID are already accessing citizenship via Siim’s proposed emphases on developing individual agency in tandem with political power. Feminists should further support self-advocacy
efforts for women with and without disabilities because such support would enrich the plight for women’s citizenship in general, and the citizenship of women with ID in particular.

Siim perceives the main issues of women’s citizenship as “equality and difference, work and care, and participation and power” (2000, p. 151). Women with ID stand to benefit from all of these alternative feminist notions of citizenship. For example, citizenship that honors both “equality and difference” would identify women with ID as deserving as women without disabilities when it comes to education, medical treatment, voting, raising a family, etc. (e.g. being “equal”) and also as requiring accommodations and supports for those same activities (e.g. being “different”). Similarly, Siim’s citizenship notion of “participation and power” could benefit women with ID if there was a standard expectation that all women participate in public forms of citizenship such as expressing opinions, voting, and making public policy decisions as they are able, in addition to privately exercising personal agency in tandem with such political power.

Siim calls for women as citizenship outsiders, to unite with other marginalized social groups in order to struggle together for a presence, “in political forums to influence political decisions” (2000, p. 157). The call to create a unity across oppressed groups is one made by feminist and disability scholars alike (hooks, 1984; McRuer, 2006; Siebers, 2008). This call for women and feminists to unite as oppressed groups, excluded from traditional notions of citizenship, should be extended not only to groups of women across race, ethnic, a/sexual, and class groups, but to women with disabilities in general and women with ID in particular.

E. **Rian Voet**

Like Lister, Young, and Siim, Voet (1998) acknowledges the division of the public and private sphere as an underlying assumption of modern citizenship. As such, the public sphere is
constructed as the sphere of justice and political decision-making, while the private is that of “private decision making regarding the good life” (Voet, 1998, p. 126). Feminist theorists have unmasked the traditional citizenship theory assumptions of the male-citizen (Voet, 1998). Voet explores -and finds wanting- four “feminist alternatives” to this traditional construction of citizenship below: humanist feminist; woman-centered feminist; and deconstructionist feminist.

1. **Feminist citizenship alternative: Humanist feminist**

Voet describes the human feminist alternative as one that “sees gender difference as accidental to humanity” (1998, p. 26). The human feminist alternative to traditional assumptions of citizenship proposes that women should simply have all of the same opportunities as men, that things that men do are models for women’s own activities. Human-feminists claim that citizenship should continue to be gender-neutral. Voet sums up the human feminist philosophy: “Let us be included as citizens and forget that we are women” (1998, p. 29).

The humanist feminist position on citizenship is problematic for women with ID who would be expected under such a model to rise up and make their citizenship claims without considering external barriers to their participation such as discrimination and lack of staff/familial/professional supports. This is similar to Siim (2000) who also criticizes such an approach when she warns against too great an emphasis on women’s individual agency at the expense of considering disparities in political power. Such external barriers to citizenship might include: inaccessible materials; policies regarding competence that prevent women with ID from voting or having their opinions considered; and ongoing, usually lifelong experiences of not having their voices count. All of these barriers may discourage women with ID from risking participation in various realms of citizenship. In the same way that the humanist feminist approach to seeing gender as “accidental to humanity” is insufficient to guarantee the citizenship
participation of women, such an approach that negates difference would necessarily exclude women with ID where specific supports needed for accessing and participating in various realms of citizenship are not taken into account.

2. **Feminist citizenship alternative: Woman-centered feminist**

In contrast to the human feminist alternative, “woman-centred feminists” prefer political and social citizenship based on the acceptance of women’s particular differences from men. As a feminist citizenship alternative, woman-centered feminism envisions an honoring of women’s particularity in the public sphere, rather than an assimilation of women under traditionally “male” citizenship ideology. This would not mean women emulating men in the public sphere, but rather being equally respected in their differences from men.

Woman-centered feminists seek “voice and access” for women to the public realm. Woman-centered feminists do not seek gender neutrality in citizenship. Rather, they envision a rethinking of citizenship with women at the center. Voet sums up the woman-centered feminist position: “Let us try to become included as women citizens, and, in doing this, change the concept of citizenship” (1998, p. 29). This line of thinking is problematic, however, because it assumes men and women are “essentially” different from one another, an assumption that many feminists, including Voet, reject.

The sort of differentiation that woman-centered feminism draws between men and women as categories of citizens with different perspectives and requirements for the enactment of citizenship could be a meaningful concept when considering the citizenship of women ID. For women with ID, the particularities of intellectual disability must be taken into account in addition to gender, race, ethnicities, a/sexuality, etc., in order for citizenship to be more than

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8 Voet uses the spelling “centred” as in “woman-centred feminist”; this thesis will use the American spelling “centered.”
token participation. To consider intellectual disability alongside gender and other social group identifications when fostering active citizenship—as Voet proposes woman-centered feminism does—is as necessary for the meaningful participation of women with ID as citizens as it is for the meaningful participation of women as citizens in general. However, the dangers of women-centered feminism’s assumption that men and women are inherently different applies here as well: to emphasize too strongly the unique perspectives of people with disabilities, in particular women with ID, risks essentialism that reinforces the stereotype that women with and without disabilities have more differences than similarities between them.

3. **Feminist citizenship alternative: Deconstructionist feminist**

Voet looks at “deconstructionist feminism” as the final possibility of a feminist alternative to traditional models of citizenship. This feminist alternative is more of a lens than an alternative political theory (Voet, 1998). The call of deconstructionist feminism is to “deconstruct and unravel all so-called truths, unities and oppositions” (Voet, 1998, p. 130). Deconstructionist feminism acknowledges that the many and varied needs of people cannot be formulaically met, and to do so could further marginalize vulnerable populations. However, a concept of citizenship that is too “differentiated” can also be problematic if it leads to group stigmatization and perceptions of preferential treatment.

A deconstructionist feminist approach to citizenship might prop up the argument for women with ID as citizens if such reasoning were used to explore ways in which women with ID are not so “other” from women without ID. In other words, a deconstructionist feminist approach to citizenship could benefit women with ID as citizens if it served to illustrate the differences between women with and without ID as frequently socially constructed. Also, a deconstructionist approach could create space for the citizenship of women with ID if it showed how women with
and without ID are not essentially different from each other, rather, any differences of intellectual disability between them is a matter of degree, not of kind\(^9\).

4. **Voet’s alternative feminist notions of citizenship**

While Voet (1998) explores “human feminism”, “women-centered feminism”, and “deconstructionist feminism” as possible feminist alternatives to traditional male centered notions of citizenship, she argues finally that they are not entirely viable alternatives. Instead, Voet argues for women’s citizenship in terms of: “active citizenship”, “sex equal citizenship”, “alternation and circulation” or alternating between ruling and being ruled, and “woman-friendly citizenship”. Voet’s feminist characteristics of citizenship -active, sex equal, alternating, and women-friendly- are described below.

a. **Active citizenship**

Voet (1998) argues that an emphasis on “active citizenship” is missing from the most salient, current feminist theories of citizenship. She explores the Aristotelian notion of active citizenship, which claims that a citizen becomes and reinforces being a citizen by actively participating in public offices. Voet takes this a step further by claiming that one is and becomes a citizen not just through active participation in public offices, but through active participation in the economy as well: “Participation in decision-making therefore refers not only to parliaments, governments, local councils and administrators, and the judiciary, but also to socioeconomic boards, the top echelons of the military and police, ministries, university councils

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\(^9\) This comes from an argument by Carlson (2010) that people with ID have variously been portrayed throughout the history of philosophy as either: non-human and therefore a qualitatively different *kind* of creature; or as human with a quantitatively different *degree* of humanity than people without ID.
and senates, unions, and boards of media organizations” (1998, p. 137). Voet terms the notion of active participation in not only political office but in social and economic realms as well “full citizenship” (1998, p. 137). This is similar to Siim’s (2000) call to foster social expectations that women can be and do belong in public realms of citizenship, in addition to the private.

Voet (1998) describes full citizenship as not only active participation in decision-making that happens via political offices, but in wage work as well. This is a version of the argument that wage earners, even when they are not public officials, can still claim access to citizenship based on their economic decision making power. Voet also argues that full citizenship must include a sense of “political subjectivity” such that a citizen knows “how to play political roles” and is “capable of political judgment” (1998, p. 137-138). Voet also claims that in order for people to be citizens, a baseline of “freedom, rights and a certain level of material welfare” is a precursor to participation as citizens: “We have to be autonomous citizens, free from utter poverty and protected by and against the state before we can play the part of active citizen” (1998, p. 138).

There is some room in Voet’s (1998) notion of active citizenship as “full citizenship” for many -but not all- women with ID to participate in various forms of citizenship. If women with ID are supported in seeking wage-earning employment, they might be able to exercise active/full citizenship as wageworkers actively participating in economic citizenship. At the same time, awarding citizenship status to women with ID based on the fact that they are wage earners comes necessarily at the exclusion of women with and without ID who do not do wage work. Also, Voet’s notion of autonomy and competence will by definition exclude some women with ID who

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10 It is a weakness of Voet’s argument that she does not explore how the transfer of an Aristotelian notion of active citizenship amongst a homogenous, male, Greek born, materially upper class citizenship from centuries ago may be extremely problematic in heterogeneous, class mixed, modern democracies of today.
require support and (inter)dependence to function, and whose measurable intelligence might not be at the level deemed necessary to be considered “competent”\(^\text{11}\).

A baseline of freedom from poverty before one can be an active citizen may also be problematic for women with ID who statistically live well below the poverty line (Carlson, 2010). While Voet perhaps means to infer that a person must live out of poverty before they can be expected to think in terms of active citizenship rights and responsibilities, the danger of this caveat to citizenship is that people living in poverty or on government benefits, like so many women with ID, will be considered unfit to be active citizens by nature of their poverty. It is therefore clear that women with ID remain invisible in Voet’s feminist analysis.

b. **Sex equal citizenship**

Voet (1998) draws a distinction between the Aristotelian notion of equal citizenship amongst men only, and calls for equal citizenship between men and women\(^\text{12}\). By this, she means not only equal participation in terms of equal numbers of men and women participating in politics, but also to “equal outcomes” such that there is an equal number of actual political decisions resulting in policies that are made by men and women. In other words, that policy decisions by women equal the number of policy decisions made by men over time. This idea of equal presence and decision making outcomes between men and women is complementary to Young’s (1989) call for representative quotas in decision making positions in order to create spaces for the citizenship of those deemed too “other.”

\(^{11}\) More on how notions of “competency” are problematic for women with ID when it comes to sexual citizenship will be explored in the next chapter.

\(^{12}\) It should be noted that Voet claims that she is taking a “group perspective: that of the two sexes”, however, not all feminist theorists agree that there are in fact two sexes, see for example Fausto-Sterling’s *The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough* (2004).
The aim of equal citizenship is not only to have the appearance of women’s participation as citizens (e.g. with quotas to ensure presence alone) but to actually effect policy change by women alongside men. Voet’s (1998) “equal outcomes” also means that women are supported in the ways that they need in order to do varied citizenship work. For example, if women are relegate to the private sphere and expected to take on all of the care responsibilities there, they will not have the time or energy to practice citizenship in the public realm of policy.

Measures of equal outcomes to support equal citizenship might mean men stepping fluidly into care roles, and/or state sponsored funding for child care arrangements, such that women will not be prevented from practicing their citizenship on equal terms with men because they must be in the private realm doing the incessant work of material life or “care work” (e.g. unpaid care of dependents, meal preparation, family housework, teaching youth, etc.) (Voet, 1998). As people mostly excluded from participation not only in public policy but from care work as described here, it is unclear where women with ID fit into Voet’s notion of equal or full citizenship as they again remain an invisible group of women in her analysis.

c. **Alternating between ruling/being ruled and circulation of elites**

Voet claims that “Women have seldom been among the rulers throughout history, and it is now time for them to be included in the process of alternating between ruling and being ruled” (1998, p. 139). Voet argues for the equal presence of women and men as rulers and ruled when it comes to citizenship. This does not mean that there are an equal number of men and women ruling or being ruled at any one moment in time, but that there are equal numbers of men and women engaged in decisive decision making over time (Voet, 1998).

Voet (1998) also argues that women from different social groups must be incorporated into the “elites” of decision making bodies, and that there be a “circulation” in such elite decision
making bodies “in order to prevent abuse of power, inertia, a weakening of the qualities of rulers, revolution, or neglect of resources and talents” (p. 139). Voet points out that requiring the presence of women as elites in decision making bodies should not be taken to mean that women are expected to represent only the interests of other women, nor that women are somehow more moral than men in decision-making capacities. Rather, the argument is that if the engagement of all people in full citizenship is the goal of democracy, there must be mechanisms to ensure that such full citizenship takes place for women. Without mechanisms for full inclusion of women as citizenship, the idea of democracy as representative of “the people” continues to mean mostly men in reality.

While many women with ID may have a lot of experience being “ruled” by others, from their families, to service providers, policy makers, peers deemed higher functioning, etc., there are fewer examples of women with ID ruling others. As inspirational as they may be, the work of some self advocates\(^{13}\) in promoting their own interests and supporting other women as self advocates in doing the same appears to be the exception rather than the rule. In any case, self-advocacy cannot be construed as “ruling” others, but rather as making sure that one’s own voice is accounted for in life decisions that affect that individual personally. As with “active” and “sex equal” citizenship, it is difficult to envision how women with ID would fit into Voet’s (1998) notion of ruling/being ruled and circulation of elites in power. It is obvious here that Voet did not have women with ID in mind when she envisioned these alternative characteristics of citizenship as working to include women as citizens; it is equally unclear that Voet envisions women with other kinds of disabilities being active in elite public decision making positions.

\(^{13}\) A “self advocate” is a person with an intellectual disability who advocates on their own behalf. Self-advocacy is explored more in the concluding chapter of this thesis.
d. **Woman-friendly citizenship**

Voet’s proposal to reformulate citizenship such that it is meaningful and enticing for women and seeks to challenge “the masculine founding myths of states, the idea of fraternity, the assumed necessary detachment of political actors from their bodies, backgrounds, group interests and group identities” (1998, p. 140). Voet argues that mere quotas to get women into decision making positions is not enough to ensure the meaningful participation of women as citizens. Instead, she calls for a “two pronged” approach to citizenship where not only are there quotas to ensure the presence of women in “decision-making positions” (the first prong) but where the very “content of citizenship itself” is changed to include women as citizens (the second prong). Such a change in citizenship content would mean reformulating notions of citizenships such that women “empathize” with them: “a citizenship for which they can make time and in which they want to be active” (Voet, 1998, p. 140). Aspects of Voet’s two pronged approach to reformulating notions of citizenship in order to be woman-friendly would have implications for women with ID as well, as explored below.

i. **Challenging men as primary decision-makers**

Voet argues that men have historically been the primary (and sometimes only) decision makers in realms of citizenship and that “such a bias needs to be corrected by rethinking the idea of citizenship from the perspective of the female and the feminist citizen” (1998, p. 140). Just as Voet (1998) argues that decision-making citizens have for a long time been primarily men, decision makers for a long time have also been primarily non-disabled, with notable exceptions. President Roosevelt is an oft quoted example of a person with a disability who did have considerable decision making power, but it must also be
remembered that Roosevelt was an educated, upper class, white, male elite, who was physically, and not intellectually disabled, and as such was still considerably privileged.\textsuperscript{14}

As for people with ID in positions of primary decision-making, no ready examples come to mind. Just as Voet (1998) claims that men have heretofore been the primary decision makers in the realms of citizenship, women without ID have been the primary ones to challenge this situation. Presumably, Voet envisions women \textit{without} ID to be the women candidates next in line to share in decision-making positions, while women with ID are simply not a part of such considerations.

\textbf{ii. Challenging the public-private divide}

As do Lister (2003), Siim (2000), and Young (1989), Voet (1998) also argues that in order for citizenship notions to be woman-friendly, the “borderline between the public and private” would have to be recast. This recasting would be such that no concrete sense of a division would exist between the public and private realms, a division that feminists have long argued relegates women to the private realm, systemically discouraging them from participating in the public realm.

Recasting the public-private divide would not mean that there would be no privacy and that everything would be public (Voet, 1998). Rather, it would mean that issues usually associated with the private realm and thus with women themselves, e.g. care work, house work, material life, etc., would instead be considered not only the responsibility of women traditionally in the private realm, but of men and the public realm as well. For example, the work of keeping a house such as child rearing, cooking, caring for elders, etc., would not fall solely to women in the private realm, but would be shared more equally with men and/or subsidized in some way by

\textsuperscript{14} Additionally, President Roosevelt worked to actively distance himself from disability by carefully cultivating a public image of himself as a non-disabled person.
public funding. Voet argues that such a recasting of the public-private divide could make it so that women -no longer yoked to the private realm by default- would have the time and energy to take up decision-making positions.

Voet (1998) does not mention what such a recasting of the public-private divide could mean for women with disabilities in general, let alone women with ID in particular. It is therefore unclear whether Voet envisions women with any variety of disabilities also being empowered to step into public decision-making roles, should the public-private divide be recast; once again disability and women with ID remain invisible in Voet’s feminist citizenship concepts.

iii. **Making decision-making positions attractive**

Voet continues her feminist recasting of citizenship to be more women-friendly by proposing that decision making positions must be made “attractive for men and women who want to keep in contact with their family and friends” (1998, p. 141). Voet argues that as it is, the traditional view of citizenship assumes only those who can participate in very long workweeks, often away from home, are able to hold decision-making positions. This has meant that women, as the primary caretakers and homemakers, have not been able to participate in full time decision-making positions where it meant a total neglect of assumed responsibilities in the private realm. As Voet writes: “Being an active citizen can still be a calling, but it does not have to imply that all other aspects of one’s life, other interests, needs and activities must be subsumed by the aim of serving the common good” (Voet, 1998, p. 141).

Although she does not seem to consider women with ID in her analysis, Voet’s (1998) call to make participation in decision-making positions less than full time might also help to draw women with ID into the realm of public decision-making and policy. Women with ID could
benefit from Voet’s notion of part time public policy and decision-making, where plentiful connections to family, friend, and support staff networks could provide the support necessary for them to participate in public decision-making processes.

Voet also argues here that the male dominated public realms of decision-making have been unattractive to women where they have been subjected to ridicule and that “psychic space is needed in the sense that the macho-culture in politics with its sexual jokes needs to go” (1998, p. 141). For women with ID to participate in the public realm, spaces must be just as absent of the humor and dialog that degrades intellectual disability as they are of the sexist language and ridicule that discourages women in general from active participation in public realms.

5. **Voet conclusion**

This section has explored the work of feminist citizenship theorist Rian Voet (1998), in seeking to examine the first research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about citizenship? While Voet presents “human feminism”, “women-centered feminism”, and “deconstructionist feminism” as possible feminist alternatives to traditional male centered notions of citizenship, she argues finally that they are not entirely viable alternatives. Voet claims that none of these feminist citizenship theory alternatives provide the necessary “ideal of active citizenship” including “active decision-making” which she sees as imperative to obtaining citizenship (1998, p. 132). Specifically, Voet sees the following necessary characteristics as absent from these feminist alternatives: “active citizenship”, “sex equal citizenship”, “alternation and circulation” or alternating between ruling and being ruled, and “woman-friendly citizenship”. It is clear at many points within her analysis that Voet did not have women with disabilities in mind. While some of Voet’s proposals of alternative feminist notions of citizenship could potentially serve to create spaces for the citizenship of women with
disabilities in general, such analysis is absent. In particular, women with ID remain invisible as citizens in Voet’s feminist analysis of citizenship.

F. Conclusion: Feminism and Citizenship

This chapter has explored the first research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about citizenship? To investigate this research question, this chapter has examined the works of feminist citizenship theorists Ruth Lister (2003), Birte Siim (2000), Rian Voet (1998), and Iris Marion Young (1989). Citizenship has been defined here as the belonging and participation of people in a society, and it includes rights as well as obligations for individuals. All four of the feminist citizenship theorists examined in this chapter made claims about citizenship that could potentially create space for the citizenship of women with ID. However, analysis that incorporates women with disabilities is absent and women with ID remain invisible as citizens.

All four feminist theorists examined in this chapter challenge the tradition notion of a “universal” citizen. They claim that a traditional “citizen” in Western contexts has historically been white, male, of middle or upper class socioeconomic status “rational, restrained, and chaste, not yielding to passion” (Young, 1989, p. 254-255). In such traditional notions of citizenship women are seen as too passionate, emotional, dependent or in some other way too particular and not universal enough to qualify for citizenship. Other groups are also seen as too “particular” for citizenship, include African Americans, Native Americans and Alaska Natives, Mexican Americans, people with disabilities in general, and women with ID in particular.

The feminist theorists examined in this chapter call for a deconflation of the public realm with men and the private realm with women (Lister, 2003; Siim, 2000; Voet, 1998). Men’s dominance and enjoyment of the privileges of citizenship in the public realm has been made
possible by the care and material work which has traditionally been ascribed to women in the private realm, beyond inclusion as citizens. The feminist call for the deconflation of the public/male and private/female realms would allow for both men and women with and without disabilities to move more fluidly into and out of roles that best fit with their individuality. Such fluidity could obviously benefit women with ID as well, whether they choose to primarily be active public citizens, do the care and material work of the private realm, or move between realms.

The feminist theorists in this chapter challenge the privileging of wage work done in the public realm, which has traditionally been associated with men, and degradation of non-paid care work traditionally done by women in the private realm. As with deconflating the public/men and private/women binaries, such a feminist challenge could create space for the citizenship of women with and without ID, whether they choose to participate in wage earning or care work, because both forms of work would be equally valued and compensated.

The feminist theorists examined in this chapter also call for the deconstruction of the traditional independence/dependence binary (Lister, 2003; Siim, 2000). This deconstruction could benefit women with disabilities generally and women with ID in particular because people with disabilities tend to need more support from others in order to be “independent”. However, people with disabilities are also depended on by others and there is no dividing line between people with and without disabilities. In other words, there are times in life when individuals are relatively independent, and times when we are more dependent upon others.

As most of us will have disabilities if we live long enough, it is illusory to frame individuals as “independent” or “dependent” when such status is constantly in flux. Additionally, even individuals considered the most “independent” are in fact dependent upon the work,
knowledge, and good will of others. The feminist call for a deconflation of the independence/dependence binary could therefore create space for women with and without ID as interdependent citizens, which in fact all of us are, as we continue to move between various degrees of independence and dependence throughout our life spans. A deconflation of the independent/dependent binary also holds the possibility of creating space for people with more severe disabilities, including severe intellectual disabilities, if such a deconflation means that independence is no longer held up as the only supreme characteristic by which individuals are valued.

Finally, all four theorists call for a collapsing of the equality/difference binary. This binary is especially salient for people with disabilities, particularly women with ID. For women with ID to be included as citizens, both their common humanity and the impairments that indicate difference must be accommodated. In light of collapsing the equality/difference binary, debates among feminists and Disability Studies scholars about whether women and people with disabilities are more alike or more different than men, people without disabilities, and across impairments, cultures, race, class, a/sexuality, etc., cease to be meaningful.

There must be an accommodation of all citizens in both their equalities and their differences, and this seeming paradox is not at odds with citizenship and public policy. For example, when it comes to education, collapsing the equality/difference binary means that citizens with ID are eligible for publicly funded education that is both inclusive or "mainstreamed" (i.e. equal) as well as individually supported via special education professionals and resources (i.e. difference). Similarly, people with disabilities must be eligible to vote as citizens (i.e. equality) and also supported in doing so, e.g. support staff, drivers, interpreters, simple English texts, etc. (i.e. difference). Such examples of accommodating citizens like people
with disabilities as both equal and different abound and are easily identifiable, once the feminist call for collapsing the equality/difference binary has been answered.

To increase effectiveness and maximize the power of movements for social justice like feminism and Disability Studies, individual groups must cease to rearticulate notions of citizenship so that they can be included, but at the expense of other marginalized groups. For example, the feminist distancing from disability, especially intellectual disability, excludes women with disabilities who might otherwise be powerful allies in academia, research, policy, and activism for social justice. Such distancing is ironically not only socially unjust, but it is ineffective in building political power in order to rearticulate citizenship to the benefit of various groups.

In fostering greater political systems change and re-articulation of citizenship, it would be more effective to foster unity across disparate groups, i.e. women, people with disabilities, women with physical disabilities, women with ID, women of color, white feminists, women of color feminists, rather than each group seeking to distance themselves from more stigmatized groups in order to claim citizenship for themselves. However, such unity will involve costly compromises.

Here is an example of the kind of compromises that would have to be made in order to foster unity across groups and create spaces for the citizenship of all women: white non-disabled feminists have long prioritized reproductive rights such as access to abortion, while women of color and women with disabilities have protested that they’re reproductive rights have been violated by forced sterilization and the devaluing by medical professionals -mostly white and non-disabled medical professionals- of their choices to have children. In order for white feminists, feminist of color, and women with disabilities to unite across such an issue, there are
myriad, vehement discussions that still must take place. However, if all groups prioritize unity with compromise, in the long run, such discussions would inevitably create spaces for the citizenship of all, despite a short-term sense of having compromised too much that many group members will experience.

To illustrate an example of a possible compromise regarding women’s sexual citizenship for the sake of unity, perhaps white feminists could concede that every single woman have the unimpeded right to one or two children; this would include women with physical and intellectual disabilities, women of color, poor women, incarcerated women, women with substance abuse addictions, etc. In turn, women of color and women with disabilities could concede that aggressive birth control and abortion would be considered paramount for all women of reproductive age who have already had one or two children. Additionally, women and feminists who reject abortion might agree to a compromise whereby various forms of government subsidized birth control are available and affordable for all women in the prevention of pregnancy, while the termination of a pregnancy is not paid for by public dollars at any stage, but is not illegal either.

Many of the arguments put forward by the feminist citizenship theorists examined in this chapter offer possibilities for creating spaces for the citizenship of women with ID, although they do not explicitly include women with ID. Specifically, citizenship notions of “woman-friendly”, “full citizenship” (Lister, 2003), and “women at the center” (Siim, 2000) offer possibilities for the citizenship of women with and without ID through: a pervasive social expectation that women belong in public decision-making positions; an understanding that systems change must occur in tandem with individual and group agency, (e.g. self-advocacy); quotas guaranteeing women’s access into public policy positions with decision-making outcomes equal to men;
public policy positions are made attractive to women because it is not expected that all other aspects of one’s life -such as family, friends, and one’s health- are considered less important than public service; deeming humiliating, demotivating sexist language as unacceptable in the public realms of policy making.

