



The work of people with deeper intellectual disability as a source of emancipation in the context of personal fulfilment

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Issues of normalisation, autonomy and self-determination of people with intellectual disabilities in special education have already taken their fixed place. The consequence of this continuing discourse is the personal nature of disability, international, timeless declarations and modifications of already established rights. Recently, the emancipatory trend is gaining in importance in this discourse. It remains in close correlation with the primary objective of educating people with intellectual disabilities, which is comprehensive preparation for life. It is a form of conscious self-reliance, self-knowledge and the capacity to take autonomous action. One of the areas of development of self-reliance is work. The resulting interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences can become the path to emancipation. Sometimes one that goes beyond the standards of rehabilitation.

KEY WORDS: disability, work, emancipation

Introduction

Issues of normalisation, autonomy and self-determination of people with intellectual disabilities in special education have already taken their fixed place. The consequence of this continuing dis-

course is the personal nature of disability expressed by the description "Person with disability", as well as international, timeless declarations and modifications of already established rights. Recently, the emancipatory trend is gaining in importance in this discourse¹. With respect to special education, the assumption of the paradigm of emancipation denotes full acceptance of the practical consequences of the meaning of the term "emancipation". It constitutes "liberation from under the rule of social dominance and dependence (...) towards the free expression of one's own, authentic needs, the equality of chances, almost towards self-determination, self-regulation, to an upbringing free of violence, reinforcing the strength of the I"². The structure of the I is related to perceiving oneself as a unique person, the construction of an internal hierarchy of objectives. Its content is composed of individual convictions, interests, needs, values³. Their shaped is determined by the experienced process of socialisation, the environments of significance for this process, and the personal experiences of the person expressed through their knowledge of themselves, and their actions. A consequence of the feeling of independence is the shaping in the person of the structure of the Us, *expressed by the cognitive relations of the person with other people, and identification with their objectives, values and rules of conduct*⁴. From the perspective of social psychology and identity psychology, the mutual relations between the person and their social environment *shine through in changes in life, interests and goals, which are named variously, for instance, "personal struggles", "personal plans"*⁵. The struggles and the plans are activities stemming

¹ C. Barens, G. Mercer, *Niepełnosprawność*, Wydawnictwo Sic!, Warszawa 2008, p. 29.

² B. Śliwerski, *Współczesne teorie i nurty wychowania*, Impuls, Kraków 2005, p. 267.

³ Ł. Grzelak, M. Jarymowicz, *Tożsamość i współzależność*, [in:] Strelau J. (ed.) *Psychologia. Podręcznik Akademicki. Tom 3*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2002, p. 107.

⁴ A. Brzezińska, *Spółeczna psychologia rozwoju*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Poznań 2007, p. 239.

⁵ C. Sedikides, L. Gaertner, *Ja społeczne – poszukiwanie tożsamości a prymat motywacyjny Ja Indywidualnego*, [in:] J.P. Forgas, K.D. Williams, L. Wheeler (ed.), *Umysł Społeczny*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2005, p. 130.

from emotional, intellectual and social maturity. They are the road towards emancipation. The rule of *nothing about us without us*⁶, constituting the basic dimension of the process of emancipation of disabled people, is reflected for instance in the multitude of documents governing the social functioning of these. What is particularly important is that the emerging provisions are the result of direct contacts, talks and discussions with disabled people. Emancipation in this context is a sign of conscious attempts at changing one's own life, raising its quality, or may even constitute the source of the meaning of life⁷. Authors referring to emancipation pedagogy stress that to experience emancipation is not only to "be independent" but foremost to "be autonomous", meaning, to understand oneself in the structure of the "I" and to be able to distinguish the structure of the "Us"⁸. Comparing and identification with others leads to shaping of the image of oneself within one. Oneself as different from others, and as belonging to a specific community. We are thus considering here an adult who struggles to change their situation or position, and who themselves can decide of their fate and make choices independently. This is doubtless related to the relational model of independence, but also to ever more conscious treatment of disabled persons as a separate entity in the ontological, epistemological and axiological categories. A disabled person is a unique phenomenon that is not described by a specific definition once and for all, but undergoes constant cognition. A phenomenon making relations with other entities, and constituting a value in itself. Considered must also be the possibility of self-actualisation of the individual, which never occurs in solitude. And even though its level is conditioned by one's personal intellectual, emotional and social potential, then if it occurs, it causes the determination of

⁶ D. Podgórska -Jachnik, *Pedagogika emancypacyjna a pedagogika specjalna*, [in:] *Konteksty Interdyscyplinarne Konteksty Pedagogiki Specjalnej*, Wydawnictwo UAM, 2015, p. 23.

⁷ J. Konarska, *Emancypacja jako nowy nurt rehabilitacji*, [in:] *Interdyscyplinarne Konteksty Pedagogiki Specjalnej*, Wydawnictwo UAM, 2015, p. 61.

