

# Développement Humain, Handicap et Changement Social Human Development, Disability, and Social Change



## Editorial

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Pratiques sportives et handicap : de la transformation à la mise en scène des corps différents

Disability and Sports: the Transformation and Staging of Different Bodies

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## Editorial

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Since the 1950's, physical and sport activities have been social practices for which disability professionals and people with disabilities have had many uses. Whether a physical gymnastic activity with a hygienic, educative or re-educative purpose, an 'adapted' physical activity, which is more and more successful today, or a Paralympic sports, the diversity of physical activities interact in various ways with human capacities. Thus, every sport, physical activity setting or sports organisation can be considered particular environments that a person encounters and that can, if necessary, be adapted or transformed to be accessible to all. Through six original research articles and three articles concerning 'echoes of the community', this issue reflects the plurality of organisations, modalities of participation, practitioners and professionals that construct the link between sports and disability.

The first section is entitled 'Social uses of sports'. It regroups four original articles that enlighten, from a sociological perspective, the uses of sports and reflects on 'what disability is doing in sports', but also on what 'sports do to disability'. Jean-Pierre Garel retraces in the first article the genesis of collective sports in Europe and shows how the will to ensure the possibility of participation of all in a given sport changes its boundaries and logics. The following contributions make it possible to bring to light the paradoxes created by the development of sports, whether 'self-organised' by disabled people or 'organised by others' (as defined by Laville et Sainsaulieu). Laurent Paccaud analyses in his article the development and the sportivisation in Europe, and more specifically in Switzerland, of a sport played with electrical wheelchairs: E-Hockey. He studies how a group of people with physical disabilities invested this sport. He shows that its recent development is an opportunity for these stigmatised people to reinvent themselves as an active minority, but that the sportivisation of this activity paradoxically contributes to the exclusion of players with certain types of disability

because of its narrowing eligibility criteria. Clément Gazza in his article then takes an interest in a French association of people with disabilities, also managers of a specialised establishment, who would like the association to organise physical activities. He highlights the internal questions that this generates, but also how it upsets the values of the organisation and its relations with its environment. Finally, Flavien Bouttet describes the French federal organization of sports for people with disabilities and shows that it can be the source of tension between different sports federations, for example between the multisport affinities federations formed around 'disabled' public, and a single sport federation that has been welcoming for a few years athletes with disabilities. These different contributions analyse the reflections, tensions and innovations that accompany the will to develop sports for a new public while still pursuing an objective of social inclusion for this public with specific capacities. Beyond the logic of adapting sports to the specificities of individuals, this development pushes the institution of disabled people and the sports institution to specify and sometimes to redefine their objectives and positions.

These original articles with complementary sociological insights are then completed with an article by Lea Anthouard entitled 'Knowledge-transfer Articles'. It addresses the conditions of the possibilities of shared sports by going beyond the integrating myth of sports.

Then come two other articles classified under the heading of 'Echoes of the Community' presenting rich analyses of field experiences. They focus on the participation of people with different capacities and impairments in given sports by showing that their participation relies on multiple adaptations necessary to avoid creating disabling situations through time and space in sports. First, Julie Wandevale and Isabelle Caby show that the physical activity of people with mental disorders today can also become a show support and stage object. Indeed, the terrain of physical and artistic activities, as opposed to sports, presents itself as a very different space of body commitment to think the interactions between subject and environment as

well as overcoming disabling situations. Ludovic Blin, for his part, retraces in detail an ethnographic observation of a very progressive construction of a positive relationship between a child with trisomy and a cooperative sport: climbing. His article emphasises the importance of the temporality and the environmental flexibility necessary to respect the personal rhythm of appropriation of novelty and adjustment to the situations of children with intellectual disabilities.

A final section, entitled 'Psychological implications of sports' takes a completely different perspective from that of the social uses of sports. It includes two original articles that render an account of studies on a few psychological variables. These articles therefore aim to objectify the effects of sports on the psychological characteristics of athletes with physical or intellectual disabilities, coupled with a reflection on the best ways to intervene with these athletes. Thus, in her first article Brigitte Mainguet is concerned with the psychological factors that make it possible to improve the performance of athletes with physical disabilities. In her second article, she reflects on the choice of a given sport for adolescents with intellectual disabilities in relation to the psychological benefits that athletes can obtain from different sports.

These nine contributions provide a rich insight into current research, studies, reflections and experiences relating to the participation of people with disabilities in physical and artistic sport activities, whether for leisure or through competitive commitment. We hope that this issue, by regrouping different perspectives, can show that beyond action on individual factors, it is the adaptation of material, rules, classifications and more broadly the transformation of the human environment, including the social representations of the physical capacities of people with disabilities, that make it possible to reduce disabling situations and create the conditions for the participation of all. Indeed, while the world of sports can sometimes be perceived as elitist, participating in a process of disability creation, we hope that this issue will have shown that it is up to us to build inclusive sporting environments.

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