Other feminist arguments regarding citizenship, however, may disqualify women with ID from citizenship. For example, Lister’s (2003) argument for the “active citizenship” of women may exclude women with and without ID who are unable and/or unwilling to participate in public decision-making because they lack the necessary supports or particular abilities required for such positions, as well as the material resources. Whether the arguments of these feminist theorists hold possibilities of creating space for the citizenship of women with ID or not, women with ID remain largely invisible throughout their analyses.

The inclusion of women with ID as citizens in feminist citizenship theory is necessary not only for the privileges that citizenship holds for women with ID, but to legitimate the feminist claim of seeking to include all women. This chapter has explored some possible ways that the citizenship of women with ID can be made salient in feminist citizenship discourse. In other words, this chapter calls attention to the invisibility of women with ID from feminist citizenship discourse, and offers some possibilities for creating space for their citizenship. This chapter has explored feminist citizenship theory generally, in order to set the stage for discussions about feminist discourse around sexual citizenship specifically, which is the subject of the next chapter.
III. FEMINIST APPROACHES TO SEXUAL CITIZENSHIP

A. Introduction

While chapter one explored feminist notions of citizenship in general, this chapter will examine sexual citizenship specifically. As chapter one aimed to do with feminist citizenship theory, the aim of this chapter is to explore third wave feminist sexual citizenship theory, to examine the lack of representation of women with intellectual disabilities (ID), and to situate women with ID within such discourse. Specifically, this chapter will address research question number two of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability?

Feminists have long sought to expand the boundaries of sexual citizenship. They have worked to move beyond the exclusive privileging of heterosexuality and heterosexual intercourse as the only sexualities/sexual acts that qualify for sexual citizenship. Third wave feminists especially have rejected the notion that heterosexuality and heterosexual intercourse are the most important forms of sexuality and sexual expression (Friedman & Valenti, 2008; O’Connell Davidson & Layder, 1994). For third wave feminists, the activities that count as “sex” are as many and varied as the individuals that engage in them, and sex is as much about pleasure, desire, consent, the inclusion of the entire body and many different kinds of bodies, as it is about heterosexual penile-vaginal intercourse. This chapter will explore how several key feminist theorists have engaged with and challenged hegemonic notions of sexual citizenship. Specifically, works by the theorists Jeffrey Weeks (1998), Brenda Cossman (2007), Gayle Rubin (1989), Sherene Razack (1998), Licia Carlson (2010), and Allison Carey (2009) will be examined.
Weeks’ *The Sexual Citizen* (1998) and *Making Sexual History* (2000) are examined here because much of Weeks’ writing around sexual citizenship seems to be foundational to the field of sexual citizenship, as evidenced by frequent references to his work throughout many of the other texts about sexual citizenship examined in this thesis and as evidenced by initial literature reviews. Week’s work is used in order to operationalize a definition of “sexual citizenship” for use in this thesis. Cossman’s book, *Sexual Citizens: The Legal and Cultural Regulation of Sex and Belonging* (2007), is a more recent publication about sexual citizenship with analysis that specifically incorporates feminist frameworks, lending it to usage in this thesis which also seeks to examine third wave feminist theory in terms of sexual citizenship and intellectual disability. Rubin’s *Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality* (1989) is positioned here as a useful text for operationally defining sexual citizenship and sexual citizens.

In addition to issues of sexual citizenship, feminists have engaged with intellectual disability in various ways. This chapter will also examine the claims of third wave feminist authors Sherene Razack, Licia Carlson, and Allison Carey regarding intellectual disability, feminism, and citizenship/sexual citizenship. While these authors may have been first exposed to feminist theory during the second wave, their works examined here have been written and published during the third wave, i.e. after 1980\(^\text{15}\), situating them within third wave feminist frameworks.

**B. Examining Terms**

1. **Defining sex and sexuality**

   “Sex” is often synonymous with heterosexual intercourse, at least in the United States and much of Western Europe (Friedman & Valenti, 2008; Shakespeare, Gillespie-Sells, 1980).

\(^{15}\) While contested, the “third wave” of feminism is generally regarded as 1980 onwards (Dicker, 2008).
Davies, 1996). Such a definition is as much a result of socio-historical circumstances as of any essentialist notion of “nature” or biology. Throughout history, various institutions from religious churches to secular courts have defined heterosexual intercourse as the main form of acceptable sexual expression. This emphasis on heterosexual intercourse as the only sex that counts may have served as a means of maintaining wealth by limiting extramarital relations that could lead to illegitimate offspring whom could stake a claim to familial fortunes in patriarchal societies (Cossman, 2007; Young, 1989). Also, before the advent of paternity testing, strict censorship of women’s sexual activity outside of marriage may have been the only guarantee that a man did not end up investing in the raising of children whom were not biologically his (Buss, 1999).

There is also a differentiation to be made between “sex” which is an expression of sexuality, and sexuality itself. Weeks (2000) describes sexuality as inclusive of many aspects of “individual and social existence,” including identity, reproduction, relationships, erotic activities, fantasies, intimacy, love, and pleasure (p. 163). While the traditional view of sex has meant heterosexual intercourse, this thesis will employ and explore the third wave feminist expanded definitions of sex, and will draw on Weeks’s distinction between sex as sexual acts, and sexuality as one’s entire notion of a sexual self including what happens physically with bodies as well as the identities, emotions, and meanings that are interwoven with sex acts.

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16 In Shakespeare et al. (1996), The Sexual Politics of Disability: Untold Desires, this privileging of heterosexual penile-vaginal intercourse is referred to as “fucking ideology” (p. 97).

17 However, the idea that men are constantly on the alert for the sexual infidelity of their female sexual partners as a means of creating “paternity certainty” is a concept in the field of evolutionary psychology that has recently begun to come under fire. See for example, Sex at Dawn: The Prehistoric Origins of Modern Sexuality (2010) by Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jethá.
2. **Defining sexual citizenship**

Sexual citizenship is one of the many forms of citizenship, including legal, political, social, economic, and cultural citizenship to name a few. While the notion of citizenship often brings to mind active participation in civic realms such as voting and employment, sexual citizenship is the expansion of citizenship discourse of rights and responsibilities into the realm of sexuality (Cossman, 2007; Richardson, 2000). The claiming of sexual citizenship involves demanding and struggling for social recognition and privileging of one’s sexual identity and sexual expression, or at least, to not be actively silenced, ignored, and punished for it.

The attainment of sexual citizenship involves successfully embodying a “bundle of practices” that are socially accepted, legally sanctioned, politically uncontroversial (or at least, not taboo and silenced), culturally represented, accommodated, and celebrated. Sexual practices might include with whom one chooses to engage in sexual activity (or not) and what the consenting parties choose to do and not do. A sexual citizen is one whose “membership and belonging in a nation state” (Cossman, 2007, p. 5) is not compromised by their sexual practices, but rather, one whose sexual practices are either protected by law -or at a minimum- not punishable by law. In this vein, people who are heterosexual have status as sexual citizens, as exemplified by: the celebrations that accompany engagements and marriage ceremonies (i.e. social acceptance and celebration); the recognition of such events by the state and religious institutions (i.e. legal sanctioning and accommodation); the assumption that marriages between heterosexual people is a moral, natural, and desirable thing (i.e. politically uncontroversial); and the plethora of films, music, and writing depicting heterosexual relationships (i.e. cultural representation).
Sexual citizenship includes the sexual practices and identities that are accepted and privileged in a given society. Sexual citizenship is ultimately a claim to belonging, delineated by certain socially defined rights and responsibilities, which are complex, historically situated, and incessantly changing. While oppressed groups may not use the term of “sexual citizenship”, it is a useful concept that can sensitize us to the traditionally marginalized public discourses surrounding the body, including aspects of sexual expression such as pleasure, intimacy, and identity (Weeks, 1998). The exclusion of women in general and women with ID in particular from sexual citizenship will be further examined later in this chapter.

3. **Defining sexual citizen**

To be a sexual citizen is to be unashamed -and even proud- of one’s sexuality and sexual expression, and even to be able to take its expression for granted. A sexual citizen does not face social ostracism, litigation, and professional interference when it comes to sexual identity and practices. On the contrary, sexual citizenship brings with it promises of personal, community, and democratic fulfillment and well-being (Cossman, 2007).

Like other marginalized and oppressed groups, people with disabilities have been and continue to be excluded from citizenship and sexual citizenship discourse. While feminists with physical disabilities have begun to challenge their exclusion from sexual citizenship in feminist discourse (Findlen, 1995; Garland-Thomson, 1997; Wendell, 1996), the invisibility of women with intellectual disabilities as sexual citizens persists. It is this representation/lack of representation of women with ID in feminist textual discourse around sexual citizenship that this thesis continually seeks examine.
4. **Describing citizenship and sexual citizenship theory**

In broader notions of citizenship a “good citizen” in Western societies has been assumed to be white, able-bodied/able-minded, “familial, marital and heterosexual” (Cossman, 2007, p. 127). Such assumptions have a long and winding history going back to Greek city-states, where a “citizen” was a Greek male, while women, slaves, and children were considered not citizens but property (Weeks, 1998). With the stages of Western democracies set, these groups have continued to be excluded from citizenship in general and sexual citizenship in particular. For example, while participants in the French Revolution struggled to redefine and expand notions of citizenship centuries later during the 18th century, establishing the citizenship status of women was not on the agenda of “liberté, égalité, fraternité” (“liberty, equality, fraternity”).

For women, it was not until the 20th century that struggles for citizenship met with some success in Western societies via the Feminist Movement (Weeks, 1998). It must be remembered, however, that many women around the world continue to be excluded from many aspects of citizenship (Weeks, 1998), and that the Feminist Movement itself has alternately excluded various groups, such as women of color (hooks, 1981, 1984), women with physical disabilities (Garland-Thomson, 1997), and women with intellectual disabilities (Carey, 2009; Carlson, 2010). It is the exclusion of women with ID from feminist sexual citizenship discourse that this chapter seeks to explore further.

The world “remains invested in forms of social membership, indeed, citizenship, that are structurally identified with domesticated heterosexual marriage and intimacy” (Cossman, 2007, p. 29). Even so, the boundaries of sexual citizenship in 20th and 21st century America have been expanding. This expansion has been characterized by an ongoing “democratization of
relationships” in Western societies (Weeks, 1998). This process has entailed the remaking of relationship norms, with challenges especially to the traditional norms of women as the primary homemakers, responsible for all non-wage labor in the private, domestic realm, including child rearing, supporting a wage earning husband, and support of aging, disabled and/or sick family members. Just as the expansion and/or remaking of notions of sexual citizenship have carried benefits for women in general, women with ID also stand to benefit. As notions of who counts as a sexual citizen -and therefore who benefits from sexual citizenship- continue expand to include groups of people previously marginalized, spaces for women with ID as sexual citizens might also be created.

Weeks (1998) goes on to describe the “democratization of relationships” as being composed of three elements: “detraditionalization”, “egalitarianism”, and “autonomy” (p. 40). The “detraditionalization” of relationships is the critical questioning, problematizing and deconstruction of traditional forms of power, including “the churches, customary ways of life, [and] state forms” (Weeks, 1998, p. 41). This critical questioning, problematizing, and deconstruction extends into the interpersonal relationships between people, including between sexual partners and parents and children as well. This upset in institutional and interpersonal relationships across the board is also accompanied by challenges to traditional binaries (e.g. men/women, heterosexual/homosexual) and to the division of public and private realms (Weeks, 1998). The detraditionalizing of relationships could also create space where women with and without ID might find room for dreaming up their own non-traditional relationships, wherein their status as sexual citizens could be maximized.

The “egalitarian” aspect of the “democratization of relationships” is that relationships can now be founded upon the mutual and ongoing choosing of people to stay with each other. This
active choice is paramount in defining relationships and is nurtured through “personal attraction, sexual desire, mutual trust and compatibility” (Weeks, 1998, p. 42). The expectation of egalitarianism in relationships may arguably lead to unwanted social upheaval, for example, an increase in divorce rates and single parent families that result when parents choose not to stay together. Where women are expected to take on wage work in addition to most of the care work, they will not have the time or energy for civic engagement. Therefore, upheaval of traditional social institutions such as marriage may be a necessary step in claiming citizenship for women with and without ID. Regardless of such risks, the citizenship of women with and without ID is strengthened where women and men are expected to more equally divide wage and homemaking responsibilities, even when such an altering of traditional arrangements creates social upheaval. By remaking sexual relationships to be more egalitarian, the sexual citizenship of women with and without ID might also be strengthened, for example, when women learn to demand reproductive justice, e.g. that men are expected to take as active a role as women in the prevention of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy.

Finally, the “autonomy” aspect of Weeks’ “democratization of relationships” implies a “quest for individual fulfillment” within the context of any chosen relationship (Weeks, 1998, p. 43). This trait of autonomy in relationships exists alongside the traits of trust, compatibility, and reliability and the struggle is to find a balance between them. The autonomy aspect of relationship democratization may be more problematic for women with ID than Weeks’ other two aspects of relationship democratization, (i.e. “detraditionalization” and “egalitarianism”). As with the American emphasis on the value of independence, a focus on autonomy rather than mutual support and interdependence may put women with ID at risk, for example, where extra support is required in navigating sexual relationships, and a focus on autonomy leads to the
withholding of such supports. At the same time, women with ID could benefit alongside women without ID by a focus on autonomy in sexual relationships, if the goal is to minimize the kind of dependence that puts women at risk in abusive relationships.

5. **The performance of sexual citizenship**

There is a stress that goes along with the remaking and redefining of the traditional family ideal (i.e. heterosexual, monogamous, white, non-disabled, wage earning father and home maker mother). The lack of clearly defined sexual citizen roles during this upheaval is very threatening for some, even as it is liberating for others (Weeks, 1998). There is also a sense of ongoing stress when it comes to the flexibility of modern sexual relationships, including Weeks’ democratization, egalitarianism, and autonomy, as each relationship is looked at as a kind of project where all the parties involved are called upon to constantly work on relationships; a call that Cossman (2007) terms the “responsibilization” of relationships.

When it comes to the remodeled relationship of sexual citizens in modern day Western societies, “we’ve been well tutored in the catechism of labor intensive intimacy. Work, work, work” (Cossman, 2007, p. 190). In this sense, there is still a “performance of citizenship” (Cossman, 2007, p. 100) even as this performance has become more diverse and non-traditional. Where women with and without ID are able to engage in such citizenship performance, they will reap the benefits of sexual citizenship (e.g. be allowed to marry/not to marry, have a family/not have a family as they desire, experience less threat of sexual violence, etc.). However, where women with and without ID are unable and/or unwilling to meet the performance requirements of sexual citizenship, they will continue to be socially and legally sanctioned, restricted, and protected “for their own good”. Therefore, even the alternative feminist notions and boundaries of sexual citizenship such as the ones proposed by Weeks (1998) and Cossman (2007) must
continue to be critically examined in order to maximize the feminist call for the sexual
citizenship of all women, including women with disabilities in general and women with ID in
particular.

C. **Feminist Theorist on Sexual Citizenship: Gayle Rubin**

Gayle Rubin in “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality”
(1989) defines sexual citizens as being in the “charmed circle” of “good sex” which is
considered normal, healthy, and natural sex. If having normal, healthy, and natural sex is part
of the prerequisite for being a sexual citizen, one must presumably be in possession of a body
that is considered normal, healthy, and natural. These criteria automatically exclude women with
disabilities and especially women with ID who have historically been and continue to be socially
and medically defined as abnormal, unhealthy, and unnatural. Indeed, the bodies of people with
disabilities/ID are often conflated with such traits, while the absence of disability is conflated
with desirable normality, health, and naturalness.

According to Rubin (1989), members of the charmed circle engaging in good sex are:
heterosexual; married; monogamous; have sex to procreate; do not have sex for money, favors,
opportunities (i.e. are not sex workers); do not use sexual paraphernalia or pornography; have
sex only in private; and are relatively the same age. These traits of sexual citizens as defined by
Rubin will be explored in the remainder of this section. All of these traits of a sexual citizen are
problematic for many people in general, and so are problematic for women with ID in
particular. While Rubin does not specifically consider women with ID as excluded sexual
citizens, this section will examine the invisibility of women with ID as sexual citizens in Rubin’s

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18 While Rubin (1989) does not use the term “sexual citizen” herself, her work around excluded
and included sexual identities and practices is essentially about who does and does not count as a
sexual citizen.
analysis. Additionally, this section seeks to create space for women with ID as sexual citizens by situating women with ID within Rubin’s feminist discourse of sexual citizenship.

1. **Sexual citizens are not homosexual**

   There are presumably as many women with intellectual disabilities that have sexual same-sex relationships as there are in the general population (Thompson & Bryson, 2001). Disability aside, according to Rubin’s (1989) analysis, women with ID who are homosexual or living homosexual lifestyles would be excluded from sexual citizenship on the grounds of homosexuality. Not only are there women with ID who are homosexual, but the history of gender segregated institutionalization often left people with ID to engage in homosexual activity, whether or not they identified as homosexual (Dudek, 2006). Regardless of which side one falls on when determining if gendered institutionalization “makes” people with ID homosexual, the point of Rubin’s argument is that homosexuals are on the “outer-limits” of sexual citizenship. Therefore, lesbian women with ID, in any setting, would be considered “bad, abnormal, unnatural” (Rubin, 1989, p. 281) and outside of sexual citizenship.

2. **Institutions: Marriage, guardianship, and benefits**

   Marriage as a means to access sexual citizenship status may also be problematic for people with ID, given the historical and present day practices surrounding institutionalization, guardianship, and benefits. Women with disabilities living in institutions are often prevented from engaging in sexual activities, let alone marrying (Schwier, 1994). If women are not able to be sexual citizens unless they are married, then women with ID in institutional settings where they are prevented from marrying cannot be sexual citizens.

   While many states have begun to close large residential institutions for people with ID, the “community settings” into which people have been transitioned do not necessarily have policies
regarding sexuality and marriage that are any less stringent than institutional settings. In community settings, many people with ID must still navigate having legal guardians (Hingsburger, 1995; Hingsburger & Tough, 2002). While legal guardians should not restrict the sexual expression and/or desires for marriage of their wards (National Guardianship Association, 2007) the reality is that this frequently happens anyway. Even though many women with ID have been transitioned out of large institutions where obtaining some amount of sexual citizenship via marriage is probably an impossibility, women with ID in community based settings may still contend with individual guardians who actively try to stop their wards from getting married.

Finally, women with ID may be deterred from obtaining sexual citizenship status via marriage if their benefits will be reduced should they marry. Benefits like Medicaid and Social Security Disability Insurance are often higher for recipients who are single than for recipients who are married. The potential loss of benefits for people with disabilities who get married may serve as a disincentive to marry. In this way, women with ID are less likely to increase their status as sexual citizens through marriage, and will remain, in Rubin’s analysis, outside of sexual citizenship as unmarried people.

3. **Sexual citizens are monogamous**

There are many communities in which monogamy is not a norm, as indicated by the extensive Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, Sadism and Masochism (BDSM) and “kink” communities in the United States, not to mention the inconspicuously practiced polygamy of certain religious communities (Easton & Liszt, 1997; LightPlanet, 2010). As with homosexuality, it is likely that women with ID engage in non-monogamous sexual activity at rates similar to the general population. According to Rubin’s (1989) analysis, just as non-disabled and non-monogamous populations are in the “outer limits” of sexual citizenship,
women with ID engaging in non-monogamous sexual activities will be similarly excluded from sexual citizenship as well.

4. **Sexual citizens have sex for procreation**

Rubin (1989) argues that sex for pleasure and not procreation falls outside of the realm of sexual citizenship. However, with the advent of more widely available birth control and safer sex methods like condom and dental dam use, having heterosexual sex for pleasure without it leading to procreation has become a possibility for many\(^1\). While most people probably would not argue that having heterosexual sex for pleasure necessarily excludes people from being considered sexual citizens in most of the United States today, the hint of this argument still lingers in anti-homosexual agendas. For example, the argument that sex for pleasure between a man and a woman is “natural” because it could lead to procreation (i.e. heterosexual sex is primarily about procreation and therefore still in the realm of sexual citizenship), while homosexual sex for pleasure cannot lead to procreation and is therefore “unnatural” (i.e. homosexual sex can only be for pleasure and falls outside of sexual citizenship) (The Evangelical Covenant Church, 2010).

While sex for pleasure and not procreation has arguably become a generally accepted practice among able-bodied heterosexual people, sex for pleasure and not for procreation among women with ID -whether homo- or heterosexual- remains outside of sexual citizenship. As Rubin (1989) argues, if sex for procreation is a marker of sexual citizenship, then women with ID who have sex for pleasure -especially non-heterosexual sexual pleasure- and are unable or unwilling to procreate (or prevented from procreating, as in the case of forced sterilization) are excluded

\(^1\) However, some feminists argue that safer sex methods are mostly available to middle and upper class white people (Roberts, 2009) and not people of color. Clearly, the issues around reproductive justice are not only highly ableized -i.e. for people without disabilities- but class and race based as well.
from sexual citizenship. Unlike non-disabled people who choose not to have children, women with ID are often excluded from sexual citizenship based on procreation against their will when they are variously barred from procreation via gendered institutionalization, forced sterilization, or family and/or service provider and/or medical professional interference in their reproductive rights. In this way, women with ID have been excluded from procreation and therefore sexual citizenship as well.

This exclusion does not mean, however, that women with ID are not sexual persons, nor that they do not have children. What exclusion from sexual citizenship via procreation does mean for women with ID is that when they do express their sexuality, they must deal with the presence of professionals in their personal lives. Such professional presence may be supportive, for example, by fostering self-advocacy and sexual self-advocacy\textsuperscript{20} skills; or it may be in a less supportive capacity, for example, to remove children of people with ID from their custody. This was the case for Carrie Buck, a young woman in Virginia who was institutionalized, as her mother had been, for being “feebleminded” when she became pregnant. As her mother before her, Carrie Buck’s child was removed from her and placed in foster care, and Buck herself was sterilized (Trent, 1994). Although Buck’s case happened in the early 1900s, when it comes to sexuality -and especially procreation- the presence of professionals in the lives of people with ID continues to be both necessary in some ways and perilous in others (Schwier, 1994).

5. **Sexual citizens have sex in private without sex workers and sex paraphernalia**

Due to the nature of intellectual disability, some women with ID may require assistance when engaging in sexual activity, especially if it is to be safe and consensual.

\textsuperscript{20}Self-advocacy and sexual-self advocacy are further explored in the conclusion of this thesis.
Requiring assistance to engage in sexual activity can automatically turn sex as a private activity into a public one (Siebers, 2008). In the absence of other physical disabilities, this assistance may be only in regard to getting information that can be understood. For example, a woman with ID may need assistance in: obtaining and understanding pictures or videos that show sexual positions; purchasing desired sex paraphernalia, like sex toys or pornography; demonstrations of sexual activities with life like dolls;\(^2\) demonstrations of how to masturbate without causing injury; how to clean up after sexual activity has taken place; and how to effectively use safer sex measures like condoms, and dental dams, lubricant, etc.

Sexuality information must be provided in a way that is easy to understand and according to the communication abilities of each individual, i.e. such information must be accessible. While there may be nothing particularly special about such sexuality information, it is the nature of having to make sexuality information accessible to people with intellectual disabilities that is unique. In other words, where women with ID require assistance with comprehension of sexuality information, sex will no longer be a private matter, and if sex is not a private matter, according to Rubin’s (1998) analysis, women with ID will be excluded from sexual citizenship.

While able-bodied heterosexual women who buy sex paraphernalia may be able to discreetly do so by themselves and not compromise their status as sexual citizens, discretion and privacy are more difficult when a woman with an ID must rely upon someone else’s involvement. While able-bodied people can presumably fulfill their sexual fantasies themselves, not needing the permission or discretion of paid support people, this is not a luxury that most women with ID have.

\(^2\) The use of dolls in sexuality education for people with ID remains controversial because there is still a degree of abstraction involved. For this reason, some sexuality educators have created videos of sexual activities like masturbation with real actors, made specifically for people with ID (Hingsburger, 1995).
Since prostitution is by and large illegal in the United States, finding support staff who are willing to walk the fine line between sexual assistance and prostitution may be all but impossible to find. If support staff who are willing to provide sexual assistance are found, they run the risk of being considered perverts\textsuperscript{22} and/or being prosecuted as sex workers. For this reason, women with ID needing sexual assistance may choose and/or be encouraged to go to a sex worker instead of involving their support staff in their sexual needs. Where the very nature of intellectual disability precludes privacy and necessitates sexual assistance and/or sex work and sex paraphernalia, according to Rubin (1989), women will be excluded from sexual citizenship. Rubin illustrates that the presence of these elements -public sex, sex work and sex paraphernalia- exclude people from sexual citizenship, and yet these very elements may be even more imperative for some women with ID than they are for women without ID in expressing their sexualities.

6. **Sexuality of children**

Rubin argues that the state intervenes in sexual behaviors of citizens “at a level that would not be tolerated in other areas of social life” (1989, p. 288). This, she claims, is all the more the case when it comes to the sexuality of children and people who are sexually attracted to young people below the legal age of consent. Societal and state campaigns against the expression of sexuality by children have been occurring since Victorian times, and are evidenced in modern legislation for federally funded “Teen Chastity” programs (Rubin, 1989, p. 274) and the more recently funded abstinence-only sexuality education programs (Rojas, 2009). This obsession with keeping children from sexual material is all the more ludicrous when one considers that children

\textsuperscript{22} In a personal communication with Katie Keiling, a member of UIC’s Sexuality & Disability Consortium, sexuality educator for people with ID and Illinois resident Orieda Horn Anderson reported that she has been called a “pervert” on a number of occasions.
are not similarly kept from violent material: “It is legal for young people to see hideous depictions of violence, but not to see explicit pictures of genitalia” (Rubin, 1989, p. 290).

The denial of children’s sexuality compounds the claim to the sexual citizenship of women with ID, who are often equated with children. The historical equating of people with ID as “eternal children” (Carey, 2009, p. 105) continues today not only in social attitudes and institutional policies that deny the sexuality of children (Evans, 1993) and people with ID, but in clinical and research practice that calculates the level of supports required by people with ID by calculating “mental age”. Social workers, service providers and medical professionals examine the “mental age” of people with ID through batteries of assessments, where the outcome is an estimate of that person’s “mental age” in months.23

When taking on a new client/patient, agency or medical personnel will tailor their services according to the calculated mental age of the person with ID. For example, if a client/patient has a mental age of 102-121 months than they are treated as an 8.5-10 year old (“mildly” impaired level of functioning). If a client/patient has a calculated mental age of less than 45 months, this means that they will be regarded as a child of less than three years of age.24 While measuring mental age is often a useful benchmark in designing support systems for people with ID, there is a downside: equating adults with ID with children in a society that denies sexuality to children, as Rubin (1989) claims, means that women with ID will be similarly denied sexual citizenship. For the actualization of people with ID as sexual citizens, not only is it imperative that issues of sexuality be considered throughout the lifespan, including in childhood,

23 For an example of such calculations, see Lulinski Norris, Rizzolo & Heller’s (2010) analysis on deinstitutionalization of people with developmental disabilities in Illinois between 2001 and 2008.
24 People with ID are often referred to as “clients” in service settings and “patients” in medical settings.
but people with ID cannot be equated with children. While a 40 year-old woman with ID’s lack of self-consciousness at being naked may remind people without ID of a child, it must still be remembered that a 40 year-old woman has had life experiences that a young child has not. Experiences of institutionalization, deinstitutionalization and aging are not experiences that a young child has yet had, and such a pivotal difference must be taken into account.