⁸ B. Śliwerski, *Współczesne teorie i nurty wychowania*, Impuls, Kraków 2005; A. Krause, *Współczesne paradygmaty pedagogiki specjalnej*, Impuls, Kraków 2010.

a further goal. The difficulty of self-improvement allows the experience of personal satisfaction, teaches resistance against failure, raises one's self-assessment. It strengthens one in their daily struggle. It becomes the basis to liberate one from the pressure of "disability". And, as much as this is possible, it shapes the individual "consciousness of freedom". Self-improvement is the vantage point for the emancipation process, *which through a critical negation of compulsion and limitations leads to rational freedom and conscious actions*⁹. Subjective modes of perception of reality by persons with disabilities gain on meaning. Statements, discussions, one's life record, the interpretations, the personal experiences of the researcher and the studied subject uncover a common fate. In many instances they enable *a rediscovery of the meaning of local and global economic, political and cultural forces in the maintenance of the oppressive attitude towards disability, as well as the development of abilities to upset those forces*¹⁰.

Work as an area of emancipation

The present article concerns the social situation of three men with deeper intellectual disability, who after several years of courses in occupational therapy had participated in a scheme simplifying the entry into the open job market. They had undergone a half-year professional internship at a social cooperative in Poland's Kamień Pomorski¹¹, and subsequently, having completed it, returned nei-

⁹ M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, *Między dostosowaniem a zmianą. Elementy emancypacyjnej teorii edukacji*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin 2005, p. 45.

¹⁰ C. Barnes, A. Sheldon, "Emancipatory" *Disability Research and Special Educational Needs*, [in:] *The Sage Handbook of Special Education*, ed. by L. Florian, Sage, London, 2007, p. 242.

¹¹ The formation meeting of the "Warcisław" social cooperative in Kamień Pomorski took place on August 25th, 2009. Its main goal was the support of people threatened by social exclusion. The cooperative operates based on cooperation with the commune of Kamień Pomorski, the social aid institution in Kamień Pomorski and the county employment agency of Kamień Pomorski. As part of its activities,

ther to workshops, nor did they undertake any employment. This short information serves to introduce the reader into the research area of this article, to be described in more detail later on.

The movement towards reflections on work doubtless requires a short description of it. Work is one of the basic activities of man, most important during adulthood, it is the defining factor of civilisational development, including the development of every man and the society, in which they are raised. It influences the physical and psychological development of man, releases creativity, initiative, provides satisfaction, happiness and the feeling of being useful¹². It lets one participate in the process of shaping one's own environment, the conditions of one's own life, culture, and the person themselves¹³. It is the kind of activity that becomes the social binder, as it allows the experience of human integration, it is a source of income, and also determines the socio-professional position of one¹⁴. In literature on the subject, work is considered not only as an economic and sociological category, but also as a paedagogical category. Indeed, it is believed that work has additional properties. It is a system of separate and repeatable activities, constitutes a source of income and requires special vocational preparation¹⁵, whereby the profession for the most part determines not only the place of work, but one's position in the social process of work. From the perspective of special education, work is considered in terms of rehabilitation, because work secures for the disabled person the fulfilment of their economic needs, markedly improving their disturbed functions. It permits the confirmation of one's social effectiveness and usefulness, which as a consequence prevents defrustration and

it had made possible an internship of seven persons in social and useful work, who were participants of occupational therapy workshops at the Polish society for the intellectually disabled in Kamień Pomorski.

¹² Z. Wiatrowski, *Podstawy pedagogiki pracy*, Bydgoszcz 2005, p. 78.

¹³ A. Bogaj, *Człowiek w środowisku pracy*, [in:] S.M. Kwiatkowski, A. Bogaj, B. Baraniak, *Pedagogika pracy*, Warszawa 2007, p. 23.

¹⁴ Z. Wiatrowski..., *op. cit.*, p. 99.

¹⁵ Z. Wiatrowski..., *op. cit.*, p. 101.

leads to professional as well as social integration¹⁶. Sadly, disability in many cases forms the basis of one being stripped of maturity typical for an adult living in a particular culture. Achieving gainful employment, especially on the open job market is very difficult for disabled persons. Becoming unemployed, they take on, in many instances, the roles of beneficiaries of social aid institutions for the rest of their lives. Considered subjectively, unemployment is a condition of professional inactivity of persons able to work and announcing readiness to undertake it, the basis for the existence of whom is income from work¹⁷. Work leads to psychological resistance, optimism in life, activity of one, and its lack gives rise to passivity, distress and resignation. All the negative effects of unemployment stem foremost from the inability of satisfying of hidden needs, meaning, the psychological functions of work¹⁸. It is believed that certain elements of the work environment such as the possibility of control, a valued social position, variety, the ability to use one's qualifications, interpersonal contacts, are required for psychological health, the feeling of threat or the ability to foresee one's future. This last aspect in particular causes one's own plans and strategies to shatter, it causes social isolation and financial troubles. Great importance is ascribed to the content of the executed tasks, assigning them the role of the determinant of autonomy (independence), the possibility of to express themselves and develop. It is only then that one becomes fully mature and responsible. In losing employment, they lose the ability to express themselves in authentic activity, and at the same time, they lose the ability to develop a mature personality. The main effect of unemployment are financial hardships, which significantly influence the reduction of the standard of life. Lack of income strips the unemployed from the possibility of

¹⁶ H. Borzyszkowska, *Przygotowanie dzieci niepełnosprawnych do pracy w rodzinie i szkole* [in:] A. Hulek (ed.) *Praca ludzi niepełnosprawnych-zadania pedagoga*. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź 1985, p. 80.

