# Just see me as Lisa, not as the one with a disability!

**How students with a disability try to find their way in a Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences.**

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- Background research project

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- Theoretical framework

- Movements

- Transgressive movements → becoming

- To belong or not: that's the question?!

# Background research project

Research project:

'Studying at Ghent university and the transition to work'

➔ Goal: Policy advice

BUT what with the stories of students?

➔ Second analysis

# Background research project

Interviews of
- 16 students
- 2 graduates

of the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences

Diversity among participants:
- Gender, age
- Variety of 'labels'
- Different trainings and training years

# Background research project

Second analysis:

"how do students with a disability consider themselves and their disability?"

"how do students with a disability try to find their way at this faculty? "

→Key incidents:

"rich descriptions of people and interactions as they exist and unfold in their native habitats" (Emerson, in Van Hove et al., 2012)

# Transgression

- "… as a subversive tactic which could enable individuals to transform themselves and as a form of resistance which involves the crossing of limits or boundaries. Transgression involves the challenging or crossing of limits imposed by others, but never allows one to remove those limits" (Allan, 1999).

- Moving in and/or out disability

# The 'Kingdom' of the university

→ Competition:

*"And the general mood among the students is very competitive. (...) that it is for example not fair if you get extra time."*

→ Still prejudice and stereotypes:

*"He answered: No, that´s not possible. By the way, you can practice dyslexia. You should practice more."*

→ Disbelief :

*"Is it really necessary?"*

Special status is no sufficient proof

→ Reasonable accommodations are not a right:

*"goodwill" of professors*

# Theoretical framework

→Ableism

→Medical discourse:
  objects of study and patients
    ⇔ future medical experts

→Market discourse
  prestigious faculty
  'making it'

→Transgression

# Results: Movements

1. Away from the impairment:
   **"I'm not that disabled"**

2. Towards normalcy: **"I'm just a normal student!"**

3. Stressing capabilities: **"I AM NOT my disability!"**

4. Using label: **"My label is my proof!"**

5. Exclusionary movement:
   **"A person with dyslexia can't become a doctor!"**

# 1. "I'm not that disabled"

"I won't tell it to other students, but when we have a group work, I do tell them: 'I'm not such a fantastic writer'."

"I don't want to be looked at differently, since I believe myself it is not as important, so … there's no need for others to care about it."

# 2."I'm just a normal student!"

"I try to do just like all the others and try to achieve the same."

"Because you always want to be as normal as possible and don't want to be immediately put into a cubicle. As normal and independently as possible gives you always the most happiness."

"To be honest I thought it was more for wheelchair users and people who are blind or deaf, or with a really severe disability. So that's why I never looked up something about it [possibilities to get reasonable accommodations at work]."

# 3. "I AM NOT my disability!"

"At first I am a woman, I come from a disadvantaged neighborhood, I'm an immigrant and then there is also my disability. (…) And I am not my disability. I am Amira, I have my skills and I 'have' a disability, I 'am not' a disability.

# 4. "My label is my proof!"

"Yes, I was in the first percentile, it was really bad. I hadn't really expected that. But on the other hand it was also good because it made me think: 'I do have this, I do not make excuses when something fails. I've done it really well so far given that I do have dyslexia. So yes, somewhere it felt good to finally see some proof."

# 5. "A person with dyslexia can't become a doctor!"

"Someone in a wheelchair for example shouldn't say, 'Hey, I'm going to study physiotherapy.' That's totally impossible."

"Someone who is blind for example: I don't really think he can study audiovisual arts. It should be a little consistent with his capabilities, capacities and the training itself. (…) Not all people with Asperger's have the same skills: one is good at mathematics and biology, another in languages. The idea of 'People with Asperger must not do Medicine', makes no sense."

# Transgressive movements ➔ becoming

→ Movements are flexible

→ From passive individuals to active agents

→ Dismiss 'stable identity' → concept of 'becoming'

→ Continuous process of moving in, out, and between (dis)ability and (ab)normality

# To belong or not: that's the question?!

→ *"They don't belong here"* vs *"They do!"*

→ Belonging = conforming?

→ Belonging as a process:
 Moments of belonging AND of not belonging

Thanks for your attention!

More questions, information, thoughts?

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