7. **Advantages of sexual citizenship**

Rubin (1989) argues that there are advantages to being considered a sexual citizen. Some of the advantages include “certified mental health, respectability, legal status, social and physical mobility, institutional support and material benefits” (Rubin, 1989, p. 279). Conversely, non-sexual citizens are disadvantaged in being considered mentally ill, disreputable, and criminal, and are subjected to a “loss of institutional support,” as well as “economic sanction” (Rubin, 1989, p. 279). These advantages are the very ones that women with ID struggle to obtain: that one can be healthy, respectable, have legal status, mobility, and “institutional” and “material” support and also have an intellectually disability. Also, self-advocates\(^{25}\) struggle to establish that the presence of ID cannot unequivocally be equated with incompetence\(^{26}\) in addition to mental illness, disrepute, and criminality, as it so often is. Clearly, women with ID are excluded from the advantages of sexual citizenship as defined by Rubin, which is in turn indicative of the general lack of sexual citizenship that people with disabilities experience.

\(^{25}\) Self advocates are people with ID that advocate for their own rights and desires, such as where to live, employment, relationships, education, the right to vote, etc. Self-advocacy is further explored in the conclusion of this thesis.

\(^{26}\) The conflation of ID with incompetence will be explored more in the next section examining work by Sherene Razack (1998).
8. **Conclusion: Rubin**

This section has explored the second research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability (ID)? While women with ID remain invisible in Rubin’s (1989) feminist analysis of sexual citizenship, this section has sought to interweave Rubin’s claims of sexual citizenship with issues experienced by women with ID. Rubin argues that sexual citizens are adults who: are married; have sex only with the body of one person who is of the opposite sex and also about the same age; have sex in private and primarily for the purpose of procreation. These qualifiers of a sexual citizen may be problematic for a woman with ID if she: is perceived as a child; is unable to marry; has sex with women; requires the assistance of other people and/or paraphernalia in order to express her sexuality; and cannot, chooses not to or is prevented from having children. In this way, Rubin’s analysis of sexual citizenship illustrates that most women with ID are indeed excluded sexual citizens.

D. **Feminist Theorist on Sexual Citizenship and Intellectual Disability: Sherene Razack**

While Rubin’s (1989) broad notions about the inner and outer limits of sexual citizenship apply to the sexual citizenship of people with intellectual disabilities generally, Sherene Razack’s (1998) notions of feminist complicity and “subtexts” of power operating in the oppression of other women applies to women with ID specifically. This section explores Razack’s notions of “feminist complicity” and its implications for the sexual citizenship of women with ID. Specifically, this section also seeks to explore research question number two: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability (ID)?
1. **Feminist complicity in oppression: Vulnerability and pity**

Razack in *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms* (1998) calls for everyone to engage with their own complicity in the “subordination of other women” (p. 132). This is an argument similar to that of feminist citizenship theorist Iris Marion Young (1989) in the previous chapter, who argues that feminists make claims to citizenship for their membership group by marginalizing other groups, effectively diminishing the status of others in order to fortify their own. Razack’s (1998) argument is that all people in general, and feminists in particular, are complicit in the oppression of other women when we regard certain women as vulnerable and therefore worthy of pity instead of respect. “Pity” is a notion also rejected by disability activists in favor of respect, resistance, and agency (Charlton, 1998; Shapiro, 1994).

Razack’s (1998) notions of complicity and pity are especially salient when they translate into evaluating the vulnerability and consent capacities of women with ID who have experienced sexual violence. The binaries between vulnerable/not vulnerable, rapable/unrapable map onto Razack’s ideas of respect and pity, such that vulnerable, rapable women are accorded respect and protection, whereas women who consent are invulnerable and unrapable, accorded only pity, rather than respect and justice. This mapping is somewhat different for women with ID, where their status as disabled, non-sexual citizens means that they are simultaneously pitied, considered vulnerable and in need of protection but not respect, and also sexually undesirable, therefore unrapable and not in need of sexual justice.

If feminists tout social justice for all women, and yet still confer pity and a status of vulnerability on women with ID without emphasizing their potential for agency and resistance, then feminists are indeed complicit in the oppression of women with ID. When feminists make
claims to citizenship based on the inherent intelligence and strength of women as a group -a claim that says in other words, women are not intellectually or physically disabled- then women with ID will by default be excluded from citizenship and sexual citizenship.

2. **Unacknowledged “subtexts” of power: The cases of Her Majesty the Queen v. Mahde Mohammed and Glen Ridge**

Razack (1998) goes on to describe how these notions of vulnerability, rapability, and consent capacity play out in courts with two cases of sexual violence against young white women with ID. The first case she explores is *Her Majesty the Queen v. Mahde Mohammed* from 1992 that occurred in Toronto, Canada. The allegation was that 25 year-old Somali refugee Mahde Mohammed went into the women’s bathroom at a fast food restaurant where he worked and tried to rape a 20 year-old white coworker with an intellectual disability named Lisa H. In the end, the court did not find Mohammed guilty of the allegation because both parties seemed to have given “testimony in as clear and straightforward” in way that the judge could not “find where the truth lies” (Razack, 1998, p. 146).

The second case that Razack explores is the *Glen Ridge Case* of 1989 where a white teenage girl with an intellectual disability was raped by 4 male athletes from her school using a baseball bat, a broom handle, and a stick while up to thirteen others watched in the basement of an affluent New York suburb. In contrast to *Her Majesty the Queen v. Mahde Mohammed*, three of the young men involved were eventually found guilty of “conspiracy and aggravated assault” (Razack, 1998, p. 147).

Razack (1998) argues that in both cases there were “subtexts” of power based on assumptions about vulnerability, race, disability, class, and gender operating in the courtrooms that informed the decisions of everyone involved. In *Her Majesty the Queen v. Mahde*
Mohammed, notions of vulnerability (i.e. rapable, worthy of protection) racism, gender, and disability were operating in the prosecution’s framing of Lisa H.’s accusations as credible because of her status as a vulnerable, white woman with an intellectual disability. Undertones of racism and classism were also present in the suspicions of Mahde Mohammed as a black refugee working for low wages in a fast food restaurant.

For the teenage girl in the Glen Ridge Case, her past history of sexual activity, including having already been raped, being on birth control, and having approached members of the varsity team in the past and asking if they wanted to “fuck” (Razack, 1998, p. 148) undermined her status as a vulnerable and therefore rapable person worthy of protection from sexual violence. In this way, the sexual citizenship of Lisa H. as a fat women with an intellectual disability was called into question, undone, and remade repeatedly. The subtexts of power worked in the courtrooms of both cases to establish and then de-establish the young women’s status as a sexual citizen, simultaneously capable (i.e. a sexual citizen), and incapable (i.e. not a sexual citizen) of understanding and perceiving sexual violence. Razack provides an awareness of the complexities of hierarchies, complicity in oppression, the problematic nature of consent capacity, and the interlocking subtexts of power that operate in all negotiations of sexual citizenship for women with ID. Her analysis also illustrates how women with ID remain outside of sexual citizenship and largely invisible in feminist discourse.

3. **Conclusion: Razack**

As does Rubin’s (1989) section defining sexual citizenship, this section explores the second research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made

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27 While there are many parallels with fat oppression/fat studies and disability oppression/disability studies, they are beyond the scope of this thesis. For more information about fat oppression and resistance, see *The Fat Studies Reader* (2009) edited by Esther Rothblum and Sondra Solovay.
about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability (ID)? Razack (1998) argues that feminists are complicit in the oppression of other women when they extend pity, but not respect to their lived experiences. Not only can feminists be complicit in oppression in this way, but such pity also operates to create more vulnerability, rather than creating space for citizenship and sexual citizenship. Razack also points out that there are “subtexts” of power operating in spaces where citizenship is contested, such as courts of law. As in the cases of Her Majesty the Queen v. Mahde Mohammed and Glen Ridge, courtrooms are highly visible places where complicity in oppression, the effect of pity in creating space for vulnerability rather than citizenship, and the operations of “subtexts” of power along lines of disability, gender, race, ethnicity, and a/sexuality play out. While an extension of respect creates spaces for the citizenship and sexual citizenship of women with ID, to extend pity fosters primarily vulnerability. Therefore, as does this thesis, Razack’s analysis calls for feminists to extend respect, rather than pity, to women with ID and to create spaces for women with ID in feminist sexual citizenship discourse.

E. **Feminist Theorist on Sexual Citizenship and Intellectual Disability: Licia Carlson**

Carlson (2010) examines the ways in which intellectual disability has been either excluded by philosophical discourse, or else used in order to claim citizenship for others. Carlson herself is a self-proclaimed feminist and she declares that her analysis includes feminist perspectives. So, while Carlson’s analysis as discussed in this section focuses on historical aspects of first and second wave feminism and women with ID, it is included here because she is writing within third wave feminist frameworks.

Carlson points out that intellectual disability remains “overshadowed” in feminist discourse by physical disabilities and questions of disability in general (2010, p. 12). She calls for more philosophical attention within feminist and Foucauldian frameworks to be paid to
“persons with intellectual disabilities as knowing subjects in their own right” complete with the “possibility for resistance” that comes with such agency (Carlson, 2010, p. 15-16). This call for the agency of people with ID in offering resistance to oppression/sexual oppression and exclusion from citizenship/sexual citizenship is explored in the conclusion of this thesis.

While the voices of women with physical disabilities have become increasingly present in feminist discourse and scholarship, intellectual disability continues to be relatively marginalized. In addition, while there is now a strong inclusion of the role of gender throughout historical discourse, gender’s role in the history of intellectual disability continues to be overlooked (Carlson, 2010). Just as Carlson draws attention to the absence of intellectual disability in historical, philosophical and feminist discourse, this thesis analyzes the absence of women with ID in feminist citizenship and sexual citizenship discourse.

1. **Distancing from intellectual disability**

Feminists working for women’s rights during the late 1800s and early 1900s purposefully targeted women with ID for institutionalization and sterilization as part of a greater push to gain social and reproductive rights for their, “non-feebleminded counterparts” (Carlson, 2010, p. 61). The patriarchal stereotypes of white, middle class women as “passive” and “vulnerable” were directly mapped onto women with intellectual disabilities. For women with ID, this meant that their very identities and lives were conflated with “feminine” traits such as passivity, vulnerability, fragility, child-like innocence, etc., rendering them in need of the maximum amount of protection and supervision that could be offered were they to be locked away in residential institutions. As Carlson points out, “the great importance placed on mental ability and proper sexual conduct rendered [women with ID] invisible” as independent actors and sexual actors in their own lives (2010, p. 62). This invisibility continues in the present day in the
form of women with ID’s exclusion from sexual citizenship, as will be explored in the next chapter.

During the rise of institutionalization for people with disabilities, the label of “feebleminded” -what is today called “intellectual disability”- was applied not only to women with cognitive impairments, but to women who engaged in sexual activity outside of socially sanctioned parameters i.e. outside of marriage. Women who had children outside of wedlock were especially perceived as feebleminded (Carlson, 2010). Also, a designation of feebleminded for women who did not have ID was, “a convenient way of assembling a greater labor force,” (Carlson, 2010, p. 66) because it meant that such women would join the ranks of the institutionalized, unpaid workers whose labor ran the institutions.

2. **Eugenics: Early feminist exploitations of women with intellectual disabilities**

   Social reformers like Josephine Shaw Lowell “exploited the image of the feebleminded woman to advance their own political reforms” (Carlson, 2010, p. 76). Lowell argued that the principles of eugenics could be used to improve the genetic stock of populations. Therefore, the reproductive powers of women who had children out of wedlock -which was perceived as indicative of feebleminded status- and poor women needed to be controlled by removing such women from society (institutionalization) and preventing them from procreating (sterilization). Lowell argued for such measures on the basis of trying to make society a better place for non-feebleminded women (Carlson, 2010).

   While Lowell was less of a women’s rights reformer *per se* and more a person who believed in “scientific charity” (Carlson, 2010, p. 77), there were also early feminist reformers that sought to gain rights for women without ID at the expense of women with ID. Margaret Sanger was one such first wave feminist. Sanger was a strong proponent of reproductive rights
and a leader in the U.S. movement for women’s birth control, in addition to being the founder of the organization Planned Parenthood. Sanger’s focus on birth control for women was in part the product of her goal to prevent the birth of feebleminded people, believing that “unwanted children” would probably be physically and intellectually inferior, and that such children should therefore not be born (Carlson, 2010, p. 80). Sanger was concerned about people with ID roaming free in society, procreating and making more feebleminded people. Thus it was that the prevention of more people deemed feebleminded in general -and women with ID in particular- were framed as the reason that women should have access to birth control. In the meantime, as the bearers of potentially feebleminded children, women with ID continued to be targeted for institutionalization and sterilization. Related claims about ID, citizenship and sexuality by third wave feminists continue today, and will be explored in the next chapter.

3. **Philosophy: Distancing from intellectual disability**

In addition to describing the exploitation of women with ID at the hands of early feminist reformers, Carlson’s (2010) main objective is to delineate the ways in which philosophy has approached questions of intellectual disability. While philosophy is not the focus of this thesis, Carlson’s arguments surrounding philosophy will be briefly described here, in order to draw parallels between them and third wave feminist claims examined in the next chapter. In Part II of *The Faces of Intellectual Disability: Philosophical Reflections* (2010), Carlson seeks to illustrate how philosophy has approached intellectual disability through an analogy of four “faces”: “The Face of Authority”, “The Face of the Beast”, “The Face of Suffering”, and “The Face of the Mirror”. Each of these “faces” and their implications for the sexual citizenship of women with ID are examined below.
a. **Intellectual disability: “The Face of Authority”**

The “authority” approach to ID has its roots in 19th century institutionalization and still deeper roots in the philosophical notions of western science and epistemology that began to take shape during the Enlightenment. Carlson’s “Face of Authority” includes the approach to intellectual disability from the vantage of professionals in medicine, law, the human services, research, and advocacy (as with the parent’s movements). Such professionals in the lives of people with disabilities are often referred to as “gatekeepers” (Carlson, 2010, p. 120). The authority approach to intellectual disability has essentially been that professionals and experts make decisions for and about people with disabilities, without their consent or opinion. The assumption of authority that professionals and experts have in deciding what intellectual disability is and what people with ID can do continues today and greatly influences the citizenship and sexual citizenship status of people, particularly women, with ID.

b. **Intellectual disability: “The Face of the Beast”**

Carlson’s (2010) “Face of the Beast” is an unmasking of the philosophical assumptions that people with ID are like animals. In this section, Carlson explores the philosophical tradition of positioning people with ID as marginalized “non-persons”. While the marginalized of women and the exploitation of animals have been written about quite extensively (Adams & Donovan, 1995) people with ID remain relatively absent in such discourse. Additionally, where people with ID are mentioned in philosophical literature that equates their status with that of animals, there has been little refutation of such claims (Carlson, 2010). Unless animals are given citizenship and sexual citizenship status, people with ID will continue to be marginalized by discourse that equates them with animals.
c. **Intellectual disability: “The Face of Suffering”**

The “Face of Suffering” is the philosophical face ascribing disabilities as conditions to be pitied. Here, Carlson explains the assumption made by non-disabled people that people with impairments “necessarily suffer,” as a result of impairment (2010, p. 165). Carlson challenges this assumption by pointing out how people with impairments and their family members often claim that if there is any pain involved in their impairments, the pain resulting from “social exclusion” and “marginalization” that comes from political, institutional and physical inaccessibility is much greater (2010, p. 165). The assumption that people with disabilities experience lives of pain and suffering is all the more misplaced when it comes to the impairment aspects of intellectual disability, which generally do not involve physical pain and suffering outside of what is inflicted by others. Carlson’s argument that it is the social, rather than the material, suffering which makes life the hardest, is further evidence in support of the social model of disability that dominates Disability Studies. The notion that people with ID primarily suffer due to their impairments, rather than as a result of negative social attitudes, exclusion and inaccessibility, contributes to the underlying policy assumptions that people with ID are in need of extensive professional care (see Carlson’s “the Face of Authority” as described above), which can serve to further undermine their status as citizens and sexual citizens.

d. **Intellectual disability: “The Face of the Mirror”**

Finally, Carlson’s (2010) philosophical face of intellectual disability as “the Mirror”, is the tendency for people to imagine themselves as having the disabilities that they see in others. Carlson points out how such an exercise is problematic because “this mirror can become akin to a fun house mirror in that when I see the intellectually disabled individual, I see myself in a distorted form [people with ID become] a manifestation of my own fears as I imagine
myself to be in this condition” (2010, p. 190-191). It is quite a different experience to have had an intellectual disability since before the age of 18 or even since birth, than to imagine oneself as suddenly having an intellectual disability -or any disability- with no previous experience. Thus, the philosophical “Face of the Mirror”, in addition to those of “Authority”, “the Beast”, and “Suffering” all contribute to the exclusion of people with ID from critical philosophical and feminist discourse, thereby undermining the status of people with ID as citizens and sexual citizens. In turn, this thesis argues that a similar exclusion has been occurring in third wave feminist textual discourse of sexual citizenship in regards to people with ID.

4. **Conclusion: Carlson**

As do the works of third wave feminist theorists Gayle Rubin (1989) and Sherene Razack (1998) examined earlier in this chapter, this section explores the second research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability (ID)? Carlson claims that arguments about human status - i.e. who counts as a citizen and who does not- in philosophical and feminist discourse generally serve to marginalize people with ID as citizens and sexual citizens and to negate the existence of intellectual disability as part and parcel of the human condition. In other words, philosophers and feminists have frequently and unjustly made claims about what it means to be human that pivot around the exclusion of people with ID.

If human life is argued to be more valuable in the absence of suffering, then people with ID who are perceived as suffering because of their impairments will not be considered as having lives worth living (i.e. Carlson’s “the Face of Suffering”). In the feminist movement, this has meant that issues of reproductive justice have been framed in terms of the prevention of more “feebleminded” people with intellectual disabilities. The philosophical and feminist distancing
from intellectual disability is also the case for people with disabilities in general: where people
with disabilities are perceived as doomed to a life of suffering, of an existence more like animals,
a life that people without disabilities imagine that they would not want for themselves, then
people with disabilities will continue to face exclusion and invisibility when it comes to status as
citizens and sexual citizens.

F. **Feminist Theorist on Sexual Citizenship and Intellectual Disability: Allison Carey**

Carey (2009) seeks to document and examine the exclusion of people with intellectual
disabilities from various aspects of citizenship throughout the history of the United States. As
this thesis intends to do, Carey draws attention to the fact that “While the storybook ideal citizen
exudes intelligence, independence and the ability to contribute to the national well-being through
hard work, political participation, and bravery, people with ID tend to be characterized by their
deficiencies” (2009, p. 2). Carey also points out that while challenging the constructed aspects of
race and gender has been on the agenda of Critical Race and Women’s Studies agendas since the
social movements of the 1960s, this has not been the case for disability in general, or for
intellectual disability in particular.

1. **Distancing from intellectual disability**

Carey (2009) documents the lack of representation of people with intellectual
disabilities by exploring the historical events around institutionalization, service delivery,
legislation (e.g. the Developmental Disabilities [DD] Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act
[ADA], Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, etc.), court cases, and various social
movements (e.g. Independent Living Movement, Disability Rights Movement [DRM]; Parent’s
Movement). Carey explores the court case *Buck v. Bell* early on in her introduction. *Buck v. Bell*
was a 1927 court case of a young women named Carrie Buck. Born to an unmarried mother in an
institution for “feebleminded” women, Buck later became a resident herself at the age of 17, when she became pregnant. Buck’s baby was also declared “feebleminded” at the age of nine months and Buck was sterilized after the birth.

Carey’s (2009) exploration Buck v. Bell is a way of framing the kinds of rights violations that people with ID have experienced when it comes to bodily integrity, such as the right to not be forcibly sterilized or institutionalized against one’s will, without active consent. As Carey points out “the issue was not the right to procreate per se but, rather, the means available to the state to prohibit procreation” (2009, p. 4). In such an example, Carey is showing that what is at stake in the violation of sexual citizenship rights is not only the sexual rights of people with ID -particularly women with ID- but the sexual rights of all individuals where there is state involvement.

Carey points out that intellectual disability has historically been associated with various populations as grounds for denying their citizenship rights, including people of color, immigrants, single mothers, and poor people (2009). Due to this association, these various populations have historically been subjected to the same kinds of violations of citizenship that people with ID experience, including “institutionalization, sterilization, the prohibition of marriage, segregated education, and registration, [in order] to identify and control [them]” (Carey, 2009, p. 15). In this way, “normal” people became conflated with “rational and autonomous”, white citizens without disabilities, while “abnormal” people became conflated with “irrational and dependent citizens”, e.g. people with ID, especially women with ID, people of color and poor people (Carey, 2009, p. 16). This conflation is remarkably similar to the feminist claims regarding citizenship (see Chapter I of this thesis) that (white) men as a category have been equated with intellect, rationality, autonomy, independence, and the public sphere
where they enjoy the privileges of citizenship; whereas women and people of color have been equated with emotions, irrationality, dependence, and the private sphere and considered beyond the realm of citizenship. In either case, we see that emotions, non-intellectualism, irrationality, and dependence have been assigned to certain populations, and have been used as grounds for denying the citizenship and sexual citizenship of diverse groups of people.

2. **People with intellectual disabilities as “eternal children”**

Carey (2009) explores how the rights and interests of certain citizens can be at odds with other groups, such that the rights and interests of one group can be claimed and upheld at the expense of other groups. This was the case, argues Carey, with the parents of people with disabilities during the Parent’s Movement of the 1950s. Framing their case for the deinstitutionalization and community care of their young and adult children with developmental disabilities, parents in the movement framed their offspring as “eternal children” in need of support from the parent state. This precedent of people with ID as children in adult bodies is especially problematic when it comes to sexual citizenship, as Western cultures tend to deny the sexuality of children as well (Evans, 1993). Where children are denied sexual identities, then the sexual identities of adults with ID who are equated with children will also be invisible. While the assertion of people with ID as “eternal children” in need of state care assisted parents in successfully arguing for deinstitutionalization and community based services, it set a precedent for people with ID to be regarded as children even in adulthood, essentially negating their potential status as sexual citizens.

Carey finally argues in this chapter on the Parent’s Movement that the narratives about people with ID were variously about eugenics, “eternal” childhood and finally human rights; yet all of these narratives “tended to support a paternalistic system in which social services were
more important than individual rights” (2009, p. 131). Such paternalistic systems are problematic when it comes to citizenship and sexual citizenship and have therefore been actively resisted by people with ID themselves, via the Self-Advocacy Movement, which is further explored in the next section.

3. **People with intellectual disabilities as self-advocates**

Self-advocates are people with intellectual disabilities who work towards self-empowerment and speaking for themselves (Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, 2010). The first conference for self-advocates in the United States was in 1990 in Colorado, and the first national self-advocacy group -Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)- was created a year later. Since then, SABE and other self advocate groups called People First have begun to form all over the country. Self-advocacy groups demanded a voice in their own lives, with their guardians, service providers, communities, policy makers, and family members (Carey, 2009).

Carey examines the work of self-advocates as active agents of resistance when it comes to restrictions of their citizenship and sexual citizenship. For example, several developmental disability (DD) organizations attempted to join together in order to form the Alliance for Full Participation in 2003, with SABE among them. However, SABE withdrew from the alliance “because they felt that professionals were excluding them by using jargon, moving discussions along too quickly, and creating goals and objectives without them” (Carey, 2009, p. 187). It was embarrassing for professional DD providers to not have the endorsement of SABE self-advocates, and so the alliance wrote a letter of apology to SABE, asking SABE to rejoin in their efforts (Carey, 2009).

That the refusal of participation by a group of self-advocates could not only cause such extreme embarrassment but also be considered politically unwise is a testament to the power and
potential of the self-advocacy for people with ID. Self-advocates have also used and developed this power in meeting their demands for “people first” language, including getting rid of the “r” (“retardation”) word (Carey, 2009, p. 189), deinstitutionalization, supported employment, accommodations in the judicial system, integrated education opportunities, and no involuntary sterilization, discriminatory prenatal screening, death penalty (Carey, 2009) or euthanasia (Not Dead Yet, 2010) of people with ID. Self-advocacy is an effective and empowering means of people with ID to claim status as both citizens and sexual citizens.

4. **Conclusion: Carey**

As do the other three theorists examined in this chapter (Carlson, 2010; Razack, 1998; Rubin, 1989) this section explores the second research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability (ID)? Carey (2009) concludes that the rights of citizens, including people with ID, are often interwoven with and contested by the citizenship claims of others. Where this is the case, people with ID themselves are in the best position to defend their citizenship and sexual citizenship as self-advocates, with the (inter)dependent support of their families, guardians, staff, service providers, communities, friends, and other self advocates.

Like the other feminist citizenship theorists in this chapter, Carey argues that traditional notions of citizenship create “false dichotomies by which to judge the worthiness of citizens for the exercise of rights, positioning people as independent or dependent, competent or incompetent, equal or different from other citizens” (2009, p. 216). In order to create space for the sexual citizenship of people with disabilities in general and women with ID in particular, these dichotomies must be deconstructed alongside the hegemonic representations of “normal”
citizens. Not only must such false dichotomies be deconstructed, but a focus on interdependence, rather than independence, is a critical move in creating space for the citizenship and sexual citizenship of women with ID. As Carey writes: “Like feminist scholars, disability scholars have moved toward a rejection of autonomy in favor of notions of interdependence … Exposing the interconnectedness of all people reveals the myth of independence and positions dependence as the ‘normal’ state of being” (2009, p. 18).

