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## Editorial<sup>☆</sup>

### Éditorial



Each year, the European Society for Disability Research ALTER organizes an international scientific conference in different European universities aimed at presenting and publicizing the most recent disability research in the human and social sciences.

The four articles in this issue of the ALTER review were initially presented as keynote lectures in the most recent annual ALTER conferences: Stockholm in 2016, and Lausanne in 2017.

The 5th annual ALTER conference, held in Sweden from 30 June through 1 July 2016, was jointly organized by the University of Stockholm and Uppsala and the Swedish Agency for Participation. The overall theme of this meeting was « Inclusion, Participation in disability research: comparisons and exchanges ». Two of the keynote lectures were published in volume 11th, 2017 issue of the review ALTER, and the last conference led to an article being published in the current issue of ALTER. Written by Anne Marcellini, it is entitled: The extraordinary development of sport for people with dis/abilities. What does it all mean?.

The 6th annual ALTER conference took place in Lausanne on 6 and 7 July 2017. It was organized by the University of Lausanne and the overall theme was: Disability, recognition and « community living »: Diversity of Practices and Plurality of Values ». The conference represented an endeavor to better understand the diversity of practices and experience of disability in different territorial entities (cantons, departments, regions, nations, etc.) characterized by contrasting socio-historic, political and cultural configurations. In these different entities, which are voluntary bound to the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, social stakeholders attempt to transform the representations and social participation of persons with specific needs, including the key objective: "community living". Three of the articles in the present issue are derived from the keynote conferences in Lausanne and address the aforementioned general theme.

<sup>☆</sup> The 6th Alter Conference of Lausanne became reality due to the cooperation of numerous partners – academic, scientific or simply affiliated – all of them directly concerned by issues that associate disability and social change: the National Swiss Research Fund, the Science-Society Interface, the Social Sciences Institute and the Sport Sciences Institute and the Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration of the University of Lausanne, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland, and the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation, the Pro Infirmis Association, the Procap Association, the city of Lausanne and the Canton of Vaud.

The four articles included in this special issue were subjected to the usual procedure of double blind peer review. However, their form is somewhat different from that of the research articles generally published in this review insofar as they have conserved some traces of their initial “oral” form as lectures and thus reflect the idiosyncrasies of each researcher.

We begin with a theoretical article by Anne Waldschmidt entitled *Disability–Culture–Society: Strengths and Weaknesses of a Cultural Model of Dis/ability*. In this highly complex study, she proposes an analysis of the complexities and nuances of the different and distinct currents of social science research on disability, namely conventional disability research – disability studies – critical disability studies – cultural disability studies. The author concludes by setting forth an appeal not only to pursue experimentation, but also to carry on with the theorization and conceptualization of cultural approaches in disability research.

In the second article, *Disability Art and Culture: A model for imaginative ways to integrate the community*, Carrie Sandahl offers an insightful presentation of the practices, regards of disabled persons engaged in artistic pursuits. Providing a number of precise and concrete details, she evokes the artistic endeavors brought to fruition by disabled persons, as well as their multiple forms of participation in these productions. Written in the first person singular, the text bears the imprint of her personal investment in this field.

The article by Anne Marcellini is entitled *The extraordinary development of sport for people with dis/abilities*. What does it all mean? In this study, she deals with a more and more frequently occurring, yet seldom studied dimension of the history of persons with in/capacities, that is to say their educational, recreational and at times high-level competitive physical practices. The author defends her contention that the development, recognition and social visibility of these individuals having been obtained by the sphere of “disability sport” are based on the convergence of two “tool boxes” for innovation: 1) the organization of athlete classification and 2) the “technologization” of the impaired body. Both of these innovatory mechanisms are controversial and subject to continuous experimentation in “sport for the disabled”.

The article closing out our dossier is authored by Michel Chauvière, who sketches out a highly thought-provoking historical and socio-political re-reading of public action in France. He studies the successive events and discourses that created the conditions in that country for the adoption of a pair of concepts originating from external fractions, more specifically the Inclusion/Disabling situation. In a contribution entitled *Steps and stakes in the construction of disability in French social policies: 1939–2005*, the author carries out a retrospective reading of national public action, and its international influences, in the field of social policy. His analysis enables him to propose a reading of the dynamics presently in play in this sphere.

These four articles shed light on the different positions and approaches adopted by researchers and, more specifically, on the variations in the degree of distance they maintain from their objects of research. They also underscore the fact that researchers’ positioning in the field of disability research can range from activist involvement to distant observer.

We are delighted about this diversity insofar as one of the challenges for the European Society for Disability Research ALTER and its review ALTER consists of creating conditions propitious to encounters and exchanges between social science researchers coming from different disciplines and, in their work, exhibiting a wide-ranging variety of approaches, viewpoints, methods and tools. We hope that by bringing together four diversified articles, this publication will further enrich the exchanges in Stockholm and Lausanne that involved researchers from some 18 countries. A number of them came to their first annual conference in Lausanne, and many will have the opportunity to meet again and pursue their discussions during the 2018 ALTER conference, which will be held in Lille, France.

### **Disclosure of interest**

The authors have not supplied their declaration of competing interest.

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Available online 19 April 2018