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Title of dissertation: **The impact of the disability, the family and the educational context on the educational choices and professional expectations of Social Work students with disability**

Abstract

This research study attempts to highlight the factors that enhance respect, acceptance and inclusion (or contrariwise lead to negative discrimination, marginalization and/or exclusion) of otherness in the educational system and leads persons with disability to specific educational choices. It was based on the narratives of six disabled social work students and the unique way in which each participant describes and gives meaning to his experiences via the educational journey at all levels of education. The theoretical background relies on the social approach of disability and the influences it receives from materialistic, feministic and post modernistic approaches. The Life-history research method has been chosen to highlight the factors that influence the educational choices of participants during the primary and secondary school, their motivation to continue their studies in higher education and in the scientific field of social work as well as their career expectations after receiving their diploma. The —thematically focused— narrative biographical interview has been used as methodological research tool and data analysis was based on content analysis. The study of the experiences of the participants highlights their disability experiences, their families and the education system as the most important factors affecting their educational choices. The first one has additionally been emerged as the main determinant of their professional expectations. The analysis of the findings highlights the social construction of disability

and impairment as important variables which directly affect the opportunities given to people with disability in educational and social participation. Through their accounts, students shared their individual experiences, and the failure of the educational system to respond to difference was revealed. The role of human resources (educators, teachers and academic staff, classmates/fellow students, etc) is also revealed, which, when active, succeeds to overcome obstacles and support people with disability in meeting their educational goals.

Key words: disability, social work, educational choices, choice of profession, tertiary/higher education