Meeting the call by feminist theorists like Carey to challenge dichotomies by focusing on (inter)dependence and challenging constructions of an ideal “normalcy” could create space for the citizenship and sexual citizenship of women with ID in various ways. For example, challenging the independent/dependent binary with an emphasis instead on (inter)dependence elucidates how independence is not an objectively superior quality that everyone can or should aspire to all the time. In fact, it is (inter)dependence that is the “normal” quality of life, and to acknowledge that opens up possibilities for recognizing that all people are reliant upon others to varying degrees which fluctuate throughout the lifespan. Such a shift could serve to create space for the acknowledgement that women with ID have contributions to make as citizens and sexual citizens, even as they may be relatively dependent upon the support of others to make their contributions.

Rather than being perceived as “dependent” persons who rely on other “independent” individuals, draining their energy and resources, a focus on interdependence could prime women without disabilities and feminists to recognize the ways that they benefit from relationships with women with ID as well. Sexuality educator Dave Hingsburger shares numerous stories about how working with people with ID has forced him to examine his own prejudices, deal with his

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28 For some ideas about how to meet such a challenge, refer to McRuer (2006) and Sandahl’s (2003) concept of “cripping”.

own insecurities and challenge hegemonic ableism, especially intellectualism and classism (Hingsburger, 1992, 1995; Hingsburger & Tough, 2002). That people without disabilities can learn from people with disabilities should not be interpreted to mean that people with disabilities are only as valuable as the lessons they can teach temporarily able-bodied people. Rather, the focus on interdependence creates space for the acknowledgement of the contributions that people with disabilities, and particularly women with intellectual disabilities, can make as citizens and sexual citizens.

In addition to the call for acknowledging interdependence and the deconstruction of binaries, Carey (2009) calls for self-advocacy as an instrument for claiming various citizenship rights for people with ID. However, Carey acknowledges that this call for self-advocacy in staking citizenship claims is problematic in that it presupposes, for example, a level of abilities in communication. Indeed, the Self-Advocacy Movement may not “represent the demographic distribution, political interests, and diverse needs of people with developmental disabilities” (Carey, 2009, p. 222). Regardless of such limitations, Carey still argues that “the self advocacy movement represents a vital step forward in achieving the equal participation of people with intellectual disabilities in politics and their broader communities” (2009, p. 223). This thesis also argues that the supporting self-advocacy and sexual self-advocacy is imperative in creating spaces for women with ID as citizens and sexual citizens. Like self-advocacy, sexual self-advocacy is when people with ID speak up for themselves and others when it comes to issues of sexuality. For women with ID operating as people excluded from sexual citizenship in a “rape
culture"\textsuperscript{29}, sexual self-advocacy becomes all the more critical; this will be covered in more detail in the next chapter as well as in the conclusion of this thesis.

Not only does Carey call for the fostering and support of more self-advocacy by people with ID, but she calls on “American communities” to “make a commitment to foster the inclusion of all of their members and social justice” (2009, p. 225). The call for self-advocacy and active community inclusion are not only principles for self-advocates and those who support people with ID, but they are concepts that feminist theorists and activists could incorporate into their work as well. For example, the privileging of interdependence, and even specific self-advocacy techniques and philosophies such as person-centered planning and self-determination respectively (Pacer Center, 2010), could provide creative frameworks for participants in the feminist movement in advancing their aim of increased citizenship and sexual citizenship for women in general.

G. \textbf{Conclusion: Feminist Approaches to Sexual Citizenship}

This chapter has explored the second research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability (ID)? Specifically, to investigate this research question, this chapter has examined the works of feminist citizenship theorists Jeffrey Weeks (1998), Brenda Cossman (2007), Gayle Rubin (1989), Sherene Razack (1998), Licia Carlson (2010), and Allison Carey (2009) as they pertain to sexual citizenship and intellectual disability. The use of specific terminology was explored, including “sexuality”, “sex” (Weeks, 1998), “sexual citizenship” (Cossman, 2007; Weeks, 1998), and “sexual citizen” (Rubin, 1989; Weeks, 1998).

\textsuperscript{29} The feminist notion of “rape culture” and its implications for the sexual citizenship of women with ID is the subject of the next chapter.
“Sexuality” has been defined here as including identity, reproduction, relationships, erotic activities, fantasies, intimacy, love, and pleasure (Weeks, 2000). In contrast, the use of the word “sex” refers to acts and not necessarily to identity. This thesis has employed the expanded feminist definition of the word “sex”, which goes beyond heterosexual penile-vaginal intercourse to include myriad kinds of touch and intimacy between many different kinds of bodies. Expanding the definition of “sex” beyond intercourse is imperative for people with disabilities and other sexual minorities in claiming sexual citizenship. For example, if sex is defined only as intercourse, than the sex and sexual relationships of women with ID who are sexually attracted to other women will not be considered as qualifying for sexual citizenship. This would mean that the women with ID who are sexually attracted to other women will probably not be taught about safer sex practices and healthy sexual relationships because the kind of sex/sexual relationships that they have are not deemed legitimate. This is a public health issue because not learning about safer sex practices and healthy sexual relationships puts people with and without ID at risk for harmful sexually transmitted diseases as well as sexual abuse and violence.

This chapter has defined “sexual citizenship” as the legal, social and cultural recognition, belonging, and privileging of one’s sexual identity (i.e. “sexuality”) and sexual expression (i.e. “sex”) such that they are at least tolerated, hopefully accommodated, and maybe even celebrated (Cossman, 2007). A sexual citizen is a person in a society that is unashamed -and even proud- of their sexuality, and whom does not face profound social ostracism, litigation, professional, and familial interference when it comes to their sexual identity and practices. In other words, a sexual citizen is a person who can take their sexuality for granted, while a non-sexual citizen cannot. The privileging of white, “familial, marital, heterosexual” men without disabilities (Cossman, 2007, p. 127) people as citizens and sexual citizens is a long standing tradition in Western
societies (Weeks, 1998), as is the exclusion of women (Cossman, 2007), people of color (hooks, 1981, 1984), people with physical (Garland-Thomson, 1997), and people with intellectual disabilities (Carey, 2009; Carlson, 2010). The analysis of feminist theorists examined in this chapter makes it clear that women with ID -like women with disabilities in general- are not included sexual citizens and therefore do not benefit from the privileges and protections that sexual citizenship offers.

Rubin (1989) describes how individuals who are heterosexual, married, monogamous, have sex for procreation, engage only in private sex without sex workers and sex paraphernalia, and have sex only with people their own age are conferred the status of sexual citizens. This conference of sexual citizen status in turn means a certain level of social status, respect, access to resources, and other various material and institutional benefits. She concludes that “If sex is taken too seriously, sexual persecution is not taken seriously enough,” that we must “try to prevent more barbarism and to encourage erotic creativity,” and that “it is time to recognize the political dimensions of erotic life” (Rubin, 1989, p. 310).

Through her arguments and these conclusions, Rubin (1989) conveys that sexual citizenship status should be conferred not only upon the white, able bodied, middle class, non-kinky, male body who has monogamous sex only in private with the body of a single spouse his own age, but to all “Others” as well. There is room in Rubin’s expansion of sexual citizenship for women with ID, and yet women with ID remain invisible. The invisibility of women with ID in Rubin’s analysis is indicative of the larger exclusion of women with ID as sexual citizens in feminist citizenship/sexual citizenship theory. The first step to creating space for the sexual citizenship of women with ID within feminist discourse is the naming and analyzing their absence, as this thesis seeks to do.
Razack’s (1998) arguments of the feminist complicity in the oppression of other women via pity, and her call to acknowledge subtexts of power could also contribute to the creation of space for women with ID as sexual citizens. First, feminists must become universally aware of women with ID as an oppressed category of women whom are also capable of resistance. Also, feminists must become aware of how pity -feminist or otherwise- compounds that oppression and stymies resistance. Ideally, feminist theorists would be as aware of issues surrounding women and disability in general, and women with ID in particular, as they are of race, class, and a/sexuality intersectionality with gender. With this awareness, disability in general and intellectual disability in particular could begin to be incorporated as pillars of feminist theories around intersectionality and oppression, alongside race, ethnicity, a/sexuality, class, gender, etc. With feminist theory taking disability and intellectual disability into account, in tandem with the work of Disability Studies, women with ID could themselves become a part of creating spaces for their sexual citizenship via self-advocacy and sexual self-advocacy.

Licia Carlson claims, as does this thesis, that intellectual disability remains “overshadowed” (2010, p. 12) in philosophical and feminist discourse by inquiries into the oppression and experience of people with physical disabilities. Carlson calls for an emphasis not on vulnerability but on people with ID as “knowing subjects in their own right” (2010, p. 15-16). Carlson argues that people with ID are capable of offering resistance to stereotypical representations, pity and the powers of various authorities that seek to intervene with and manage their lives. She also argues against conflating people with intellectual disabilities with traits of passivity, innocence, fragility, exploitability and suffering.

30 Women with ID as their own “sexual self-advocates” is explored in the concluding chapter of this thesis.
As does Carlson, this thesis argues that feminist discourse must take women with ID into account. Also, if spaces for the citizenship and sexual citizenship of women with ID are to be created, issues of intellectual disability cannot remain in the background relative to physical disability. Additionally, perceptions of women with ID must be shifted such that their status as active agents, frequently capable of resistance, is acknowledged and supported via self-advocacy and sexual self-advocacy. Also, ID cannot any longer be conflated with stereotypical representations of pity and vulnerability, such that professionals, family members, philosophers, feminists etc. deem it acceptable to make everyday and sexual decisions for women with ID largely without their participation.

The “story book” characteristics of the America dream, as Carey (2009) argues, including intelligence, independence, and ability to contribute have all been constructed in such a way as to exclude people with ID. While the Civil Rights and Feminist Movements have challenged constructions about race and gender that exclude people of color and women from citizenship and sexual citizenship, such challenges were not extended to include women with ID. Forced institutionalization and sterilization of women with ID, very often disproportionately women of color, have not specifically been challenged by the Feminist Movement. In fact, when it comes to sexual citizenship, some members of the Feminist Movement have exploited representations of women with ID as a means of staking claim to the sexual rights for non-intellectually disabled women (Carey, 2009).

Feminists have generally distanced themselves from association with intellectual disability as a political way of getting accessing citizenship and sexual citizenship for women without ID. Just as Carey (2009) and Carlson (2010) seek to draw attention to this distancing and the invisibility of people with ID in philosophical and feminist discourse, the next chapter of this
thesis will attempt to show how women with ID remain invisible in third wave feminist textual discourse around sexual citizenship in a “rape culture”.
IV. SEXUAL CITIZENSHIP IN A “RAPE CULTURE”

A. **Introduction**

Chapters I and II examined feminist notions of citizenship and sexual citizenship and sought to situate women with intellectual disabilities within such discourses. This chapter will continue to examine notions of sexual citizenship in third wave feminist textual discourse by examining the invisibility of women with ID in feminist discourse of “rape culture”, as well as possibilities for situating women with ID as sexual citizens within such discourses. Specifically, this chapter will explore the third research question of this thesis: What are some of the implications of third wave feminist textual discourse around sexual citizenship for women with ID?

“Rape culture” is a feminist concept that describes patriarchal systems permeated by sexual violence against women. In a rape culture, the rape and sexual abuse of women is common. A rape culture is a culture of misogyny, where unwanted sexualization and objectification of women and girls is so ubiquitous as to often go unnoticed and unchallenged (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993; Friedman & Valenti, 2008). “Rape culture” is crucial to third wave feminist notions of sexual citizenship because feminist arguments for the sexual citizenship of women are made within the frameworks of the rape culture at large. Many of the third wave feminist texts examined in this thesis frame notions of sexual citizenship in terms of rape culture. In fact, while examining “rape culture” was not an original objective of this thesis, it so consistently emerged as a third wave feminist theme of sexual citizenship, that it came to be included here as the focal point of an entire chapter.

This chapter will explore various aspects of sexual citizenship in feminist discourse in terms of rape culture as described in various third wave feminist texts. This chapter will examine
possible implications of third wave feminist textual discourse regarding rape culture for the sexual citizenship of women with ID. The aspects of feminist sexual citizenship discourse in terms of rape culture that will be explored include: the rape culture manifestation of sexual violence; the rape culture notion of sex as a commodity; sex negativity that fosters and perpetuates rape culture; the problematizing of sexual victimization in a rape culture; and issues surrounding “sexual consent capacity”.

B. Sexual Violence: Ridicule, Abuse, and Rape

There are many accounts of sexual violence against women in the third wave feminist texts explored for this thesis. Sexual violence is the overarching category that includes penetrative rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, unwanted sexual objectification, and ridicule based on sexual characteristics or perceived sexual characteristics (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; World Health Organization, 2002). Sexual violence involves demeaning verbal and/or physical overtures towards another person based on their gender or perceived gender that are unwelcome, distressing, degrading, frightening and often result in a struggle for positive self-esteem on the part of the person experiencing the sexual violence (Rape Abuse & Incest National Network, 2009).

1. Sexual ridicule

Sexual ridicule is classified here as part of sexual violence because it meets the qualifications of sexual violence as described above, namely sexual ridicule is most often unwelcome, distressing, degrading, frightening, and results in a loss of positive self regard for the person experiencing it. Several poignant examples of sexual ridicule from third wave feminist texts will be explored here in order to illustrate sexual ridicule at work in rape culture, and what the implications of this might be for women with ID.
In *How Do You Fuck a Fat Women* by Kate Harding (Friedman & Valenti, 2008), Harding shares some of the comments left on her blog and the blogs of her friends regarding their experiences as fat women who have been sexually assaulted. “Fat” is used here because that is the adjective that the author herself uses; it is not meant to be derogatory in any way. In fact, it seems that “fat” feminists like Harding are using the word as a way of reclaiming negative connotations usually attached to “fat” in U.S. culture. This is similar to the way that disability activists have reclaimed disability with words like “crip”.

Harding writes about a comment that was left in response to an account of the sexual assault of her friend that nearly resulted in the friend’s death: “You should consider yourself lucky that some man finds a hideous troll like yourself rape-able” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 67). Harding goes on to explain that the rape of fat women is portrayed as “a compliment” by men reading her blog, based on the assumption that all sexual attention from men must be desirable for women that are outside of the beauty ideals of thinness. This is similar to the incredulity that women with ID may face when reporting having experienced sexual violence: family, service providers, and law enforcers may not believe that sexual violence could have taken place because they may doubt that a woman with ID could be sexually appealing enough for a man to want to have sex with her, let alone rape her.

In addition to this rape culture notion of rape as a compliment if you are a women outside of normative beauty ideals -or a woman with ID- Harding writes that there is a sense that the man who rapes a fat women is “doing her an enormous favor” (Freidman & Valenti, 2008, p. 68). As one commenter responded to Harding’s blog about a woman’s account of being sexually assaulted: “I’m against rape. Unless it’s obese women. How else are they going to get sweet, sweet cock?” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 69). The experience of sexual abuse, ridicule, and
rape being perceived as “compliments” or “favors” shown to fat women who are perceived as
unworthy of genuine sexual interest and affection are also experienced by women with ID
(Hingsburger, 1995).

Harding does not argue that fat people are or should be perceived by everyone as sexually
appealing, but she makes the point that in rape culture, it is “women’s first -if not only- job to be
attractive to men...your job as a woman is to be attractive not only to the men who will love you
and treat you well, but to all heterosexual men” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 68-69). As
Harding sees it, part of rape culture is the expectation that women make themselves as attractive
as possible to as many heterosexual men as possible, or else face the kind of sexual ridicule that
she has experienced in the blogosphere.

As people excluded from sexual citizenship, women with ID may experience sexual
ridicule similar to the sexual ridicule that Harding experienced in her blog when writing about
sexual assault as a fat woman. There is also a risk that when women with ID report sexual
violence including sexual ridicule, they may be met with incredulity that anyone would find
them attractive enough to sexually assault them. Due to being perceived as non-sexual citizens,
women with ID may be met with a similar sentiment that fat women are more likely to
experience when reporting sexual assault: “rape is a compliment...No one but a rapist would
ever, ever want you” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 67).

2. **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is being used here to mean one time or ongoing, unwanted sexual
touch or sexualized experience that may result in, for example, a sense of degradation, shame,
fear, anger, loss of self esteem, being disconnected from one’s own body, and in some cases
mental illness, for the one experiencing it. As with sexual ridicule, sexual abuse is a form of
sexual violence that has a strong presence in the third wave feminist literature examined for this thesis. Sexual abuse is also experienced at high rates by people with disabilities in general, and women with intellectual disabilities in particular (Anderson, 2000; Bell & Cameron, 2003; Hingsburger, 1995; McCarthy, 1999). While some of the third wave feminist writing examined for this thesis references women with disabilities, such mentions tended to focus on physical disabilities, while intellectual disability was not mentioned at all. Given the high rates of sexual abuse experienced by women with ID, this is an especially notable and meaningful exclusion.

In an anthology of third wave feminist essays by Findlen (1995), contributor Cheryl Green writes about the sexual abuse she experienced growing up as an African-American women with physical disabilities in her essay, One Resilient Baby. This is the only third wave feminist account examined for this thesis where the writer makes her status as a person with a physical disability known. Green recounts how she experienced physical abuse as a child because of her disability from family members and peers at school. She also writes about how the physical abuse of her childhood turned into sexual abuse by the time she entered high school. Similar to Harding’s experience, Green was not believed when she reported the sexual abuse to her aunt, who asked with incredulity, “what would a boy want with what you got?” (Findlen, 1995, p. 140).

The targeting of Green by young African American boys and men in her own community was just as much due to her disability as the fact that she is a woman (Findlen, 1995). In a rape culture, such targeting is common place, and indeed, was an expected part of Green’s life until she became a Christian and a feminist, reframed her experiences in new socio-political ways via a gender sensitive feminist consciousness. With her new frames of reference, Green rejected the rape culture expectation that sexual violence was inevitable because she was a woman and a
woman with a disability, and that she was helpless against such sexual violence. While Green does not claim to have an intellectual disability, she sees a place in the feminist movement for disability as a broader category:

The movement has come far in acknowledging the diversity of women with respect to ethnicity, sexual preference and economic status. But where the movement still fails miserably is in disability. Women with disabilities are grossly concentrated on the margins...Disability is a feminist issue. It touches on the lives of millions of women—whether because of one’s own disability or that of a loved one (Findlen, 1995, p. 142-143).

Green goes on to list a variety of disabilities that could be included in the feminist movement; tellingly, intellectual disability is not on the list.

3. **Rape**

Rape is being defined here as any unwanted insertion of a body part or other object into the body of another person. Although some feminists have argued that “rape” has traditionally been considered penile-vaginal rape of a women by a stranger, part of the feminist agenda has been to expose the prevalence of rape, to debunk the myths surrounding sexual violence, and to redefine rape itself on women’s own terms. For example, feminists have worked to deconstruct the myth that most rape is perpetuated by strange men in dark allies against young, thin, virginal, white, beautiful women. In fact, most perpetrators of sexual violence are people that women know, and women who survive sexual violence are of all ages, shapes, a/sexualities, races, classes, and ethnicities. Feminists have sought to expand the definitions of “rape” in order to gain legal recognition of women’s experiences in court and to validate the sense of violation that women feel upon being sexual assaulted. Baumgardner and Richards
quote feminist Catherine MacKinnon as saying that “Politically, I call it rape whenever a woman has sex and feels violated by it” (p. 248). Similarly, feminist Lee Jacobs Riggs writes “By ‘rape,’ I mean a sexual encounter without consent. Consent is saying yes” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 109).

Despite the feminist attempts at expanding definitions of rape, penetration of a vagina or anus with a penis still tends to hold sway as the definition of rape. When penile-vaginal/penile-anal penetration is regarded as the most “real” kind of rape, there is little room for validation of people’s experiences with other kinds of sexual violence. Orieda Horn Anderson, a sexuality educator from Illinois, exemplifies the practical implications of this situation in a story from her book, Doing What Comes Naturally?: Dispelling Myths and Fallacies About Sexuality and People with Developmental Disabilities (2000). A young woman with developmental disabilities reported to her agency staff that she had been raped by a man who was a fellow service user at the same agency. The police were already present when Anderson arrived to investigate. The main concern of the police was to find out from the young woman if the man had “penetrated” the woman (Anderson, 2000, p. 40).

When Anderson asked the man suspected of rape, "What did you do with your penis?", he was confused and said, "Nothing! Nothing!" (2000, p. 40). With no evidence of penile penetration, the police were less concerned, and promptly removed the handcuffs from the man’s wrists, saying that there was now no reason to charge the man with rape. The policemen were satisfied that no harmful sexual violence had taken place, but Anderson points out that the woman’s “definition of rape could be as minimal as the nonconsensual touching of her body” (Anderson, 2000, p. 41).
The privileging of penile-vaginal penetration as the most heinous form of rape means that it is investigated the most and punished the harshest (O’Connell Davidson & Layder, 1994). Conversely, other forms of sexual violence are not recognized as serious, investigated as thoroughly or punished as severely. This situation undermines the justice that is available to people who experience various forms of sexual violence, when those experiences are not socially or legally recognized. In other words, the privileging of penetration as the worst kind of rape does not recognize the suffering that people experience as a result of sexual violence other than penile-vaginal/penile-anus penetration by a stranger. Therefore, third wave feminists have tried to expand the definitions of rape to any nonconsensual sexual touch (Friedman & Valenti, 2008) in order to acknowledge and legitimize the trauma of survivors of sexual violence, even when that sexual violence was not the standard penetration that is considered the worse kind of rape in a patriarchal rape culture.

4. **Conclusion: Sexual violence, ridicule, abuse, and rape**

It is not the purpose of this section to come down on one side or the other in defining what counts and what does not count as sexual ridicule, sexual abuse and rape, and how they differ from one another. The point is that third wave feminists seek recognition of the dangers of all forms of sexual violence for all kinds of women, even when it is not the penile penetration that is so often considered the worst -if not only- kind of “real” sexual violence. The third wave feminist writers examined for this thesis consider many forms of sexual violence threatening to the physical and psychological well being of women. By expanding the definition of rape and drawing attention to the underpinnings of rape culture, these writers create space for the recognition of all kinds of sexual violence experienced by all kinds of sexual citizens, including women with ID. In other words, the exposure of rape culture and the feminist
redefining of rape culture create possibilities for greater recognition of the sexual violence committed against women with ID, as well as the possibility for their inclusion as sexual citizens.

While there is a room in third wave feminist textual discourse for the stories of the sexual violence that women with ID experience, these stories are absent. Even though writers with physical disabilities like Cheryl Green in her essay discussed above (Findlen, 1995) call for the inclusion of women with disabilities in the feminist movement, it is not clear that women with ID are also intended. This invisibility of women with ID will be continually examined in the rest of this chapter in the four following sections about rape culture: sex as commodity; sex negativity; the problematizing of sexual victimization; and issues around consent.

C. **Sex as Commodity**

The commodity model of sex frames sex as something in limited supply that women have and men must get from them. In the essay *Toward a Performance Model of Sex*, Thomas Macaulay Millar describes the commodity model of sex this way: “We live in a culture where sex is not so much an act as a thing: a substance that can be given, bought, sold, or stolen, that has a value and a supply-and-demand curve...This model pervades casual conversation about sex: Women ‘give it up,’ men, ‘get some’” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 30).

1. **Abstinence sexuality education**

MacCaulay argues that the federally sponsored abstinence only approach to sexual education is based upon the commodity model of sex (Friedman & Valenti, 2008). Abstinence only programs approach sex as something that each person has a limited amount of, especially women. In the commodity model of sex used by abstinence only programs, the limited sex that one has must be guarded with abstinence until one is monogamously married. While this
limited supply of sex in the commodity model supposedly applies to all people, there is a particular emphasis on the virginity of women as being in short supply, and therefore, all the more crucial to protect. An example of an abstinence only advertisement given here by MacCauley is a picture of a diamond wrapped and padlocked with the words, “Guard Your Diamond, Save Sex for Marriage for a Brighter Future!” The diamond here is presumably a metaphor for virginity, or as MacCauley claims, for the hymen itself.

An emphasis on sex as a limited commodity—and women’s virginity as a particularly limited commodity—puts an extraordinary onus on women to refrain from expression of their sexuality. In order to motivate young women to do this, “This model is often taught with an eye toward making the metaphor [of women’s sex as a limited commodity] as disgusting as possible” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 31). The example MacCauley gives is of one abstinence only program that sticks and tears off a piece of tape from several participant’s arms which is then thrown in the trash. The tape here represents the individual who has sex with more than one person, has disgusting things “stick” to them like STDs and shame, and is then “thrown away” after sexual encounters. Another example given is an unwrapped peppermint patty that is passed around and fondled by everyone in the class. My own experience with a version of abstinence only education included the analogy that a non-abstinent person is like a bag of cookies that is passed around to everyone in the class. Each person takes some cookies out of the bag with their unwashed fingers, throw some back in after taking them out, or even chew some of the cookies and then spit them back into the bag. As MacCauley points out, this kind of curriculum truly has “an eye toward making the metaphor as disgusting as possible” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 31).
2. **“Sluts”: Sex cache squanderers**

MacCauley also connects the commodity model of sex to the concept of “sluts” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008). In a rape culture where the commodity model of sex operates, women who “give up” their sex commodity too easily are devalued through ridicule and shaming, often via derogative name calling (i.e. “slut”). A women who has squandered her sex commodity in a rape culture has arguably squandered her value as a person, as she has spent her sex cache with which she was supposed to “buy something really ‘important’: the spouse, provider, protector” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 30). In other words, a woman in a rape culture who squanders her sex cache has lost status as a sexual citizen.

MacCauley argues that the notion of sex as a limited commodity, which women can trade for other things of value, opens up a window for a rapists, “license to operate” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 30). The reasoning is this: if “slutty” women have already given away what makes them valuable, it is less of a crime to subject them to sexual violence. Even if a woman’s perceived sluttiness due to a lack of enough sex cache does not lead to outright, violent rape, she may suffer from being socially devalued. The following online post from MacCauley’s essay illustrates the kind of social devaluation women may experience as a result of the commodity model of sex:

Recently, as soon as I hook up with a girl, I start to resent her, because it was SO easy to seduce her. My skills have gotten pretty good, and I’ve seduced two girls this past week, and immediately after it happened, I wasn’t attracted to her anymore. I feel like, how can she be a high-value female if she was THAT easy to get into bed (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 33).
When women are sexually active in a rape culture where sex is viewed as a limited commodity, they will risk being devalued as sexual citizens. If this is true for women in general, then such a loss of sexual citizenship will be all the more poignant for women with ID who experience additional loss of citizenship due to their status as women with disabilities.

