

ABSTRACT

In this doctoral dissertation the concept of active citizenship and the possibilities of its fulfilment for people with intellectual disability will be explored through data collected in four European countries - the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Ireland and Sweden. The dissertation is divided into three sections and eleven chapters. In the first section, the epistemological foundations are presented, including the perceived connections between contemporary disability paradigms (special and inclusive education) and active citizenship. It includes relevant key notions necessary to clarify the conceptualisation of disability, specifically intellectual disability and the conceptualisation of citizenship and of active citizenship, in particular. There will be a focus on the issue of human rights and on the policies and Conventions which both advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, and strive for social change and the establishment of equal opportunities for all people with disabilities. The concept of active citizenship will be explored through the domains of employment, community living and political participation and this will be the main focus of the qualitative research. In the second section, the methodological foundations will be presented and the active citizenship domains will be considered from three perspectives. The first one is a micro-practice perspective through which the views people with intellectual disabilities hold about their lives will be examined. Secondly, a mezzo level perspective will be utilised to reflect the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders. Finally, the macro-practice context will be analysed. In the third section of the thesis, the analysis and interpretation of findings will be reported. Finally, in the chapter devoted to discussion, a critical analysis of the possibilities and limitations of the research will be presented along with reflection on whether the research objectives have been fulfilled, before concluding with recommendations for strengthening the active citizenship of people with intellectual disabilities in the Czech Republic.

KEY WORDS

Intellectual disability, citizenship, active citizenship, citizenship values, social service, life in the community, political participation, employment, Life Course Theory.