3. **Conclusion: Sex as commodity**

In a commodity model of sex, not only can women lose their value by giving away their sex as “sluts,” but different women start out with more or less sex commodity to begin with. In a commodity model of sex, women who are sexual citizens are going to have more of a sex cache than women who are not sexual citizens. Specifically, heterosexual, white, able-bodied, non-kinky, gender unambiguous, young, thin, virgin women from middle to upper class backgrounds, women with no signs of mental illness and no intellectual disabilities are going to have the most sex commodity as sexual citizens. Conversely, non-heterosexual, non-white, disabled and/or impaired, kinky, transsexual, transgendered, old, fat, non-virgin, working class women and women with mental illness or intellectual disabilities are going to have much less sex cache as people excluded from citizenship and sexual citizenship. This third wave feminist textual discourse of sexual citizenship in the framework of rape culture illustrates how women with ID will not only be excluded from sexual citizenship, but will be put at risk for sexual violence due to their position as women with not enough sex commodity to be worth respecting.

While a greater sex cache may mean more status as a sexual citizen, increasing one’s sex cache does not address the other underlying dangers of rape culture, including abstinence based sexuality education, the commodity model of sex, the rapist’s “license to operate”, or the social devaluing of “sluts” as described above. Therefore, increasing the sex cache of non-sexual citizens like women with ID is not a proposed tactic for increasing sexual citizenship in this
thesis. Rather, dismantling rape culture, such as through alternative models of sex and disability, is proposed; this will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

D. **Sex Negativity**

In addition to the aspects of sexual violence in the form of sexual ridicule, abuse, and rape, and the commodity model in rape culture, sex negativity is also at work. In a culture that is sex negative, sexual expression is acceptable only within a highly proscribed set of practices. In U.S. culture, these proscribed practices are the same things that define sexual citizens: heterosexual, gender definitive, non-kinky. In a sex negative culture, sexual expression outside of these proscribed sexual practices will mean exclusion from sexual citizenship. Examples of sex negativity in U.S. contexts from third wave feminist literature will be given below in order to better illustrate what sex negativity is, and how pervasive and clandestine a part of rape culture it can be. The implications of sex negativity in these examples for people with disabilities in general and women with ID in particular will also be explored.

1. **Sex work**

   There is no safe place in a sex negative culture for sex work. In a sex negative culture, sex work often takes place outside of the heterosexual, monogamous, and non-kinky parameters of heteronormativity. Because sex work occurs outside of these boundaries, sex workers are excluded from sexual citizenship in a sex negative rape culture. Mary Christmas in an essay titled *No Goddesses, No Slaves: The Sex Workers Rights Movement Through A Pro-Choice Lens*, describes how her work as a sex worker advocate is met by “vitriolic reaction” from other feminists (Berger, 2006, p. 227). Christmas describes her work on a sex worker advocacy magazine called $pread as “a common labor-movement tactic of allowing workers to tell their stories and find strength en masse toward making positive changes in their industry”
(Berger, 2006, p. 227). In a sex negative rape culture, even the advocates of basic human rights such as voice for sex workers are met with derision, accusation, and disgust, as experienced by the hate mail that Christmas regularly receives for her advocacy work through $pread. This is evidence for how sex workers, and anyone associated with them, are excluded from sexual citizenship as the result of the sex negativity of rape culture.

Sex negativity towards sex work in a rape culture also means that sex workers themselves are put at risk when law enforcement workers dismiss their reports of sexual violence. In such cases, sex workers may cease to report sexual violence, and perpetrators come to understand that they can get away with sexual violence against sex workers, i.e. that sexual violence against sex workers is acceptable. Conversely, the sex negative stigma attached to being with a sex worker may discourage people with disabilities who experience sexual violence or fraud at the hands of a sex worker from reporting the crime. In other words, sex negativity in rape culture marks people with disabilities as easy victims for sex workers as much as sex workers themselves are marked as appropriate victims.

The sex negativity towards sex work complicates the situation for people with disabilities who might need sexual assistance in order to express their sexuality. The sex negative attitude towards sex work and sex workers also restricts people with ID from utilizing the body knowledge of sex work professionals, who may be able to generate creative ways of having sex for people whose bodies\textsuperscript{31} may be differently mapped sexually than the bodies of people without disabilities (Siebers, 2008). The exclusion from sexual citizenship of sex workers alongside

\textsuperscript{31}This thesis presupposes monism (as opposed to “dualism”), and so “bodies” here includes physical as well as intellectual disabilities. The monist position is that “bodies” include “minds” as well, i.e. the mind/self does not exist outside of the body.
people with disabilities who might benefit from their knowledge, is indicative of the sex negativit
ity that marks rape culture.

2. **Class**

Part of a sex negative culture is scorn for working class and poor people expressing sexuality. kat marie yoas\(^\text{32}\) in *I went to College And All I Got Was This Trailer-Trash T-Shirt* (Berger, 2006) writes about the prejudice that she experiences in everyday conversations as a college educated person of a working class background:

> When they got around to talking about people of color or poor/working class, their descriptions came across as caricatures … Academics is built upon a language of distance … You are unable to articulate and communicate, and you are therefore invisible (p. 266).

Like yoas, women with ID, “unable to articulate and communicate” in traditional ways are also “invisible”, as citizens and sexual citizens in feminist and academic discourse as well.

yoas addresses how terms like “white trash” and “trailer trash” are highly charged terms that she finds offensive and hurtful; yet they are terms that seem to be used in everyday discourse without a second thought. She also writes that she does not “appreciate that economically poor women are always hypersexualized and portrayed as sexually loose/constantly pregnant receptacles” (Berger, 2006, p. 286). For yoas, the ubiquitous use of derogatory terms regarding working class people is indicative of a lack of citizenship and sexual citizenship status.

As does yoas, women with ID also face the everyday use of derogatory names that are associated with intellectual disability such as “moron”, “idiot”, “stupid”, and “imbecile”. As Trent (1994) points out, such terms are in fact out dated clinical terms used by medical professionals and institutional staff in describing what later came to be called “mental

\(^{32}\) Like the prolific feminist writer feminist Gloria Watkins who writes with the pseudonym “bell hooks”, yoas has chosen to spell her name in lower case letters.
retardation” and what we today refer to as “intellectual disability”. Also similar to working class women like yoas, women with ID have been interchangeably assumed to be either hypersexual or asexual, in need of sterilization to prevent their prolific reproduction, or else regarded as “eternal children” with no sexuality to speak of (Carey, 2009).

yoas’ experience of class discrimination, including the everyday use of derogatory name-calling and assumptions of either asexuality or hypersexuality, mirror the experiences of women with ID as excluded sexual citizens. Women are excluded from sexual citizenship in a rape culture based on class as well as on disability. Thus, women like yoas experience class based ridicule and are excluded as sexual citizens just as women with ID are excluded from sexual citizenship based on their disabilities, in addition to their gender, class, race, a/sexuality, etc. The exclusion from sexual citizenship that women with disabilities -and ID in particular- and working class women like yoas experience based on their class is part of the sex negativity in a rape culture that leads to disdain for the sexualities of working class women and women with disabilities -and especially intellectual disabilities- alike.

As for working class people, the portrayal of people with ID as “caricatures” has been an ongoing tradition in U.S. culture, from “freak shows” in the 1800 through mid-1900s (Braddock & Parish, 2001; Clare, 1999) to modern films, i.e. *Elephant Man*, *Tropic Thunder*, and *Schmucks for Dinner*. Poor women -often women of color- and woman with ID have historically been classed together in order to control their fertility through institutionalization and sterilization (Braddock & Parish, 2001; Trent, 1994); a sure sign of a lack of status as citizens and sexual citizens. Additionally, people with ID tend to live well below the poverty line (Carlson, 2010, p. 33).

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33 The assumption that children are asexual is itself problematic but is beyond the scope of this thesis; see Evans (1993) for more information.
26), so that yoas’ experiences of class ridicule undoubtedly parallels the experiences of women with ID also living in poverty.

Sex negativity in a rape culture is antagonistic of the sexual expression of women like yoas and women with ID as working class and poor women, especially where sexual expression could lead to children that will assumedly also be poor and/or intellectually disabled. Thus, the sexual expression of poor women and women with ID is challenged through the withholding of resources such as sexuality education and birth control. Just as yoas feels that feminism, especially academic feminist theory, does not satisfactorily address this exclusion of working class women from citizenship and sexual citizenship, women with ID are similarly invisible as citizens and sexual citizens in feminist theory as well as in academia.

3. **Sexual play**

As outlined by Rubin (1989) a prerequisite to sexual citizenship includes not using anything other than two bodies during sex acts. Similarly, sex negativity in a rape culture also means disdain for people and places involved in the sale or promotion of sex toys, pornography, books on sexual play, etc. Despite the taboo against the use of anything beyond bodies that is used during sex, some feminist activists believe that sexual play may be crucial to healthy sexual identities and the deconstruction of rape culture.

In *A Love Letter from an Anti-Rape Activist to Her Feminist Sex-Toy Store* (Friedman & Valenti, 2008), Lee Jacobs Riggs explores the meaning of a sex negative culture. For Riggs, sex negativity is present when a culture values:

- the lives, bodies, and pleasure of men (and in particular white, middle or upper-class, heterosexual men without disabilities) above those of women and transgendered people, and promotes shame about sexual desire, particularly female or queer desire. Sex-
negative culture teaches us that pleasure is sinful and provides us with narrow scripts for appropriate sexual encounters (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 110).

The characteristics that Riggs has here in parenthesis -white, middle/upper class, heterosexual, men, able bodied- are essentially a description of the ideological sexual citizen in U.S. culture.

After experiencing burn out from rape crisis work, Riggs was frustrated with the rape culture “framework that positioned the criminal legal system as the primary remedy for sexual violence” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 111). Riggs wanted to work at the roots of sexual violence, which she perceived as being the rape culture unspeakability of sexual pleasure for non-sexual citizens, especially women. Her solution was to work in the Chicago based, feminist, sex toy store, Early to Bed.

Riggs sought to contribute to the deconstruction of the sex negative aspect of rape culture by working in a feminist sex toy store and by fostering dialog about sex, including pleasure and consent, especially for women and “Others” considered non-sexual citizens (Friedman & Valenti, 2008). Making the sexual unspeakability of sexual pleasure speakable is one way of broadening notions of sexual citizenship that could contribute to the inclusion of women with ID as sexual citizens; the exploration of pleasure through sexual play may accomplish the same thing. However, in the presence of sex negativity in a rape culture, where sexual citizens are considered only those who do not engage in sexual activity that involves anything besides the bodies of a man and a woman, fostering such learning through sexual play becomes unfeasible.

Where sex play fosters dialog about sexual experience, it can affect the perception of the vulnerability of women with ID by increasing sexual savvy and reducing the sense of shame and guilt that often accompanies past and ongoing sexual abuse. If the sexual savvy of women with ID is increased, and the sense of shame and guilt that silences women about their experiences of
sexual abuse is decreased, the perception of women with ID as vulnerable to sexual abuse could be affected in such a way that they are no longer considered such easy targets. Fostering dialog about sex and sexuality through encouraging sexual play and eliminating shame and guilt around sexual experiences could empower both women with and without ID and imbue them with a confidence that would undermine their status as easy targets of sexual violence. In other words, eliminating rape culture sex negativity towards sexual play could work to create spaces for women with ID as sexual citizens.

4. **Sexuality information**

Sex negativity in a rape culture includes a general taboo against discussing sex and sexuality. This taboo runs against both formal sources of information -such as sexuality education curriculum and sexuality research- as well as against informal sources of information -such as talk among peers and personal investigation through books, the internet, etc. The sex negative taboo against talking about sexuality contributes to rape culture because the silence creates space for shame, guilt, misunderstandings, and misinformation about sexuality rather than creating spaces for sexual citizenship of diverse peoples. Rape culture sex negativity towards sexuality information leaves people without the knowledge and sense of self with which to protect themselves from sexual violence; this is true both for people with and without disabilities.

Shelby Knox, in the essay, *Tales from the Bible Belt* (Berger, 2006), describes how teen sex was a taboo conversational topic in her school district, despite the fact of some of the highest rates of sexually transmitted infections in the nation. She describes her school district’s repeatedly used version of sexuality education, which included warnings against masturbation as the cause of divorce later in life, and the lesson that condoms were an ineffectual form of
protection from sexually transmitted infections that “almost always failed” (Berger, 2006, p. 75). This kind of anti-sex information is a powerful type of sex negativity and an insidious aspect of rape culture that not only disempowers people by perpetuating misinformation but actually puts their health at risk. Women with ID may be particularly susceptible to this kind of sexuality misinformation or lack of information when their disability involves difficulty thinking critically in order to sort out legitimate sources of information. Thus, a deconstruction of the sex negative taboo against the sharing of accurate sexuality information in a rape culture could create space for the sexual citizenship of women with ID. While feminists like Knox are well positioned to conduct such a deconstruction -and have already begun to do so- women with ID have yet to be a target audience.

5. **Heteronormativity**

Heteronormativity is the privileging of heterosexuality over other sexualities. Heteronormativity can be sex negative in a rape culture when it includes an active intolerance for transsexual, transgendered, homosexual, and disabled people, as well as intolerance of alternative sexual lifestyles such as BDSM (a.k.a. “kink”), polyamory, polyfidelity,

34 etc. An intolerance for anything outside of heteronormativity can be especially restrictive and dangerous for people with disabilities whose sexual experiences of their bodies may be different from the bodies/ experiences of people without disabilities.

a. **Disability excluded**

There is little room in sex negative heteronormativity for people with disabilities. Central to heteronormativity is the defining of sexual citizens as people without disabilities. Central to heteronormativity is the defining of sexual citizens as people without disabilities. Central to heteronormativity is the defining of sexual citizens as people without disabilities. Central to heteronormativity is the defining of sexual citizens as people without disabilities. 

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34 BDSM stands for Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, Sadism and Masochism; polyamory is the expression of sexual love for more than one person at the same time; and polyfidelity is the expression of sexual love for the same two or more people over time.
disabilities in addition to heterosexual, monogamous, white, middle/upper class, non-kinky, able to have children, etc.\textsuperscript{35} None of the third wave feminist authors explored for this chapter specifically mention women with ID as excluded from heteronormative notions of sexual citizenship. Therefore, the example of disability as excluded from sexual citizenship by notions of heteronormativity explored here is Eli Clare, an author and women with physical and not intellectual disabilities.

Eli Clare, in \textit{Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness and Liberation} (1999), writes about the contradiction of people with disabilities’ invisibility when it comes to sexuality, at the same time that people with disabilities are targets of sexual violence: “We live in a world that both hates sex and is saturated with sex, sex plastered everywhere: television, movies, billboards, magazines, the nightly news. Yet disabled people find no trace of our sexualities in that world. We are genderless, asexual undesireables” (p. 112). Clare explores how people with disabilities are often exempt from sexual representation until they are targeted for sexual violence, in part because sex negative heteronormativity in a rape culture does not include people with physical and intellectual disabilities as sexual citizens.

Clare is a self defined disabled, transgendered, and lesbian woman\textsuperscript{36} who grew up in rural Oregon working class logging communities. She writes (1999) about how her mother often tried to force her to act in “feminine” ways, such as wearing a dress and growing her hair long, which Clare never did. Clare chose not to express her queer sexuality until she was out of high school and had moved to the city to explore queer communities. Clare reports that if an openly lesbian couple moved to the area where she grew up, she would fear for their safety. This is indicative

\textsuperscript{35} See Chapter III for more information about who counts as a sexual citizen.
\textsuperscript{36} After publishing \textit{Exile and Pride}, Clare decided to more fully transgender and live in the world as a man. However, Clare is referred to here as “she” because that was her identification at the time of the publication of her work used for this thesis.
that Clare’s choice to not express her sexuality until she had moved into an urban area was a strategic move in a sex negative heteronormative environment where her safety was compromised by her transgendered, lesbian, disabled status. While no literature about transgendered women with ID was specifically explored for this thesis, it is likely that women with ID would face similar social resistance and danger should they live as transgendered in a rape culture imbued with sex negative heteronormativity where people with disabilities are excluded from sexual citizenship.

b. **Heteromonogamy and the romance myth**

Dean Spade, in the essay, *For Lovers and Fighters*, writes about the “myth of heteromonogamous romance” (a.k.a. “the romance myth”) (Berger, 2006, p. 29) and the practice of polyamory in trans communities. The heterosexual romance myth is the notion that there is some perfect partner out there if we can only find them. The heterosexual romance myth is sort of a rendition of the fairy tale where boy meets girl, falls in love, and are together (presumably monogamously) happily ever after. One of the consequences of heteromonogamous and heterosexual romance narratives that Spade points out includes a sense of scarcity when it comes to romantic partners. In a romantic partner scarcity, people with disabilities may be disadvantaged when the ideology of a “perfect” partner excludes representations of disability. Therefore, the heteronormative romance myth may inadvertently exclude people with disabilities by presupposing “perfect” romantic partners that are not imagined to be people with disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities.

Spade argues that there are practical reasons for members of the trans community to resist the “common sense of monogamy just as we resist the ‘common sense’ we inherit about race, class, gender, and sexuality in our culture” (Berger, 2006, p. 28). While “disability” and
“intellectual disability” are not listed by Spade, this thesis would add that “disability” should be included in the list of “common sense” constructions that should be problematized and resisted. Spade claims that the romance myth contributes to women defining their, worth solely in terms of success at finding and keeping a romance, to brainwash women into spending all their time measuring themselves against this norm and working to change their bodies, behaviors, and activities to meet the requirements of being attractive to men and suitable for romance (Berger, 2006, p. 29).

In short, Spade points out how heteronormative and the “romance myth” are both sex negative aspects of heteronormativity in a rape culture that set people up for hating who they are and perceiving themselves as failures for not being able to change (Berger, 2006). Although women with intellectual disabilities are among the excluded sexual citizens affected by the sex negative, heteromonogamous romance myth, they are not named -either in this essay or this anthology- as one such group.

Another aspect of the heteronormative, heteromonogamous romance myth that Spade finds problematic is that it encourages partners to be their “most monstrous selves” in their romantic relationships (Berger, 2006). Spade attributes this to the very high expectations that come with having one person who is supposed to meet all the needs of their partner, leading to much insecurity when either or both partners is unwilling or unable to satisfy the other in every possible way. While no research or literature about the effects of the heteronormative/monogamous romance myth and couples with ID was reviewed for this thesis, it is likely that couples with ID are affected in similar ways by the romance myth as couples without ID. Namely, the heteronormative, heteromonogamous romance myth most likely puts unassuagable psychological pressure on women with disabilities in general and women with ID
in particular to rely too much on a romantic partner, and be relied on too much in return. This is problematic when impairments require a plethora of interdependent emotional and material supports from many sources. This means that the inability of some women with ID to meet the heteronormative requirements of the heteromonogamous romance myth will be further grounds for their exclusion from citizenship and sexual citizenship.

c. **Inflexible binary gender system**

   In western contexts, feminist theorists argue that there are two performances of gender that are conflated with two unproblematic sexes: man/male and woman/female. Male and female are biological characteristics that one is born with, i.e. genitalia of penis or vagina. In contrast, the genders of “man” and “woman” are clusters of traits that compose gender performances which are socially learned and ingrained throughout life, e.g. boys and men are loud, aggressive, like sports, don’t cry or express emotions easily, live and work in public spaces, while women are quiet, gentle, emotional, nurturing, prefer watching rather than participating in physical activities and live and work in the private realm. These heteronormative assumptions of an inflexible binary gender system limit imaginative ways of living in the world, and can be not only confusing but dangerous, especially for people with ID. In fact, sexual violence tends to be more acute in settings where strict binary gender codes are in place (World Health Organization, 2002).

   A story by sexuality educator Orieda Horn Anderson exemplifies the kind of unnecessary confusion and danger for people with disabilities that often accompany a sex negative, rigid, heteronormative gender system in a rape culture (2000). A consultation was requested with Anderson because a young man with ID at a service agency insisted that he wanted to have his penis removed, refused to stand to urinate, and often claimed that he was super woman
(Anderson, 2000). This was bewildering to staff, and because sexual abuse is often suspected in situations with anything concerning the genitals of people with ID, Anderson was called in. Anderson found that the man’s mother had taught him that his penis was a disgusting and terrible thing, and that because of these messages he had decided that he wanted to become a woman—thus the desire to have his penis removed, his insistence on sitting to urinate, and his impersonations of super woman. Anderson set about addressing this man’s gender confusion by retraining him that his penis was not a disgusting and terrible thing, that he could pee standing up, and that he should not want to be a woman and wear a superwoman costume.

It is unclear whether this training was successful in addressing the man’s gender confusion, but several facets of heteronormative sex negativity are at work here. First, that this young man was taught by someone he loved that a part of his body was so abhorrent that it would be better to cut it off than to continue to live with it is indicative of a deep sex negativity towards the sexuality of people with ID, as well as their entrenched exclusion from sexual citizenship. Secondly, that this man’s solution to his troublesome penis was to become a woman may be indicative of the rigid heteronormative gender binary where if one is not a man (i.e. someone with a penis), one must be a woman (i.e. someone who has no penis and must sit down to pee). For example, the man in this story conflated his penis with living as a man, and the removal of his penis with living as a woman. He could have wanted to remove his penis because of his negative associations with it, but still have continued living as a man. That he equated his penis with manhood and a lack of penis with being a woman is indicative of the rigid heteronormative gender binary where people are unproblematically men when they have penises and women when they do not.
In the absence of this rigid binary, the situation might have been handled differently. Certainly, the man would have undergone therapy to dissolve some of the hate that he felt for his genitals as a result of the negative messages from his caregivers, but the training to pee standing up was an unnecessary distraction from this task. Certainly, he could have sat down to urinate if he wanted to, without being in danger of becoming a woman. Anderson’s discouraging of wearing a super woman costume may also be indicative of the inflexible gender binary system in a heteronormative culture. While addressing his hatred for his genitals was an apropos intervention for a sexuality educator, there is little bodily harm in sitting to pee while wearing a super woman costume. One wonders if it was the hatred of his penis or the crossing of gender norms via sitting during urination and dressing up like a woman that bothered staff more, prompting them to seek out a consultation. Obviously, an inflexible gender binary system in a sex negative rape culture is as problematic for the sexual citizenship of people with intellectual disabilities as it is for people without.

The third wave feminist quest to deconstruct the rigid, heteronormative gender binary could have benefited this man with ID by focusing interventions on his intense body hatred, and not on his gender confusion that was a result of a rigid gender binary in the first place. Similarly, the interventions of sexuality educators working with women with ID who have experienced sexual violence, exacerbated by their status as excluded sexual citizens, could be improved should the focus be on healing from sexual trauma, and not on fitting into the rigid, heteronormative gender binaries of a rape culture.

d. **Phallocentrism**

Finally, phallocentrism is an aspect of sex negative heteronormativity in a rape culture that leads to women’s exclusion from sexual citizenship. Phallocentrism means that
the penis/phallus is considered the center of the sexual world (and maybe even the world in general). In a heteronormative, phallocentric rape culture, “sex” between heterosexual people is defined as penile-vaginal intercourse (Blank, 2007); this may explain how the rape of women in the United States has historically and legally been defined as penile-vaginal intercourse. The privileging of the penis as the arbitrator of what does and what does not count as sex is at the heart of phallocentrism. This privileging is also why “sex” is often synonymous with heterosexual intercourse, at least in the United States and much of Western Europe (Friedman & Valenti, 2008; Shakespeare et al., 1996).

Phallocentrism can be especially problematic for people with disabilities, whose bodies may be mapped for sexual desire and pleasure in ways that do not or cannot revolve around the penis (Siebers, 2008). While heteronormative, sex negative phallocentrism may indeed be “especially” problematic for people with disabilities, this is not to claim that these notions are not extremely problematic for people without disabilities as well. Indeed, an aim of this thesis is to illustrate how sex negativity, including sex negativity, heteronormativity, phallocentrism, etc., can be terribly constrictive for most people, and not just for people with disabilities generally and women with ID in particular. For women with and without ID, phallocentrism is problematic for their status as sexual citizens for the obvious reason that they do not have organic penises. Additionally, sex negative, heteronormative phallocentrism in a rape culture will exclude women with ID from sexual citizenship if they are lesbian or asexual, and penises are therefore not the “center” of their sexual/non-sexual experiences.

6. **Conclusion: Sex negativity**

In response to the third research question of this thesis “What are some of the implications of third wave feminist textual discourse around sexual citizenship for women with
ID?”, this section has explored the feminist identified phenomenon of “rape culture”.

Specifically, this section has explored “sex negativity” as an integral part of rape culture. Sex negativity includes: an active intolerance of sex work; scorn for the sexualities of poor and working class people; sanctions on sex play whereby boundaries of sexuality are challenged and experimented with; and restrictions on accurate information about sex and sexuality. Sex negativity also includes: a rigid heteronormativity that excludes people with disabilities, transgendered, transsexual and people attracted to the same sex from sexual citizenship; rigid notions of heteromonogamy and romance (i.e. “the romance myth”); an inflexible gender binary system; and phallocentrism. To challenge any aspect of sex negativity is to challenge rape culture itself, and thus to shift notions of sexual citizenship to be more inclusive as well.

Challenging aspects of sex negativity can lead to a deconstruction of roles and assumptions that set up women in general and women with ID as rape culture “victims”. Challenging sexual victimization in rape culture is explored in the next section.

E. **Victim Blaming, Hierarchy of Sexual Violence, and Problematizing Sexual Victimization**

**Victim blaming**

A rape culture is marked by the blaming of survivors for the sexual violence that they experience. “Survivors” is the term preferred by many people who have experienced sexual violence (Friedman & Valenti, 2008), although some people continue to prefer the term “rape victim” or use both terms. For the purpose of this thesis, the term “survivor” will be used.

1. **Victim blaming**

In a rape culture, survivors are often blamed for the sexual violence they experience. For example, a woman who is raped while wearing tight clothing or clothing

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37 For example, see the essay in Berger (2006) by Alexia Vernon, *Troubling the Performance of the Traditional Incest Narrative*, as discussed in this section.
showing a lot of the skin on her body will be held partly responsible for her rape, rather than full responsibility for the rape being laid on the rapist. Another example of victim blaming in rape culture can be read in an interview with sexuality educator and feminist Dan Savage and his partner of 16 years, Terry. In a video taped interview with Dan and Terry for Dan’s web project “It Gets Better”³⁸ Terry describes his experience of sexual harassment in high school because of his sexual orientation. When Terry’s parents went to school administrators for support in ending the sexual harassment of their son, they were told “If you look that way, talk that way, walk that way, act that way, then there’s nothing we can do to help your son.”

Rather than holding the perpetrators of sexual violence responsible for their actions, full responsibility was placed on Terry to change his self-presentation. This blaming of Terry for the sexual harassment he experienced is an example of victim blaming in rape culture. There are also parallels here with individual victim blaming in a rape culture and placing the responsibility to conform on the individual bodies of people with disabilities in an inaccessible, ableist culture. In both scenarios, individuals are expected to be able and willing to curb their self-presentations, i.e. to be less gay, to be less disabled- rather than the burden of change being placed on the rape culture which privileges heteronormative, able-bodied sexual citizens above others. In this way, “victim blaming” is an integral part of the rape culture in which women with and without ID struggle to create spaces for their status as sexual citizens.

2. **Hierarchy of sexual violence**

In a rape culture, there is also a hierarchy of sexual violence, such that penile-vaginal rape by a stranger is considered the most heinous and insidious form of sexual violence. Feminists have tried to deconstruct the hierarchy of sexual violence, such that a plethora of

³⁸ As retrieved on October 24, 2010 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71cVyvg2QIo.
sexually violent experiences are given recognition, based more upon the perception of the survivor than on where the experience falls on the hierarchy of sexual violence. Feminists have argued that the experience and interpretation of sexual violence by the survivor, rather than the place of the experience on the hierarchy of sexual violence, defines the trauma of that experience.

The feminist deconstruction of the hierarchy of sexual violence is significant for women with and without ID, whose experiences of sexual violence can only be legitimated if they are defined according to their experiences, rather than according to where such experiences fall in the rape culture hierarchy of sexual violence. Since part of sexual citizenship is having credibility when one reports having experienced sexual violence, a shift from taking sexual violence seriously based on its position on the hierarchy of sexual violence, to acknowledging sexual violence based on the experiences of survivors themselves would create spaces for the sexual citizenship of women with ID by recognizing their experiences of sexual violence and providing public justice in response.

3. **Problematizing victimization**

If suffering from sexual violence is not recognized as legitimate because of its place on the hierarchy of sexual violence, rape survivors report a harder time coming to terms with their experiences of trauma. Additionally, healing from sexual violence may be just as difficult for rape survivors if the experience of sexual violence is treated as too central to the survivor’s identity. For example, an essay in Berger’s (2006) third wave feminist anthology called *Troubling the Performance of the Traditional Incest Narrative*, Alexia Vernon describes the predicament of needing recognition for the experience of sexual violence, and yet not too much recognition. Vernon’s stepbrother had fondled her genitals in a car when she was four
years old. While he instructed Vernon not to tell anyone, she disobeyed and told her mother immediately. After reporting the fondling to her mother, Vernon’s mother cut off all contact between Vernon and her stepbrother. Vernon was also put into long term clinical counseling, in order to act out her experience and come to terms with it.

Vernon reports feeling “dirty” about her body for many years, including guilt about sexual pleasure; persistent stomach aches and anxiety; acting out violent sexual role-play scenarios with her stuffed rabbit “Mandy”; and alternating between smashing pictures of her step brother and missing his attention. Vernon asks the brave question “Was it the molestation itself that was traumatic? Or might it have been how I was encouraged to frame the molestation that was trauma inducing?” (Berger, 2006, p. 124). Vernon adds “I was really angry that those who knew about the sexual abuse and believed that it had happened has made it out to be such a big deal. And conversely, I was angry that others in my life denied the abuse had ever happened...” (Berger, 2006, p. 129). In other words, Vernon wonders which is worse: the actual experience of sexual violence or the way that sexual violence is dealt with socially. For women with ID, this may be especially important when the response to the reporting of sexual violence is paternalistic overprotection, such that the end result is a loss of their freedom and a reduction in their status as sexual citizens.

Vernon troubles how sexual abuse is portrayed in popular culture, especially where perpetrators and survivors of sexual abuse are “dichotomized” such that “victims are supposed to be innocent and helpless women who, as a result of their abuse, often became hypersexualized at a young age and used sex with others to resolve their emotional problems,” and “sexual abuse perpetrators demonized as sinful, violent, powerful and mentally ill” (Berger, 2006, p. 127). Vernon critiques this dichotomy, arguing that it is misleading since many survivors may know
and even like their abusers. The abuser/survivor dichotomy is also problematic as so many abusers were once survivors themselves, and some survivors will also become abusers. This is also the case with people with intellectual disabilities, where those who experience sexual abuse also abuse others (Hingsburger, 1995).

Vernon powerfully critiques the survivor tradition of telling and retelling “survivor testimony”, the stories of sexual abuse. In her own experience, the more she continued to tell her story, “the less I felt like I was healing and moving on...My sexual-abuse testimony felt less and less like my story and more like an anecdote for an archive on sexual trauma- one that made me feel powerless against a system of inequity rather than like a potential agent of social change” (Berger, 2006, p. 131). Vernon talks about needing to create a “new archive, one that allowed for the traditional perpetrator/victim script to be explored and questioned” (Berger, 2006, p. 131). For women with ID who are already positioned as victims, incapable of sexual agency, the focus on the telling and retelling of experiences of sexual violence may draw attention to their status as victims, and not as sexual citizens capable of sexual agency as well.

Vernon’s new script of sexuality would “challenge gender, heterosexual, racial, class, and age stereotypes by exploding the myth that all perpetrators are rich, old, homosexual white men and that their victims are young, underprivileged white women. And perhaps most importantly, it needed to challenge the notion that children are universally positioned outside of power”(Berger, 2006, p. 131). Tellingly, ableism is not listed here as in need of being challenged, more evidence of the invisibility of women with disabilities in general and ID in particular in feminist discourse of sexual citizenship. Despite the invisibility of women with ID in Vernon’s analysis, the status of women with ID as sexual citizens could be strengthened through the actions that Vernon proposes. A deconstruction of the survivor/abuser dichotomy could create space for women with
ID as both, leading to acknowledgement and action based on that duality. Also, an emphasis on stories of sexual victimization only in addition to emphasis on sexual agency and resistance could position women with ID not only as women in need of protection, but as active sexual agents capable of creating spaces for their sexual citizenship.

Vernon’s ideas about challenging the abuser/survivor dichotomy and the “victim-centered feminism” (Berger, 2006, p. 132) are important concepts when it comes to the sexuality for any population that has been oppressed and is further oppressed by discourse around that oppression. Discourse around the sexuality of people with disabilities, and women with ID in particular, has very much focused on their status as people vulnerable to all kinds of sexual exploitation. In other words, women with ID have been primarily framed as vulnerable sexual citizens, in need to protection at the expense of other sexual rights, e.g. sexual pleasure and relationships. This discourse of vulnerability can contribute to the victimization of women with ID when it is used as grounds for withholding comprehensive sexuality education, in particular knowledge about sexual pleasure, relationships, and reproduction (Anderson, 2000; Hingsburger, 1995; Hingsburger & Tough, 2002).

4. **Conclusion: Victim blaming, hierarchy of sexual violence, and problematizing sexual victimization**

Victim blaming, hierarchies of sexual violence, a focus on vulnerability, and abuser/victim dichotomies are pillars of rape culture when they unproblematically name potential targets for sexual violence, e.g. women with and without ID, without going one step further to challenge and deconstruct those identities and discourses. Naming women with ID as vulnerable to sexual abuse, without providing comprehensive, gender sensitive, life-long sexuality education that negates vulnerability by an emphasis on sexual agency, further contributes to their
vulnerability by presenting them as easy victims to sexual abusers, and perpetuating that identity for themselves. Rather than contribute to vulnerability by naming women with ID as sexually vulnerable and simultaneously withholding sexuality information from them, women with ID would benefit from challenges of notions of vulnerability, as well as the abuser/victim dichotomy like Vernon’s, as a means of strengthening their status as sexual citizens. Similarly, feminist challenges to traditional notions of consent can also serve to create spaces for the sexual citizenship of women with ID, and this is the topic turned to next.

F. **Consent**

As is the notion of sexual citizenship, consent is a highly contested concept. Part of the feminist agenda has been to eliminate the legal practices surrounding rape and sexual harassment cases where the onus is on women who have been assaulted to establish that they have *not* given consent. In such cases, a woman’s dress, location, level of intoxication, previous sexual history, and the time of day are often assumed to be indicative of the women’s implicit consent. In other words, if a woman was dressing a certain way, in an area of high crime, had been drinking or using other drugs, had been or was sexually active, and was out at night, especially alone, defense lawyers for men who assault women have been able to successfully argue that women were giving their implicit consent to sexual violence through their actions. This sort of rhetoric that involves “blaming the victim” is typical of rape culture. The feminist reaction to rape culture victim blaming has been to demand that men not go unpunished should they rape and sexually harass women, regardless of women’s actions (e.g. sexy clothes, drinking, being unescorted, etc.). Feminists have successfully argued that the responsibility for rape lies with the rapist, not on women for dressing or acting a certain way at certain times. The mark of consent has therefore become a women’s explicit, verbal “no” to sexual activity (Brownmiller, 1975).
While the focus in this section is on the rape and sexual harassment of women by men, it should be remembered that people can also experience sexual violence by members of the same sex\(^\text{39}\). Also, women with ID can be abusers of men, as reported by Hingsburger (1995), where a young women with ID had been sexually assaulting a man in her residency who was non verbal. She would perform oral sex on him until he had an erection, and then would jump on him quickly to get his penis inside of her before it was no longer erect. As she became less careful, she ended up landing hard with her knees in his chest, which led to bruising on the sides of his chest, later discovered by alarmed staff.

When explicitly saying no to sexual activity became the dividing line between rape and not-rape, earlier feminist activism began teaching women to say no loudly and clearly, so that rapists could not claim that they had somehow misunderstood a woman’s no (Brownmiller, 1975). For example, men might justify rape and sexual assault because they didn’t hear a woman say no. A rapist might claim that his target had pushed him, moved away from him, and called him names, but never actually used the word “no”; that she/he was inebriated and unable to speak to say no; that the rape didn’t matter because she/he couldn’t remember it anyway; or that the rape survivor chose not to say no, because she/he was afraid of the consequences, (in such cases, the choice to remain silent was not an act of consent, but one of self protection). No matter what the scenario, claiming that rape did not occur is indicative of the oversimplification of sexual violence that is another marker of rape culture. Therefore, in some ways, training women to say “no” continues to put the onus of rape on women, even as it may foster empowerment for some women in learning to be assertive about their bodies (Friedman & Valenti, 2008).

\(^{39}\) For an example of sexual violence in a lesbian relationship, see the essay in Berger (2006), *The Silence That Surrounds: Queer Sexual Violence and Why We’re Not Talking About It*. 
Consent is a central theme of sexual citizenship both because it has been used in the legal system as a marker of one’s capacity to participate in sexual activity -or to evaluate whether or not one did in fact participate- and because active consent is the means by which sexual actors can most successfully navigate their sexual lives. Third wave feminists have worked to continually broaden notions of consent to include not only the importance of honoring a women’s no, but also the responsibility to obtain a non coerced yes to sexual activity. While an emphasis on obtaining yes will undoubtedly have its own difficulties, sexual relationships that are marked not only by an absence of no but by the presence of yes and a woman’s desire will arguably be safer and more fulfilling for all parties. This chapter will explore the feminist notions of “no means no” and the third wave, “yes means yes” as means of consent, and will also look at the importance of active sexual agency and the emerging use of “consent capacity instruments” for people with ID from feminist perspectives.

1. **“No means no” and “yes means yes”**

An early and ongoing feminist focus has been on identifying the problem and prevalence of date rape. One way that was chosen to combat rape was by focusing on teaching women to say “no”, and teaching men to acknowledge “no” in sexual situations. As a feminist campaign “no means no” taught women to be assertive through activities like self-defense classes (Razack, 1998). While learning how to say “no” to unwanted sexual advances is a very important aspect of women creating spaces for our sexual citizenship in a rape culture, the early feminist “no means no” approach to sexual violence was limited for several reasons, as will be explored below.

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40 As a feminist, I am reluctant to use descriptors like “combat” because of their connotations of war and violence. However, I do so here because other words like “resist” or “struggle against” lack the urgency that I aim to impart.
Putting the onus on women to say no to sexual activities presupposes that the only thing women must overcome regarding unwanted sexual attention from men is their lack of practice in saying no. The idea behind “no means no”, self defense, and encouraging women to practice saying no is that once women have enough practice, they will be able to say no, and rapists will listen. This has not really been the case, especially for women with ID, as the continuation of sexual violence against women in the United States attests to. Carrie Kennedy, in *Legal and Psychological Implications in the Assessment of Sexual Consent in the Cognitively Impaired Population* (2003), cites references that estimate 90% of people with developmental disabilities (DD) experience sexual violence in their lifetime and that 15,000-19,000 people with DD are raped every year. While there are many methodological challenges to these kinds of estimates, and much variation across research studies, it is nonetheless clear that people with disabilities experience high rates of sexual abuse and violence. While these rates are extremely alarming, the focus of this thesis is not on the victimization of women with ID, which has already been well documented, but rather on possible feminist responses to this situation, which is discussed in the next subsection, as well as in the conclusion of this thesis.

Early feminists involved in “no means no” campaigns may have underestimated the socialization that women undergo from a very early age to cooperate and be pleasing to others (Evans, 1993). Such socialization cannot be so easily overcome by simply teaching women to say “no”. Women with ID are especially socialized to be “nice” and not tell their families and support staff no (Hingsburger, 1995) and this extra socialization to please may make learning to say no to unwanted sexual advances all the more difficult.

The focus on “no means no” also does not address how many women may be unsure of what they want in sexual situations. If women in a rape culture are not encouraged to be sexual
with themselves and others from a very young age in the same way that men are, they cannot be expected to suddenly know everything that they want and don’t want when it comes to sexual activity. The “no means no” campaign made just this assumption: that women knew what they wanted and didn’t want sexually, and simply needed practice in expressing their desire assertively. Feminist efforts to combat sexual violence in rape culture via “no means no” tactics would therefore be more effective if they are paired with an emphasis on women’s sexual play in order to foster women’s awareness of their own desires (or lack thereof).

Heather Corinna, in An Immodest Proposal (Friedman & Valenti, 2008), illustrates the common predicament of the absence of women’s knowledge about their own desire through a description of the stereotypical first time heteronormative sexual experience “exactly as we wish that first experience to be” (p. 179). In Corinna’s portrayal, two heterosexual teenagers have been dating for more than a year. The boy is a “good guy”, caring about the girl’s self esteem, encouraging her interest to go off to college, and being verbally and physically affectionate with her. Her parents are not thrilled that the young couple are sexual with each other, although nothing is explicitly said on the subject. While the young man, “doesn’t want to push her into something he wants but she isn’t ready for” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 180), he is understandably excited to have “sex” (i.e. intercourse) with her for the first time and they orchestrate an opportunity when the girl’s parents go out of town for the weekend.

While the pair had been experimenting with each other sexually for most of the year that they had been together, it was “oral or manual sex”, not intercourse and “with any of [the sexual activity] he usually reaches orgasm, and while she doesn’t, what he does sometimes feels good” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008). Both the girl and boy are portrayed as “virgins” despite having had, “oral or manual sex” together. Once again, the implication here is that never having had penile-
vaginal intercourse is the marker of virginity, further evidence of the position of heterosexual intercourse as the supreme sexual act in a rape culture. The night that the pair have intercourse, “It’s fairly brief- he gets off, she doesn’t...She feels like she was just lying there...” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 181). Afterwards, the boy assures her that he loves her and she feels “lucky and loved” (p. 181). Corinna claims to have heard many renditions of this story, “from young women reporting what they feel and wish for, and what adults and peers tell them is a remarkably positive first time” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 182).

Even though many people may find this sexual “script” (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 183) a positive one, Corinna points out that “something monumental is missing from this picture...The black hole in that scenario is [the young woman’s] desire” (p. 182). Corinna argues that women are so oppressed and sexually out of touch from living in a rape culture, that the scenario she has depicted begins to seem like a “lucky” sexual experience. In such a world, it is not a woman’s desire that is the marker of positive sexual activity, but simply the absence of nonconsent, i.e. the absence of “no”. While Corinna does not use the term “rape culture”, her exact words are essentially a description of rape culture:

This is a world where women still frequently are not asked for consent, are often raped or coerced, still engage in sex with partners out of feelings of duty or obligation, usually have our sexuality depicted in grossly inaccurate ways by men and women alike, and independent female sexual desire and earnest sexual enjoyment are not only disbelieved, in some circles, but are even “scientifically” contested (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 183).

The popularity of books, like I *Heart* Female Orgasm: An Extraordinary Orgasm Guide (2007) by sexuality educators Dorian Solot and Marshall Miller, may also be indicative
that there are many women⁴¹ who are out of touch with their sexual desire as a result of living in a rape culture. This may be in part because women have been and continue to be punished in many ways for expressing their sexualities. Women with ID also face punishment for expressing their sexualities, as evidenced by forced institutionalization, sterilization (Braddock & Parish, 2001; Trent,) and often punitive policies of service providers and attitudes of caregivers (Anderson, 2000; Hingsburger, 1995; Hingsburger & Tough, 2002).

Social punishment like being labeled “sluts” or “whores” and claims by rapists, courts of law and even the general public that women dressing a certain way, acting a certain way, and being in certain places at certain times should expect to be sexually assaulted have kept women from knowing and actualizing sexual boundaries on their own terms (Berger, 2006; Findlen, 1995; Muscio, 1998). While early feminist “no means no” campaigns did not successfully address rape culture sexual violence because the underlying focus on “no” as the basis of consent was incomplete, the third wave has sought to develop the element of “yes means yes”. The combination of women learning no and yes when it comes to sexual activity in a rape culture could serve as the real markers of consent, rather than either one in isolation (Friedman & Valenti, 2008). Although women with ID remain invisible in the texts examined for this thesis, the third wave feminist demand for women’s active expression of sexual desire as the true marker of consent dismantles rape culture still further, and serves to increase the sexual citizenship of both women with and without intellectual disabilities. Therefore, both feminist concepts of “no means no” and “yes means yes” must be employed in any sexuality education

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⁴¹ While the main audience for this book is probably white, English speaking, middle/upper class women, the demand for knowledge about female sexual pleasure is assumed here to extend beyond this demographic; however, this is an un-researched assumption that should be noted here.
and activism agenda that seeks to create spaces for the sexual citizenship of women with and without disabilities, including intellectual disabilities.

2. **Active sexual agency**

   The focus on women’s vulnerability as “victims” of sexual violence can be problematic. If the focus of sexuality discourse around consent is on sexual vulnerability and victimhood, there is a tendency to emphasize the need for women to protect themselves and for others to take responsibility for protecting them as well. While the need for protection and self-protection are indeed part of a healthy sexuality agenda, such an emphasis is detrimental when it comes at the expense of maximizing sexual agency and the ability of oppressed groups to actively resist overprotective paternalism, especially when it comes to sexuality. While sexual citizens are regarded as capable of taking sexual risks at their own discretion, those excluded from sexual citizenship -like women with and without ID- are often actively prevented from doing so. In other words, the active sexual agency of women with ID as sexual citizens is often thwarted by paternalistic notions of protection (Gill, 2009).

   Sexuality educator and feminist Dave Hingsburger argues that people with ID are capable of expressing their sexualities in safe and self-fulfilling ways, given appropriate and ongoing supports (Hingsburger & Tough, 2002). In fact, Hingsburger argues that for service providers, family members, and policy makers to not provide such sexuality supports is tantamount to “abuse”: “There are two vastly different kinds of abuse. One involves the use of power to force persons to perform some kind of sexual activity against their will. The other involves the use of power to stop persons from engaging in sexual activity or developing a sexual identity” (Hingsburger & Tough, 2002, p. 15).
To illustrate his arguments, Hingsburger has created two conceptual models, “The Prison of Protection” and “The Ring of Safety” (1995). The “Prison of Protection” illustrates the vulnerability created by protecting people with ID from: 1) sexuality information; 2) relationships (sexual and non-sexual); 3) society; and 4) decision making. Rather than perceiving people with ID being intrinsically more sexually vulnerable than people without ID, Hingsburger argues that each of these “protections” contribute to making people with ID more vulnerable than they would otherwise be. In a sense, Hingsburger has here described the non-sexual citizens that people with ID experience, where sexual citizenship is denied through overprotection from information, relationships, society and decision-making (e.g. through the “prison of protection”).

As an alternative model of sexual citizenship for people with ID, Hingsburger proposes the “Ring of Safety” (Hingsburger, 1995). The “Ring of Safety” is composed of seven elements that work together to empower people with ID in developing their ability to consent to sexual activity in self-affirming ways, thereby also laying claim to their own sexual citizenship. The seven elements of Hingsburger’s “Ring of Safety” are: 1) sex education; 2) an awareness of privacy; 3) the ability to non-comply (i.e. to be able to say “no”); 4) someone who listens; 5) an understanding of personal rights; 6) healthy self-concept and self-confidence; and 7) options for healthy sexuality (Hingsburger, 1995; Hingsburger & Tough, 2002). While the “prison of protection” undermines the sexual citizenship of people with ID by taking away all opportunities to develop active sexual agency, the “ring of safety” does the opposite. By providing the information, language, tools, support, and a sense of boundaries and empowerment when it comes to sexuality, the “ring of safety” fosters the development of the sexual agency of people with ID thereby creating spaces for sexual citizenship.
Rather than an emphasis on sexual vulnerability, victimhood, and the non-sexual citizenship of people with ID, approaches like Hingsburger’s emphasize proactive building of active sexual agency. Such an approach acknowledges the importance of developing active sexual agency in order to claim sexual citizenship, and also to develop abilities to consent to sexual activity, which is the subject of the next section.

3. **The Glen Ridge case**

   The ability to consent to sexual activity often becomes the deciding factor in establishing whether or not sexual assault has been committed against a person with an intellectual disability (Kennedy, 2003). The *Glen Ridge Case* is an example of such an instance. In an affluent New York suburb called Glen Ridge in 1989, a white teenage girl with a developmental disability (DD) was sexually assaulted by four teenage boys with a baseball bat, a broom handle, and a stick in a basement at a party while a roomful of other boys watched and “urged them on” (Razack, 1998, p. 148). After two years, three of the four boys were found guilty of conspiracy and aggravated assault and were sentenced up to fifteen years (the sentencing was eventually reduced).

   a. **“Interlocking” oppressions and “subtexts” of power**

      Razack’s (1998) feminist analysis explores the power dynamics that were involved in the Glen Ridge case. Razack argues that people experience “interlocking oppressions”\(^{42}\), as was the case for the young woman in the *Glen Ridge Case* who simultaneously experienced sexist and ableist oppressions both in her experience of sexual

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\(^{42}\) Razack’s notion of “interlocking oppression” is in reaction to some feminist’s concept of “double” and “triple” oppression, which inadvertently work to weigh discursive subjects down so heavily with “oppressions”, that resistance and agency seem only distant possibilities.
assault and in the courtroom aftermath. Razack claims that in order for justice to be served in cases like *Glen Ridge*, the “subtexts” of power and oppression must be brought to light.

The young woman who was assaulted revealed to a reporter, “Yeah, I feel like a whore but it doesn’t bother me. I am so lucky. I mean I’ve been doing this since I was little” (Razack, 1998, p. 149) and she had reportedly approached the varsity football players once and asked them if they wanted “to fuck” (Razack, 1998, p. 148). While the defense claimed these words as evidence of the young women’s capacity to consent to sexual activity, other information puts her words in context: her childhood and adolescence had been “socially isolated” and she was “frequently scorned and mocked by her peers and treated as an ‘oddball’” (Razack, 1998, p. 148). She had experienced vaginal-penile rape at her school before, after which her mother put her on birth control in case of another rape and the school asked her to leave because they could not guarantee her safety. Two of the boys accused of the sexual assault in the basement at the party were probably the same two boys who had once allegedly encouraged her to eat dog feces when they were children (Razack, 1998, p. 148-149).

With this information, the young women’s words are put into a “subtext” that may explain her behaviors as a young women with an ID who had been ridiculed, isolated, and taken advantage of throughout her life in gendered ways connected to her disability; she was, in other words, a person who had experienced “interlocking” oppressions. While such cruelty had become commonplace for her, her complacent acceptance of such treatment did not make it just. In fact, such normalizing of sexual violence is evidence of rape culture and indicative of compromised sexual citizenship. While the defense might have argued that her words indicated her willingness to engage in sexual activity, the facts of her personal history problematize this argument by showing that she may have just wanted to make friends and that the young men
took advantage of her history of isolation, loneliness, and social exclusion. In fact, there evidence that “she consented in the hope that one of the boys would ask her out for a date” (Razack, 1998, p. 148).

Additionally, Razack argues that it is not enough to examine the subtexts of power in the young woman’s life, but the subtexts of her oppressors must also be taken into account. Specifically, “their own histories of domination and entitlement” (Razack, 1998, p. 148) as young men without disabilities and elite athletes in cultural contexts that privilege maleness, ableness, and competitive athleticism, needed to be exposed in order for genuine justice to occur. Interestingly, while the young woman’s history of victimization was considered admissible in her prosecution’s arguments, the history of the young men’s abuse of their power as privileged people was not (Razack, 1998). The admission of her history of abuse and oppression in order to make her case and the inadmissibility of the young men’s history of being abusers and oppressors may be indicative of the discourse around consent and sexual violence that allows for a focus on victimization scripts but not on the accounts of systemic abuses by members of powerful and entitled groups (i.e. men, able-bodied, athletes, public figures, etc.) (Razack, 1998).

b. **Sexual consent capacity**

The admissibility of evidence of victimization and the inadmissibility of the ongoing oppression enacted by the young men might also be taken as evidence of the young men’s status as sexual citizens and the young woman’s lack of sexual citizenship. The young woman’s personal history contextualizes her behavior -asking the varsity team members if they wanted “to fuck”, and going to the party willing to have sex in hopes of making friends- such that the presence of her *desire* for sex seems less salient, and the likelihood of her acquiescent consent all the more probable. The feminist claim that true consent requires a no and a yes, as
well as the presence of a women’s desire, makes this kind of acquiescent consent in the face of such power disparities all the more questionable as a just concept of consent.

It is possible that someone can be so isolated, excluded and lonely, so excluded from citizenship and sexual citizenship, that they will allow sexual violence to be done to their bodies for the entertainment of others without resistance -indeed they may even be perceived as solicitous of such violence- as was probably the case with the young women from Glen Ridge. In such cases, while the ability to consent verbally may be present, the disparity in power dynamics may presuppose a genuine agreement to participate. In other words, the ability to consent may be present, and a person may verbally agree to sexual activity, but be consenting more out of habit or “being nice”, or in order to protect themselves, operating within “subtexts” of power and a history of sexually violent experiences that have become a normalized part of their lives.

Cases like Glen Ridge are the result of the exclusion of women with ID from sexual citizenship throughout the lifespan and the abuses of power by privileged sexual citizens over time in an rape culture that is also imbued with ableist discrimination against people with disabilities. Such cases are the culmination of years of cultural “subtexts” surrounding power and domination of women and people with disabilities. They are also the impetus for the creation of clinical instruments that measure what can be called “sexual consent capacity” (Bell & Cameron, 2003; Hill Kennedy & Niederbuhl, 2001; Kennedy, 2003; Lyden, 2007; Murphy, 2003; Murphy & O’Callaghan, 2004).

In the face of such pervasive, insidious and long-standing sexual violence based on gender and disability in a rape culture, it is ironic that courtroom litigation is so often the impetus for the creation of instruments to measure sexual consent capacity. By the time that parties like the young woman and group of male varsity athletes in Glen Ridge reach the courtroom,
measuring the capacity of women with ID to consent to sexual activity will probably not lend itself to the empowerment of such women, but instead to their increased exclusion from sexual citizenship. If the aim of sexual consent capacity instruments was to measure and then increase everyone’s sexual knowledge, awareness of interlocking oppressions, understanding of privacy and boundaries, and to support people in saying yes and no to sexual activity in exploring their a/sexualities, such instruments could increase sexual citizenship. Therefore, it is ironic that sexual consent capacity instruments are created as a response to court room litigation when they could otherwise be such powerful tools by which to increase sexual citizenship, should their use start earlier in life and not be aimed only at women with intellectual disabilities but at everyone.

Measuring sexual consent capacity should be focused on establishing a person’s capacity so that it can be expanded, not retracted. While using consent capacity instruments in court cases to determine if sexual assault has occurred may be necessary, it also puts women with ID at risk of losing ground as sexual citizens. In light of hypersexual and/or asexual scripts surrounding people with ID, and the rape culture history of blaming women who are victims of sexual assault, where women with ID are found to have sexual consent capacity, their claims of sexual assault may be weakened because they are perceived as too sexual for their own good. Conversely, if women with ID are judged as lacking in sexual consent capacity, their rapists will be held accountable for their crime, but the women with ID may subsequently face an overprotective reaction from the people who support them, similar to the elements that Hingsburger (1995) describes in his “Prison of Protection” model.

While sexual consent capacity instruments may be useful in clinical and legal settings, clinicians and legal practitioners must be mindful that their use may further restrict the sexual citizenship of women with ID. The use of sexual consent capacity instruments should occur only
in conjunction with plans for increasing capacity, or where consent capacity has been all but fully reached, measures should be taken to not restrict sexual citizenship any further, despite the perception of sexual vulnerability. While there are points where an individual’s intellectual disability may preclude the possibility of increasing sexual consent capacity any further, such points are often beyond where most support staff, family members and medical professionals think they are (Anderson, 2000; Hingsburger, 1995). Ideally, the development and use of such instruments would occur well before there is even a need to measure sexual consent capacity in a courtroom, because at that point such instruments may have the unintended effect of restricting the rights of sexual citizenship of the people with ID whom are being assessed too much too late.

G. **Conclusion: Sexual Citizenship in a “Rape Culture”**

This chapter has explored the third research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability (ID)? The feminist concept of “rape culture” frames much of third wave feminist textual discourse around sexual citizenship examined in this thesis. A “rape culture” is a culture imbued with sexual violence, ridicule, rape and notions of sex as a commodity, i.e. “the commodity model” of sex. Rape culture is also permeated by sex negativity, including negative perceptions of sex work and the exclusion of people as sexual citizens based on class, race, sexual orientation, gender orientation, and disability. Rape culture is marked by sanctions on sexual play and access to sexuality information, such that involvement in these activities can work to limit the sexual citizenship of women with and without ID. A sex negative culture puts a premium on heterosexual performance, e.g. heteronormativity and heterosexual romance, e.g. “the romance myth” and requires of sexual citizens that they adhere to an inflexible, phallocentric gender binary system.
Feminists have argued that the experience and interpretation of sexual violence by the survivor in a rape culture, rather than the place of the experience on the hierarchy of sexual violence, defines the trauma of that experience. They have also argued for a deconstruction of the survivor/abuser dichotomy which masks the reality that many abusers were once survivors, and some survivors may go on to become abusers. A dichotomy that pits one against the other misses such nuances and precludes sincere dialog about experiences and healing from sexual violence.

The perception of sexual violence as defined by the survivor’s experience and a deconstruction of the survivor/abuser dichotomy could increase the sexual citizenship of women with ID, because such a definition and deconstruction could lend credibility to their experiences of sexual violence, and thus open up opportunities for receiving support and justice. Defining sexual violence by the experience of the survivor and deconstructing the survivor/abuser dichotomy would create a “new script” of sexuality that would also “challenge gender, heterosexual, racial, class, and age stereotypes by exploding the myth that all perpetrators are rich, old, homosexual white men and that their victims are young, underprivileged white women. And perhaps most importantly … challenge the notion that children are universally positioned outside of power” (Berger, 2006, p. 131). A script of sexuality that could challenge all of this could also challenge the ableist notions in rape culture that exclude women with ID, marking them as asexual children and invisible sexual citizens. While there is space for women with ID in such a feminist rewriting of sexual scripts in a rape culture, women with ID remained invisible as sexual citizens in the feminist texts examined for this chapter.

Women with ID have been framed as primarily vulnerable sexual citizens in a rape culture, in need of protection at the expense of their status as sexual citizens, i.e. at the expense
of their sexual pleasure and relationships. This discourse of vulnerability can contribute to the sexual victimization of women with ID when it is used as grounds for withholding comprehensive sexuality education, in particular knowledge about sexual pleasure, relationships, and reproduction, thereby undermining their status as sexual citizens. Such vulnerability discourse can also put women with ID at risk as sexual citizens when it names women with ID as vulnerable to sexual violence, without providing sexuality education to alleviate vulnerability. This further contributed to the vulnerability of people, and especially women, with ID by presenting them as easy victims to sexual abusers, and perpetuating that identity for themselves.

One way to resist discourses of vulnerability in rape culture is to put an emphasis on the active sexual agency of women with ID as sexual citizens; such an emphasis will be explored in the concluding chapter of this thesis through the notion of sexual self-advocacy.

Earlier feminist work placed an emphasis on a women’s capacity to withhold consent to sexual activity, i.e. “no means no”. While an emphasis on teaching women with and without ID to be emphatic about conveying “no” to unwanted sexual activity is useful in many ways, it is problematic where it continues to put the onus of avoiding rape on women themselves, e.g. it is the responsibility of women with and without disabilities to make sure that “no” is clearly conveyed. An emphasis on teaching women to say no to unwanted sexual activity also does not address the rape culture phenomenon where rapists are able to disregard women’s rejection of sexual advances, no matter how emphatic and clear they are.

The feminist “no means no” campaign does not address situations of sexual violence where women might choose not to say no in order to protect themselves from further violence, nor does it address the socialization of women to be sexually pleasing to others (Evans, 1993, p. 232) regardless of the absence of their own sexual desire (Friedman & Valenti, 2008). Finally, an
emphasis on “no means no” in a rape culture does not engage with the reality that women with and without ID are not encouraged to be sexual with themselves and others from a young age in the same way that men are. If women in general and women with ID in particular do not know for themselves what they do and do not desire sexually -or if they habitually subsume their desire/lack of desire to that of their partners- then they cannot be expected to suddenly know everything that they want and don’t want when it comes to sexual encounters.

Third wave feminists have worked to broaden notions of consent once again to include not only the importance of honoring a women’s no, but also the responsibility to obtain a non-coerced yes to sexual activity. While an emphasis on obtaining yes will undoubtedly have its own difficulties, sexual relationships that are marked not only by an absence of no but by the presence of yes and a woman’s sexual desire will arguably be safer and more fulfilling for everyone involved. In other words, an emphasis on both yes and no when it comes to sexual activity, and the discovering of women’s sexual desire, would be a superior tactic in resisting the sexual violence that marks a rape culture. The sexual citizenship of women with ID could also be strengthened through the feminist expansion of “consent” to include the absence of no and the presence of yes, along with an emphasis on women’s desire, when it comes to sexual expression. If all people learn to expect that sexual activity can only move forward when everyone involved actively expresses their desire to participate, rather than just passively letting sex happen to them, the status of women with and without ID as sexual citizens will be fortified. In fact, such intentionality would erode the rape culture foundation of sexual scripts and silence that now surrounds most sexual activity.

Sanctions on sexuality information is in itself a marker of a rape culture. Third wave feminist and sexual educator David Hingsburger’s “Ring of Safety” offers a template for
fortifying the active sexual agency of people with ID. Hingsburger is very critical of protecting people with ID from sexuality information, sexual relationships, and sexual decision-making, i.e. the “Prison of Protection”. Hingsburger even goes so far as to call the withholding of sexual education from people with ID “abuse” (Hingsburger & Tough, 2002). Hingsburger’s point is that by withholding sexuality information, we foster vulnerability in people with ID to sexual violence in a rape culture. One of Hingsburger’s examples demonstrates this: a women with ID was vaginally raped and had never been taught the word for “vagina”, so she reported to support staff that she had a stomach ache. Because she lacked the sexuality education to explain the location of her pain and what had happened, her abuse was understood too late, she received support for dealing with the sexual trauma too late, and her abuser never came to justice.

Rather than the “Prison of Protection”, Hingsburger and Tough (2002) propose to increase the active sexual agency of people with ID through comprehensive sexuality education throughout the lifespan that includes an emphasis on: privacy awareness; “the ability to non-comply”; support staff, family and friends who listen; an emphasis on understanding of personal rights; and the development of healthy self-concepts and self-confidence. This kind of third wave feminist, multifaceted approach to sexual citizenship works against rape culture and acknowledges the importance of developing active sexual agency in order for people with ID to develop the abilities to consent to sexual activity or refuse it, thereby claiming their own sexual citizenship.

In a rape culture, the ability to consent to sexual activity often becomes the deciding factor in establishing whether or not sexual assault has been committed against a person with an ID (Kennedy, 2003) as with the “Glen Ridge Case”. The power “subtexts” of sexual citizens who oppress as well as non-sexual citizens who are the subject of intersecting oppression must be
taken into account in order for consent capacities to be established in such cases (Razack, 1998). In addition to taking into account “subtexts” of power, measuring sexual consent capacity should be focused on establishing a person’s capacity so that it can be increased, not used as a justification for restricted sexual citizenship. Even though sexual consent capacity instruments may be useful and necessary in clinical and legal settings, clinicians and legal practitioners must be mindful that the use of such instruments may compromise the sexual citizenship of women with ID when it leads to further restrictions of their sexual citizenship in the name of protection.

The use of sexual consent capacity instruments should occur only in conjunction with plans for increasing capacity. Ideally, the development and use of instruments that measure sexual consent capacity would occur well before there is even a critical need for such information, as in a court of law.

The assumption when it comes to sexual consent capacity should be that more is possible, instead of the historical assumption that people with ID are incapable of increasing their capacities. If the training around sexual consent capacity began in childhood and continued throughout the lifespan, rather than the rape culture norm of restricted access to sexuality information, the opportunity for people with ID to increase sexual consent capacity over time would be heightened, as would their status as sexual citizens. As it is, the seeming impossibility of increasing sexual consent capacity is bound up with the fact that efforts begin when people with ID are already adults, and there is a need to measure and increase capacity all of the sudden, i.e. in a courtroom after an alleged sexual assault. Obviously, attempts to increase sexual consent capacities all of a sudden in adults already experiencing sexually challenging behaviors or abuse does indeed seem impossible. One means of increasing the sexual consent capacity of people
with ID is the ongoing promotion and fostering of sexual self-advocacy, a topic that will be examined in the next, concluding chapter of this thesis.
V. CONCLUSION

A. Overview

The aim of this thesis has been to draw attention to the general absence of women with ID from feminist discourse around citizenship and sexual citizenship and to offer some explicit ways of altering notions of citizenship/sexual citizenship such that women with ID might be included. Specifically, each chapter explored one research question. Chapter II explored the research question: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about citizenship? In Chapter II, the claims of several feminist citizenship theorists were explored in order to examine whether or not considerations of women with ID were present, and if not, how spaces could be created for women with ID as citizens in such feminist citizenship discourse.

Chapter III explored the second research question: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability (ID)? As with Chapter II, this chapter sought to examine representations -namely the invisibility- of women with ID as sexual citizens in feminist sexual citizenship discourse and to explore ways of creating space for their sexual citizenship. Finally, Chapter IV explored the third and final research question: What are some of the implications of third wave feminist textual discourse around sexual citizenship for women with ID? In researching for this chapter, the feminist notion of “rape culture” repeatedly arose. Thus, chapter IV explored implications of feminist notions of sexual citizenship in terms of “rape culture” and situates women with ID as sexual citizens within such discourse. The overall arguments and conclusions of each chapter are further reviewed below.
B. **Main Chapter Arguments**

1. **Chapter II: Feminist approaches to citizenship**

   Chapter II examined the first research question: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about citizenship? Specifically, Chapter II explored feminist notions of citizenship and called attention to the absence of women with ID from feminist citizenship discourse, as well as offering some ways of creating spaces for women with ID within feminist citizenship discourse. Citizenship was defined as the belonging and participation of people in a society, including individual rights as well as obligations. Obtaining citizenship status is crucial because it means obtaining access to socially and legally sanctioned privileges (i.e. rights). To not have citizenship status means living without the rights that offer protection for one’s physical and psychological wellbeing.

   Feminist citizenship theorists explored in Chapter II claimed that a traditional “citizen” in Western contexts has historically been white, male, of middle or upper class socioeconomic status “rational, restrained, and chaste, not yielding to passion” (Young, 1989, p. 254-255). In such traditional notions of citizenship women are seen as too passionate, emotional, dependent or in some other way too particular and not universal enough to qualify for citizenship. Needless to say, in such traditional models of citizenship, women with ID are also seen as too “particular” to qualify for citizenship. Despite the fact that there is space for women with ID as citizens in the analyses of feminist theorists examined for this thesis, they remain invisible. Chapter II outlined some of the feminist alternative notions of citizenship, and drew attention to the invisibility of women with ID within them. In this way, Chapter II addressed the overarching aim of this thesis, which has been to draw attention to the invisibility of women with ID in feminist discourse, as
well as to offer some explicit ways of altering notions of citizenship such that women with ID might be included.

2. **Chapter III: Feminist approaches to sexual citizenship**

   The general explorations of feminist notions of citizenship in Chapter II set the stage for Chapter III in exploring feminist notions of sexual citizenship in particular. Chapter III examined the second research question of this thesis: What claims have third wave feminist theorists made about sexual citizenship and intellectual disability (ID)? Specifically, Chapter III draws attention to the absence of disability in general from feminist sexual citizenship discourse, and the invisibility of women with ID as sexual citizens in particular. Chapter III introduced the notions of sexual citizenship and sexual citizens, explored several works by third wave feminist theorists related to sexual citizenship, examined the invisibility of women with ID in feminist discourse generally, and offered some ways of creating space for the sexual citizenship of women with ID within such discourse.

   “Sexual citizenship” was defined as the legal, social and cultural recognition, belonging, and privileging of one’s sexual identity, i.e. “sexuality” and sexual expression, i.e. “sex”, such that they are at least tolerated, hopefully accommodated, and maybe even celebrated. A “sexual citizen” was defined as a person in a society that is unashamed -and even proud- of their sexuality, and whom does not face social ostracism, litigation, professional, and familial interference when it comes to their sexual identity and practices. According to third wave feminist theorist Gayle Rubin (1989) sexual citizens in western frameworks have traditionally been considered people who are: heterosexual, married, monogamous, have sex for procreation, engage only in private sex without sex workers and sex paraphernalia, and have sex only with people their own age. To be a sexual citizen means that one will have a certain level of social
status, respect, access to resources and other various material and institutional benefits.

Conversely, to be a non-sexual citizen means that one will suffer from a lack of the same things. The privileging of white, able-bodied/minded “familial, marital, heterosexual” male (Cossman, 2007, p. 127) people as citizens and sexual citizens is a long standing tradition in Western societies (Weeks, 1998), as is the exclusion of people with physically disabilities (Garland-Thomson, 1997), people with intellectual disabilities (Carey, 2009; Carlson, 2010) women (Cossman, 2007), and people of color (hooks, 1981, 1984).

Chapter III concluded that sexual citizenship status should be conferred not only upon the traditional white, able bodied, middle class, non-kinky, male body who has monogamous sex in private only with the body of a partner his own age, but to all “Others” as well; specifically, that sexual citizenship be conceptualized to include women with ID. The invisibility of women with ID in feminist sexual citizenship discourse as examined in this chapter is likely indicative of the larger exclusion of women with ID as sexual citizens in feminist discourse generally, although further research would need to be conducted to confirm this.

The first step to creating space for the sexual citizenship of women with ID within feminist discourse is the naming and analyzing their absence/invisibility, as Chapters II and III seek to do. Additionally, as does Rubin (1989), this thesis calls for a reformulation of both traditional and feminist notions of sexual citizenship, such that truly everyone is included. Such a reformulation is in fact what feminist citizenship and sexual citizenship theorists examined in this thesis have called for, and yet much of their analysis is indicative that they have not had women with ID in mind when they proposed such reformulations.

As does feminist theorists Sherene Razack (1998) examined in Chapter III, this thesis draws attention to how feminists are complicit in the oppression of women with ID when they
extend pity that erodes citizenship and sexual citizenship status rather than respect, which fosters citizenship/sexual citizenship. Feminists must become universally aware of women with ID as an oppressed category of women whom are also capable of resistance. Feminist theorists must also acknowledge what Razack calls the “subtexts” of power and intersectionality of oppression surrounding women and women with disabilities in general, and women with ID in particular. In other words, when it comes to sexual citizenship, feminists must be as aware of disability in general and intellectual disability in particular, as they are of gender, race, ethnicity, class, a/sexuality, etc. Feminist theory must incorporate disability generally and intellectual disability particularly as pillars of feminist theories of intersectionality and oppression.

Chapter III explored how spaces for women with ID as sexual citizens must be created alongside women with physical disabilities and women without disabilities in feminist theory. As third wave feminist Licia Carlson (2010) examined in Chapter II claims: intellectual disability remains “overshadowed” in feminist discourse by women with physical disabilities and women without disabilities, therefore extra care must be taken to avoid the invisibility of women with ID as sexual citizens in feminist theory. As does Carlson (2010), this thesis calls for an emphasis not on the vulnerability of women with ID as sexual citizens, but on the resistance to oppression that women with ID are capable of offering given ongoing, individualized and lifelong supports, especially when it comes to sexual self-advocacy on the part of women with ID themselves. Additionally, spaces for the sexual citizenship of women with ID must also be created not only through an awareness of women with ID within feminist discourse, but in Disability Studies as well. Together, the interdisciplinarity and collaboration between feminist theorists, Disability Studies scholars and women with ID as sexual self-advocates has the strongest chance of creating spaces for all women -including women with intellectual disabilities- as sexual citizens.
3. **Chapter IV: Sexual citizenship in a “rape culture”**

Chapter IV explored the feminist concept of “rape culture” through the third research question number of this thesis: What are some of the implications of third wave feminist textual discourse around sexual citizenship for women with ID? Specifically, Chapter IV examined how feminist notions of rape culture are representative of feminist textual discourse around women’s sexual citizenship, and how women with ID fit into such representations. The feminist notion of “rape culture” has particular implications for the sexual citizenship of women with intellectual disabilities.

A “rape culture” is a culture imbued with sexual violence towards women, including sexual ridicule, rape, and notions of sex as a commodity, i.e. “the commodity model” of sex. Rape culture is also permeated by sex negativity, including negative perceptions of sex work and the exclusion of people as sexual citizens based on class, race, a/sexual orientation, gender orientation and disability. Rape culture is marked by sanctions against sexual play and access to sexuality information, such that promoting either of these can work to limit one’s sexual citizenship. A sex negative culture puts a premium on heterosexual performance, i.e. heteronormativity, and heterosexual romance, i.e. “the romance myth”, and requires of sexual citizens that they adhere to an inflexible, phallocentric gender binary system.

Chapter IV explored third wave feminist arguments that the experience and interpretation of sexual violence by the survivor in a rape culture, rather than the place of the experience on the hierarchy of sexual violence, defines the trauma of that experience. It also explored the deconstruction of the survivor/abuser dichotomy, including the creation of a “new script” of sexuality that could create space for the sexual citizenship of women with and without ID in a rape culture. Women with ID were not present in any of the feminist texts about sexual
citizenship in a rape culture examined for this chapter. In other words, women with ID were invisible as sexual citizens in the discourses examined. Despite this invisibility, a new sexuality “script” could challenge the survivor/abuser dichotomy for women with and without ID, such that the reality of the dual roles played by many people who experience sexual violence, as both survivors and abusers, would be exposed. For women with ID, this could mean that being both an abuser and/or survivor could be taken into account in sexuality education and treatment plans, more effectively changing cycles of sexual violence.

To challenge the abuser/survivor dichotomy also means that abusers will not be demonized and survivors will not be stripped of sexual agency and capacity for resistance. A new feminist script of sexuality could also challenge ableist notions in rape culture that exclude women with ID, marking them as asexual children and invisible sexual citizens. In other words, a new sexuality script, guided by feminist notions of sexual citizenship, could create spaces for the sexual citizenship of women with ID.

Chapter IV also examined how women with ID have been framed as primarily vulnerable sexual citizens, in need of protection at the expense of status as sexual citizens, e.g. sexual pleasure and relationships. It was argued that such a vulnerability discourse puts women with ID at risk when it names them as vulnerable to sexual abuse, presenting them as easy victims to sexual abusers, and perpetuating that identity for themselves, without providing lifelong, comprehensive, and individualized sexuality education through a feminist lens that is sensitive to issues of gender, disability and oppression, which could disrupt such victimization. The feminist notions of “no means no” and “yes means yes” were introduced as both promising and problematic for the sexual citizenship of women with ID. It was argued that both concepts must be employed in order for women with and without ID to claim sexual citizenship, and that all
people must learn that sexual activity should only move forward when everyone involved has actively expressed their desire to participate, rather than just passively letting sex happen to them. For women with ID, this means that part of individualized and comprehensive sexuality education in a rape culture will mean challenging their exclusion from sexual citizenship via sexual self-advocacy, which is discussed more in the “Significance and Implications” section below.

C. Limitations

The major limitation of this research is a lack of clear methodology whereby texts were chosen based on predetermined criteria, and then sought out and examined via comprehensive, systemic literature reviews. The explanation for this is that the original concept for this thesis was an interest in emerging “consent capacity instruments” and sexuality education specifically for people with intellectual disabilities, as well as an emerging sense that such topics were integrally connected with and central to feminist theory. Initial literature reviews and course work around these topics -consent, sexuality education and feminist theory- led to the realization that there were larger questions of citizenship and sexual citizenship at work that first needed to be explored.

What was meant to be a cursory journey into literature about feminist citizenship theory turned into a yearlong venture with no end in sight. Thus, what was discovered in that year about feminist citizenship theory, with explorations from one text leading to another text, was what became the core feminist citizenship material referenced for this work. Also, feminist notions like “rape culture” and “performance model” were unexpected finds that appear very much to be central to feminist notions of sexual citizenship, and yet systemic literature reviews were not conducted because they were unanticipated topics that were discovered, not systemically sought
after. As topics that emerged during the research, the third wave feminist anthologies used in this thesis for analysis of rape culture were not systematically chosen. Therefore, systemic literature reviews around the topics of feminist citizenship theory, particularly as it pertains to sexual citizenship and rape culture still need to be explored. This leads to the suggestions for future research directions, which are presented in the final section of this thesis conclusion.

D. Significance and Implications

1. **Women with intellectual disabilities and feminist discourse: Invisibility, distancing, and exclusion**

   Excluding the works by theorists that specifically looked at intellectual disability (Carey, 2009; Carlson, 2010; Razack, 1998), the feminist textual discourse around citizenship and sexual citizenship examined in this thesis did not mention women intellectual disabilities in their arguments. In other words, women with ID were invisible as citizens and sexual citizens in the feminist textual discourse examined for this thesis. Where intellectual disability was inexplicitly present, it was in claiming citizenship and sexual citizenship for women without disabilities based on the argument that women are as intelligent/independent/hard working, etc., as men and therefore deserve equal rights and statuses. Claims to citizenship inclusion based on intellectual ability necessarily exclude women with ID, whose disabilities are defined as impairments and deficits of measurable intellect, which frequently goes hand in hand with dependence.

   The feminist emphasis on capacities, whether of measurable intelligence, independence, ability to participate in wage work, or desire and ability to parent, as found in texts examined for this thesis, all serve to exclude women with ID in various ways. For example, if claims to citizenship are based on women’s independence, women with ID will be excluded as citizens
where they need extra supports and live essentially *inter*dependently, rather than independently. Also, where feminist claims to sexual citizenship are based on motherhood, women with ID who have historically been institutionalized and sterilized, or otherwise prevented from becoming mothers, will not be sexual citizens. All of this is to say that many of the feminist texts examined in this thesis either did not consider women with ID at all, i.e. “invisibility”, distanced from ID in making claims to rights for women without ID, i.e. “distancing”, and/or excluded women with ID through an emphasis on individual capacities such as independence, intelligence, wage work in the public realm, and motherhood in the private, all of which women with intellectual disabilities may need (inter)dependent supports in order to obtain, i.e. “exclusion”.

2. **Creating spaces for women with intellectual disabilities in feminist discourse**

While the feminist texts examined in this thesis by and large inadvertently contribute to the invisibility of women with intellectual disabilities, distance feminist theory from issues of intellectual disability, and/or exclude women with ID, there is still room for women with ID in citizenship and sexual citizenship feminist discourse. For example, the struggle against rape culture sex negativity can be particularly meaningful for the sexual citizenship of women with ID. The sex negativity that women with ID experience is both a product of ableist assumptions that degrade people with ID, as well as a reflection of greater sex negativity in U.S., and perhaps Western, cultures. Where feminists seek to dismantle rape culture, they will benefit both women with and without ID coping with sex negativity that erodes their status as sexual citizens. Additionally, where feminists leave off dismantling rape culture sex negativity for women in general, the Disability Rights Movement (DRM), Self-Advocacy Movement, and Disability Studies can pick up dismantling sex negativity for women with disabilities in particular.
a. **Sex positivity, asexuality, and “consent culture”**

Rape culture notions of sex negativity must be replaced by consent culture notions of sex positivity. While “consent culture” is not a term widely used outside of its proposal here, it is being offered as a term of vision in contrast to feminist notions of “rape culture”. If rape culture is marked by sexual ridicule, abuse, rape, the commodity model of sex, sex negativity, victim blaming, hierarchies of sexual violence, notions of consent that lack an active yes and women’s sexual desire, heteronormativity, ableism, etc., then sex positivity and asexuality are positioned as offering resistance to these phenomena. While the focus of this thesis is on people who are sexual, there is a place in a consent culture for people who are asexual as well; indeed the option not to be sexual would be integral to a consent culture, and is violated by rape culture sexual violence where the choice to not be sexual is forcibly taken away. In other words, sex positivity in resistance to rape culture sex negativity includes people who are interested in sex, as well as those who are not (Asexual Visibility and Education Network, 2008). Sex positivity is about defining one’s a/sexuality on one’s own terms, in a way that is empowering, uplifting, and free of individual, social and/or institutional stigma. For women with ID, sex positivity, including asexuality, offers possibilities for their inclusion as sexual citizens.

Consent culture sex positivity can be offered as an alternative model to the rape culture sex negativity where sexual consent in the absence of an explicit “no” is frequently assumed by heterosexual men in many sexual interactions with women; where women’s sexual pleasure is subsumed under men’s presumed sexual “need”; where sex work and sexual play are criminalized, etc. In contrast to sex negative rape culture, a sex positive consent culture would be marked by sexual relationships free of sexual violence, where all parties desire the sexual activity that takes place, and where consent is constantly negotiated in both public and private
realms. In contrast to a sex negative rape culture, a consent culture marked by sex positivity, including the accepted possibility of asexuality, would serve to strengthen sexual citizenship for women in general, and women with ID in particular.

b. **Exercises in consent**

While the feminist texts utilized in this thesis examining negotiations of consent do not explicitly talk about women with intellectual disabilities, some of the exercises around consent would be of great benefit to women with ID. An example is the Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, Sadism and Masochism (BDSM) exercise of a “Yes No Maybe” chart. Such charts are basically a list of sexual activities, including touching, penetration, role-play, etc., that people can use as an activity to help navigate discussions about sexual boundaries. In other words, a Yes No Maybe chart helps to map out consensual and non-consensual sexual activities between parties.

While sexuality education curriculum for people with ID often includes exercises about consent around different kinds of touch (an example of this is the curriculum *Sexuality Education for Adults with Developmental Disabilities* by McLaughlin, Topper, & Lindert, 2009) incorporating the BDSM tradition of ongoing navigation of sexual consent from a feminist perspective that is sensitive to systemic gender and power disparities could further enrich sexuality education for women with ID. Specifically, incorporating such BDSM notions of consent navigation in the form of the Yes No Maybe Chart breaks down possibilities of sexual activity very explicitly without abstraction, something sexuality educators like David Hingsburger and Orieda Horn Anderson report is essential for people with ID as learners.

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43 For a downloadable sample of a “Yes, No, Maybe” chart go to http://thatotherpaper.com/austin/yes_no_maybe (as retrieved on October 21, 2011). Also, for more ideas about navigating sexual boundaries in nontraditional ways, see *The Ethical Slut* (1997) by Easton and Liszt.
Additionally, exercises in consent from a feminist perspective could enrich sexuality education for women with and without ID by fostering an awareness that much of the sexual violence that women experience is connected to their gender, in addition to their other identities as women with intellectual disabilities, working class women, women of color, transgender women, etc. In other words, a feminist perspective could enrich sexuality education by fostering an awareness of how sexual violence is a part of rape culture, and resisting it is both an individual and a group struggle, a struggle not just for women with ID alone, but for all women and any individual or group who experiences similar oppression. Exercises in and dialog about consent as part of a feminist sexuality curriculum could create an awareness of systemic, intersectional oppression that goes beyond individual women with ID, while simultaneously kindling and fostering an awareness of possibilities for individual sexual agency and communal resistance.

c. **The “performance model” of sex**

Another feminist concept that could function to create space for the sexual citizenship of women with ID both in and outside of feminist discourse is the “performance model” of sex. The performance model of sex is juxtaposed in contrast to “sex as a commodity”. While sex as a commodity positions sex as something in limited supply, that women have and which men must get from them by any means possible (as exemplified by the colloquial expression that men, “get some” when referring to sexual intercourse or oral sex, while women, “give it up”), the performance model metaphorically positions sex as, for example, a performance between musicians. As Thomas MacCauley Millar argues (Friedman and Valenti, 2008): just as musicians must practice for many years, both formally and informally, in collaborations with different musicians from different backgrounds, their skill, and confidence
increasing with time and exposure to various styles and genres and performance spaces, so too must people experience sexuality.

This is not to necessarily argue for sex without boundaries with many partners, although that would be a respected choice for some women with and without disabilities in a consent culture. Rather, it is a call to view sex and sexuality as the accumulation of life experiences over time, best experienced both conceptually, e.g. through sexuality education, sharing stories about sexuality performances with others etc., and practically, e.g. navigating sexuality in relationships, whether one is actively participating in sex acts or not. To frame sex and sexuality as a performance rather than a commodity shifts the onus on women -including women with ID- to manage the incessant onslaught of sexual advances as gatekeepers of the commodity of sex, and instead positions all people as potential sexual actors in a performance that is enriched, not diminished, through sexuality education and experience.

3. **Feminist awareness: Pity, vulnerability, and resistance**

Feminists must become more universally aware of women with intellectual disabilities as an oppressed category of women whom are also capable of resistance. Also, feminists must become aware of how pity -feminist or otherwise- compounds that oppression and stymies resistance. Additionally, feminists should understand that the implications of feminist discourse emphasizing the independence, competence, and intelligence of women has certain repercussions for the citizenship and sexual citizenship status of people with disabilities, especially women with intellectual disabilities. Ideally, feminist theorists would be as aware of issues surrounding disability in general, and women with ID in particular, as they are of the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, class, and a/sexuality with gender. With this awareness,
disability/intellectual disability could begin to be incorporated as one of the pillars of feminist theories of intersectionality and oppression, especially sexual oppression.

Feminist theorists, academics, activists, and academics must become aware of how women with ID remain “overshadowed” (Carlson, 2010, p. 12) in philosophical and feminist discourse. As does Carlson, this thesis calls for an emphasis not on the sexual vulnerability and suffering of women with ID due to sexual violence, but on the potential of women with ID as capable of resistance to sexual violence, whose sexual consent capacity stands the best chance for development through lifelong, comprehensive, individualized sexual education informed by feminist theory as well as Disability Studies. Such lifelong sexuality education would not frame women with ID as “eternal children” (Carey, 2009, p. 105), nor as hypersexual people requiring sterilization and institutionalization, but as people capable of continued learning in the presence of individualized supports and sex positive values about sexuality from infancy through old age.

This is not to say that every single person with ID -or without for that matter- is infinitely capable of benefitting from feminist informed sexuality education. The sexual consent capacity, including abilities of resistance, of people with very severe intellectual disabilities may not obviously increase even with lifelong, individualized sexuality education. However, all people, all women, even those with the most severe disabilities, must be shown respect and dignity when it comes to their a/sexual selves. This means, for example, that the sexual dignity of a woman with ID who is non-communicative and non-ambulatory is presumed, and that it is never ever deemed acceptable to subject her to sexual violence, or else to completely deprive her of all human touch outside of her everyday basic care.

The sexual citizenship of women with ID is at once very private and very public. It is private in the sense that those personally involved are most often best positioned to know what is
sexually appropriate and sexually inappropriate for that person. It is also public in the sense that sometimes those closest to such situations may be lacking the perspective or vantage point that public discourse could expand upon. All of this is to say that in the presence of lifelong, individualized sexuality education and supports, informed by feminist theory and Disability Studies, women with ID are probably more capable, more of the time, of sexual agency, and resistance than is often assumed. Where questions of sex and sexuality arise in individual cases, networks of support in which to safely discuss among a group of allies, rather than only within individual families, could work to create spaces for the sexual citizenship of women with ID. Yet, the final decisions about issues of sexual citizenship rest with women with ID themselves through sexual self-advocacy, as discussed in the next section.

E. Future Directions

1. Building feminist discursive awareness: Rape culture, consent capacity instruments, and legal guardianship

In order to develop and methodologically ground the claim in this thesis that women with ID have been largely excluded from feminist discourse, a more focused and extensive literature review of feminist citizenship and sexual citizenship theory is required; preferably with a more narrowly defined geography, e.g. the United States. Similarly, a honed in literature review of feminist notion of “rape culture” is required. Examples and analysis of sexual self-advocacy and increasing consent capacity, including sexual consent capacity instruments, would also be informative. Finally, in the same vein, a collection and examination of state and national standards of legal guardianship, including real-life examples, e.g. service agency dilemmas, court cases, etc., as relates to the sexual citizenship of women with ID would offer pragmatic knowledge that could directly be of benefit to women with ID, their families and
service providers. Such analysis could be presented in an accessible way at feminist, self-advocacy and Disability Studies conferences in order to raise awareness about issues surrounding the sexual citizenship of women with ID, namely their relative invisibility as sexual citizens in feminist discourse, and even in Disability Studies to a large extent.

2. **Gender consciousness, empowerment, and sexual self-advocacy**

   In order to most effectively increase sexual consent capacity, sexuality education for people with and without intellectual disabilities must not only incorporate feminist notions of sex positivity, with a focus on increasing sexual consent capacity throughout the lifespan, but also emphasize sexual self-advocacy. Just as notions of sexual citizenship have their origins in citizenship theory, sexual self-advocacy has its origins in self-advocacy. Self-advocacy refers to people with ID who are their own “self-advocates” (Human Services Research Institute, 2011). Similarly, sexual self-advocacy refers to people with ID who speak up for themselves concerning matters of sexuality such as access to factual sexuality information, exploring and setting sexual boundaries, learning about sexual pleasure, navigating sexual and non-sexual relationships, communicating sexual desire, coping with sexual violence, etc. In other words, sexual self-advocacy is about people with intellectual disabilities working to increase their sexual consent capacity.

   For the tools learned from comprehensive and life long sexuality education to be effective, women with ID must have the confidence and support to enact such lessons, and the way to do this is through an incorporation of sexual self-advocacy into sexuality curriculum. Ideally, the feminist awareness of gender, and a Disability Studies emphasis on resisting pity, in combination with fostering empowerment through sexual-self advocacy, would be integral to such curricula. Therefore, a meaningful future direction for research would also be the piloting of
a sexuality education curriculum that takes all of these factors into account, i.e. nurturing sexual self-advocacy, developing a sensitivity to intersectional oppression through feminist consciousness, and exploring the disability community’s resistance of pity and vulnerability discourses through empowerment. An example of such a curriculum is the Green Mountain Self-Advocates and Katherine McLaughlin of Planned Parenthood’s *Sexuality Education for Adults with Developmental Disabilities* (2009). This curriculum was created with the integral participation of self-advocates alongside sexuality educators who primarily work with people with intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities and is designed to be taught with self-advocates.

Such a pilot could aim to demonstrably measure increased sexual self-advocacy skills, i.e. sexual consent capacity, and a feminist awareness of interlocking oppressions along the lines of gender, disability, race, ethnicity, class, a/sexuality, etc. A sexuality education pilot that incorporated all of these elements would politicize women with intellectual disabilities’ exclusion from sexual, in addition to fostering the sexual self-advocacy skills necessary for resistance, by which spaces for the sexual citizenship of women with intellectual disabilities could be created.

F. **Conclusion: A Synthesis**

Throughout the movement, feminists have sought to reformulate both philosophical and practical notions of sexual citizenship. While particular feminist theorists like Garland-Thompson, Razack, and Carlson have included analysis of citizenship and sexual citizenship of women with disabilities in general, and even intellectual disability in particular, disability has yet to become a central pillar of feminist reformulations in the way that gender, race, class, and sexuality are. While particular feminist theorists explore the questions of disability, feminist
theory in general does not engage with disability as a pivotal and central locus of oppression and resistance, at once an identity, a social status, an embodiment, and as disability artist and activist Neil Marcus declares “an ingenious way to live.” Without the inclusion of disability as a central point of analysis, feminist theory is less empowering as a tool for social justice, it is less nuanced and trustworthy. Disability must be moved to a central position in feminist theory because disability can destabilize our identities and unify disparate causes for social justice all at once.

In particular, the positioning of women with intellectual disabilities within feminist theory could offer radical ways of reformulating notions of sexual citizenship; an example of this are the issues surrounding consent. To consider the sexual consent capacity of women with ID would have implications for the feminist campaigns of “yes means yes” and “no means no”. These campaigns are based on non-disabled assumptions of certain communication abilities, i.e. the ability to speak (and in English). These slogans also reflect assumptions of strength and independence that do not take into account the precarious position of people like women with ID who often live with support people, family members, and legal guardians who are all socially and legally sanctioned to control everything from administering medication (including birth control), to monthly benefit checks. To “empower” women with ID with the sexual self-advocacy skills to say “no” when it comes to their bodies will be a much more complex journey than for a non-disabled woman who has the ability and the resources to remove herself from situations that infringe upon her sense of dignity as a sexual citizen. To consider and theorize about the challenges that women with ID face as sexual citizens under intense surveillance could aid feminist theorists in, for example, wrestling with the questions and challenges of consent for immigrant women and women of color who also experience institutionalized surveillance and managing of their sexual lives.
As service providers and sexuality educators who work with people with intellectual disabilities have reported: teaching people with ID to say yes and no (i.e. teaching about sexual self-advocacy) can lead to serious disruptions in their lives. In some cases, such resistance can even lead to illness and death, as when people with disabilities in institutions and group homes are punished and neglected when they resist staff and other professionals. Feminist activists working with battered women have learned a similar lesson when counseling women to leave their abusers, only to find that abuse can escalate and result in hospitalization and sometimes murder of the women trying to leave, trying to change. When it comes to such experiences, feminists have learned that to simply council individual women to change is not only ineffective but dangerous. We must seek to address infringements upon the sexual citizenship of women with and without ID through both individual and systemic change. We must always consider context because to do otherwise is unethical and dangerous for the women involved. The situation of women with ID dealing with service systems that manage their sexualities could be a rich and creative source for feminist theorists seeking to address individual and systemic changes to benefit the sexual citizenship of all women. For example, studying the way that women with ID are their own sexual self-advocates while navigating myriad service providers and medical professionals could offer insight and ideas for feminist theorists seeking to creatively empower individual women as sexual citizens whom must also cope with institutionalized forces of oppression such as racism, sexism, heteronormativity and bureaucracy, as well as rape culture. There are other unique perspectives of sexual citizenship that only women with intellectual disabilities can bring to light for feminist theory. For example, the questions of whether or not people who are disempowered can ever truly give legitimate consent to a sexual relationship with someone positioned with more power. In the feminist movement, the question has been whether
women, as a disempowered gender, can ever be truly equal and therefore consensual in sexual relationships with men. Similarly, feminists have struggled with questions of consent and power when it comes to BDSM relationships for women where disparities in power are intrinsic to sexual activities and participants are often expressing their experiences of sexual oppression in the form of BDSM “play”. For women with ID, the question is whether women with ID can ever be consensual sexual partners either with men because they are women, and/or with non-intellectually disabled or less intellectually disabled partners because they are people with ID.

My sense is that women in general, and women with intellectual disabilities in particular, can and should be supported in participating in sexual relationships, including with men and with non-disabled people, as desired. Social justice for “all women” and people mean that we do not let protection trump individual choice when it comes to sexuality, even where there is a history of exclusion and exploitation. However, the caveat is that while we can accept, nourish, and support the sexual citizenship of individual women with ID to choose their relationships, whether we perceive such as relationships as exploitive or not, we must at the same time work on multiple levels for systemic change that dismantles ableism, sexism, racism, etc., and not simply for individual empowerment alone. Individual intervention must occur alongside systemic reformulations of sexual citizenship that incorporate feminist sensitivities to gender, ethnicity, a/sexuality, fatness, etc., as well as disability in general and ID in particular. One means by which to enact such re-articulation and systemic change is through sexuality education for all people. Individuals, including women with ID, must be allowed to make their individual choices when it comes to sexuality -even when those choices are expressive of their oppression, as in relationships of power disparities and abuse- while we are all receiving and working through
comprehensive, life-long, critical feminist, race and Disability Studies informed sexuality education.

Here is another point where people with intellectual disabilities have something unique to offer feminist theory: accessible sexuality education for people with ID would be more accessible for everyone. While non-intellectually disabled people may like to think their intelligence eliminates the risk of being misinformed about sexuality, this is not the case. If we applied the same rigor to testing and increasing the sexual consent capacity of people without ID that is applied to women with ID, the prevalence of appalling levels of sexual misinformation would surely be diminished. If we are going to test the capacities of people with ID and invest in accessible, feminist and disability sensitive sexuality education throughout the lifespan for them as a “vulnerable” population, then the general population ought to be held to at least the same standards of sexual consent capacity.

The same idea of testing and increasing sexual consent capacity and providing accessible sexuality education for everyone, not just “vulnerable” people like women with ID, applies to developing skills of “sexual self-advocacy” as well. When it comes to negotiating consent and getting in touch with desire and pleasure, American women of all kinds often have as much to learn as women with ID. Just as increasing sexual consent capacity and accessing sexuality education must be individual and systemic goals for women with and without ID, so too must increasing all of our sexual self-advocacy skills be on the agenda, and women with ID who are sexual self-advocates are well positioned to inform feminist theorists and activists how to do this.

To “create spaces” for women with intellectual disabilities as sexual citizens in feminist theory means that feminists will often mention women with ID when we write lists about “others” for whom we are working to reformulate sexual citizenship: women of color,
transgendered women, queer women, asexual women, fat women, religious women, and *women with intellectual disabilities*. Not that feminist writers must write out a comprehensive list of every particular group of women they have in mind, but in every book, every article, in every discussion, women with disabilities in general and women with ID in particular must be mentioned and included in analysis throughout, if not every single time. To create spaces for women with ID means that we will include examples of all kinds of women with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, when we theorize about women’s consent, independence, and sexual justice.

To create spaces for women with ID in feminist discourses of sexual citizenship means that we will include women with ID on all of our activist and academic agendas for comprehensive, life-long, critical feminist, race, and disability sensitive sexuality education. Creating spaces for women with ID means that we will consider sexual consent capacity instruments as both baselines from which to expand our knowledge, and also as potentially dangerous and paternalistic tools that should only be used in conjunction with increasing, not restricting sexual citizenship, and preferably before experiences of sexual violence have occurred. To create spaces for women with ID as sexual citizens within feminist discourse means that non-intellectually disabled feminists will not distance themselves from intellectual disability and women with ID for their own benefit of their own sexual citizenship. When feminists without ID seek to make claims to sexual citizenship, they will not do so in ways that continually “other” women with ID, such as through everyday claims to sexual justice like “I deserve sexual rights because I too am as intelligent and independent as any man; I’m not an idiot/ a moron/an imbecile/stupid, incompetent!” In other words, creating spaces for women with ID means that feminists without ID will not stake claims to their own sexual citizenship by excluding and
distancing from women with ID. We will create spaces for women with intellectual disabilities as sexual citizens by honoring them as the sources of knowledge for how to navigate intense surveillance as excluded sexual citizens, and to offer resistance through sexual self-advocacy, nurtured and supported through critical feminist and Disability Studies informed sexuality education.
REFERENCES


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EDUCATION

08/10-PRESENT  University of Illinois at Chicago
PhD student in Disability Studies
Research interests: Sexuality education that is inclusive of women with
intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and utilizes feminist
notions of how gender affects sexuality.

08/08-12/11  University of Illinois at Chicago
MS in Disability & Human Development (exp. December 2011)
Thesis: Feminist Discourses of Sexual Citizenship: Creating
Spaces for Women with Intellectual Disabilities

08/03-05/07  University of Alaska Anchorage
B.A. Psychology; German minor

10/04 & 02/05  Center for Human Development (CHD) Student-staff internship
Introduction to behavioral/mental
health agencies and disability film

08/00-06/01  Lehrer Seminar Schule in Solothurn, Switzerland
Student of German

09/98-05/00  Robert Service High School
GED awarded 2002 in Anchorage, Alaska

GRANTS

08/07-06/08  Fulbright Recipient
Teaching Assistantship Grant in Lübeck, Germany
Received assignment as part of the Germany Fulbright “Diversity
Initiative” teaching at a vocational school with a culturally diverse
student population which had been underserved.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

08/08-PRESENT  Great Lakes Americans with Disabilities Act Center
Graduate Research Assistant, University of Illinois at Chicago
  • Management of the center’s web resource database as well
    as resources for various grants such as Punch-In! a project
    for students with disabilities wanting to attend college;
    worked with web designers to ensure accessibility of
    resource database and web based tool.
  • Collaborated with the UIC: Center for Physical Activity and
    Disability (NCPAD) on the “Health Empowerment Zone”
    (HEZ) grant collecting data about sidewalk and public
    transportation accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Data gathering to create an online blueprint/toolkit for post secondary institutions to implement inclusive program for students with intellectual disabilities; coordinated approximately thirty stakeholders in the process of creating blueprint/toolkit content.
- Prepared transcriptions of webinars and audio-conferences for web based distribution and created accessible PDF versions of texts.

12/06-08/07 Arc of Anchorage, Alaska
Individual Service Provider
- Provided individualized supports to various people with intellectual/developmental disabilities; supports included personal money management, job searching, and resume building; duties also entailed detailed paperwork for Medicare billing.
- Worked as a full time support staff in a group home for adults with dual-diagnoses i.e. co-occurring intellectual and psychiatric disabilities.

08/06-12/06 Disability Support Services, University of Alaska Anchorage
Student assistantship
- Scheduling appointments for students seeking classroom accommodations.
- Setting up classrooms with necessary equipment to meet individual student requests for accommodations.

06/06-07/06 Raven’s Quest Summer Institute, University of Alaska Anchorage
Peer Mentor
- Supported Alaska Native students coming from rural settings in adjusting to and accessing urban and university life e.g. coursework, paid internships, campus activities, city cultural events, etc.
- Designed and lead classes about cultural competency.

03/03-01/06 Drs. Robert & Joan Bundtzen
In-home Caregiver; Iditarod dog handler
- Provided supports to Dr. Joan Bundtzen who has a chronic illness e.g. medication management, grocery shopping, physical activity etc.
- Handled sled racing Huskies for Dr. Robert Bundtzen, including feedings, socialization, transporting animals, race starts, medications etc.

12/03-12/05 Center for Human Development, University of Alaska Anchorage
Project Assistant: Learn as You Earn, AAS degree in Disability Services
- Organizing student registration, financial aid and educational materials.
• Facilitating communication between faculty, students, and project managers regarding administrative processes and coursework.
• Writing reports to satisfy funding requirements.

06/02-06/03 Clayton College & State University Morrow, Georgia
LINX card systems officer
• Organized student demographic and personal information.
• Generated students identification cards.
• Directed students to basic campus services.

11/99-07/00 Borders Books and Music Anchorage, Alaska
Customer service; barista
• Responsible for directing customers to products.
• Served food and beverages to customers; organized café materials; managed supplies, including ordering and inventory.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

09/10- PRESENT Outreach to community agencies as an Ambassador Council member with, “Erasing the Distance” (ETD) a Chicago based organization working to reduce the stigma of mental illness through theatre; also work transcribing taped interviews that became stage productions.

08/09- PRESENT Volunteer with the University of Illinois (UIC): Sexuality & Disability Consortium (SDC); organizing meeting notes; presenting in various community settings (see “Presentations” on next page).

04/08/10 "Sexuality Workshop: Educator's Forum", follow up for participants from the 10/15 & 1016 2009 "Becoming a Sexuality Educator: Leading Groups”. Worked with the UIC: Sexuality & Disability Consortium (SDC) to fund and organize a meeting of self-advocates and their support staff in order to collect information about their work as sexuality educators and offer an opportunity for networking with other sexuality educators who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

10/15/09 & 10/16/09 "Becoming a Sexuality Educator: Leading Groups” Chicago, Illinois Volunteered with the UIC Sexuality & Disability Consortium (SDC) to fund and organize a training for self-advocates and their support staff to become sexuality educators.

01/2006 “Key Campaign”, organizing and attending campaign to advocate in the Alaska state capital of Juneau for policies and funding that support people with disabilities.
09/2005-05/2007 National Honor Society In Psychology (Psi Chi) member through the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA); worked to fundraise money for Hurricane Katrina relief; supported the university recycling program; organized the “Behavioral Science Conference of the North” (BSCN) where student showcase research in psychology and met professionals from the field.

04/2005 & 04/2006 “Full Lives Conference”, conference volunteer and attendee; annual conference supporting Alaskan direct support professionals working in developmental disabilities fields; sponsored through the Center for Human Development (CHD) of the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), the Alaska designated University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).

Presentations


4/22/11 “What is Sexual Self-Advocacy?”, co-presenter with a fellow Sexuality & Disability Consortium (SDC) member at the Access Living, “Disability Awareness Conference” for young women with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

4/19/11 “Feminist Discourses of Sexual Citizenship: Creating Spaces for Women with Intellectual Disabilities”, presented masters thesis work for the UIC: Department of Disability & Human Development’s “Works in Progress” series aimed to support graduate students in developing research projects/proposals.

3/21/11 “What is Sexual Self-Advocacy?”, returning guest speaker with fellow Sexuality & Disability Consortium (SDC) member Kajal Agarwal at the Independent Living Center, “Access Living”, for the activist/support group of young women with developmental and intellectual disabilities called the “Empowered Fe Fes”.

09/01/10 “Disability & Sexuality”, guest speaker with fellow SDC member Katie Keiling Arnold at the Independent Living Center, “Access Living”, for an activist/support group of young women with developmental and intellectual disabilities called the “Empowered Fe Fes”.

06/08/10 "Why Talk About Healthy Sexuality?" guest speaker at Jewish Children and Families Services with two fellow Sexuality & Disability Consortium members.

Energize and Reboot" at Lisle, Illinois; co-presented with two Sexuality & Disability Consortium (SDC) members

04/08/10 "Promoting Sexual Self-Advocacy" guest lecturer with two fellow Sexuality & Disability Consortium (SDC) members at the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental & Related Disabilities (LEND) lecture series through the Institute of Disability & Human Development (IDHD) at the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) of Illinois.

02/09/10 “Feminist Notions of Sexual Citizenship: Creating Space for the Sexualities of Women with Intellectual Disabilities” presentation of MS theoretical research at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC): Department of Gender & Women’s Studies (GWS) Spring 2011 Graduate Student Brownbag Series

01/29/10 "Advancing Sexual Self-Advocacy for People with Disabilities", co-presenter with eight members of the UIC: Sexuality & Disability Consortium (SDC); presentation title, at the DePaul University Health Disparities & Social Justice Conference 2010: A Focus on Sexual Health,

08/07-06/08 “Alaska Languages and Culture”, a power point introducing Alaskan history, Alaska Native languages and cultures in Lübeck, Germany to various audiences including youth at a vocational college, a continuing education English course, an elementary and a middle school.