¹⁷ K. Młonek, *Tradycja badań bezrobocia w Polsce – zagadnienia metodologiczne*, *Wiadomości Statystyczne* no. 6, 1992, p. 1.

¹⁸ A. Bańka, *Bezrobocie, Podręcznik Pomocy Psychologicznej*, [in:] N. Chmiel, *Psychologia pracy i organizacji*, GWP, Gdańsk 2003, p. 74.

purchasing goods that are status symbols. It also leads to the reduction of one's self-evaluation concerning one's own social position. As unemployment progresses, social isolation and simultaneous reduction of activity deepens. It is the result of either relaxation of ties with former colleagues, or of voluntary reduction of social relations by the unemployed because they do not want to publicly show off their difficult situation. A weakening of the feeling of a community of interests with the employed takes place, with a simultaneous lack of bond with groups that are employed. A breakdown of the structure of time is observed, because the time plan of activities is no longer determined by one's working hours, and this causes difficulty in organising and using one's time. A rule is that preoccupation with time, its amount, the inability to use it, and the feeling of killing time, becomes obsessive. This impacts one's emotions and one's behaviour. It causes discouragement, and even a slowing of one's motions. The ever-deepening hardships, social isolation, the inability to find new employment, dependence on others, humiliations, the feeling of a reduction of status and shutting oneself home¹⁹.

The present struggles towards employing intellectually disabled persons on the open job market are a sign of the mature perception of society on this group of Differents. The offers of the job market apply to the open market, to professional activity centres or social cooperatives. Subject literature broadly describes the positive effects of work of this group of people. Noticeable in particular are the interpersonal and intrapersonal consequences of work as seen in one's daily experiences.

Reflections from research

Calling social cooperatives into existence remains in close relationship with the idea of social work understood holistically as *engagement, responsibility of all global and local entities able to influence*

¹⁹ I. Reszke, *Wobec bezrobocia: opinie i stereotypy*, Wyd. Naukowe Śląsk, Katowice 1999; F. Znaniecki, *Socjologia bezrobotnych*, „Kultura i Społeczeństwo” no. 1, 1992.

*the quality of life of the inhabitants of the entire Earth with consideration for the issues of social changes, human rights, equality before the law and liberation of peoples*²⁰. Among the many goals of social work in the context of the present article, two need to be stressed. The compensation objective struggling to fulfil individual needs that the individuals cannot fulfil on their own, and the promotional objective, meaning, support in the solution of life's hardships in order to help individuals and groups reach a more satisfying level of life. From the point of view of intellectual disability, both these goals are so important as the first one is related to the real possibility of employment, and the second is of significance for the improvement of the quality of life and the experience of multi-context aspects of freedom.

A social cooperative is a unique form of a working cooperative. The subject of its operation is foremost running a common business enterprise based on the personal labour of its members for the purpose of their social and professional reintegration. A social cooperative conducts business activity, but the profit from this activity is not the objective in itself, but a resource used for the implementation of its stated goals. The appreciable purposes of a cooperative are the creation of interpersonal bonds, maintaining the ability to participate in the life of the local community in the members of the cooperative, and shaping the ability to independently provide work on the job market. The purpose of a cooperative is also conducting social and educational as well as cultural activity for the benefit of its members and the local community, as well as activity that is socially useful in the sphere of public activities as described in the Polish act on non-profit activity and on volunteering (Pl. Ustawa o działalności pożytku publicznego i o wolontariacie)²¹.

Such were also the goals that the social cooperative "Warcisław" of Kamień Pomorski²² set for itself. The tasks stated by the coopera-

²⁰ R. Szafenberg, *Nierówności i ubóstwo a uczestnictwo Polski w Unii Europejskiej*, Wyd. Instytut Polityki Społecznej, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa, 2015, p. 3.

²¹ Polish Journal of Laws no. 96 of May 29th, 2003, item 873.

²² The cooperative operates based on the Polish act of April 27th, 2006., on social cooperatives (Pl. Ustawa o spółdzielniach socjalnych), Polish Journal of Laws of

tive²³ were related to the maintenance of cleanliness and orderliness in the town of Kamień Pomorski and concerned foremost: mowing, raking and removal of grass, planted flowers and trees in public spaces, cleaning and running maintenance of green spaces, maintenance of order and cleanliness in the streets, pavements and parking lots, maintenance of pavements in winter, comprehensive services for town-organised events in terms of maintenance of cleanliness and order. The scope of activities permits one to state that the members of the cooperative were responsible for a very important sphere of the city aesthetics, which certainly was not unimportant to the moods of the inhabitants of Kamień Pomorski. In implementing specific tasks, they foremost became a visible professional group. They specialised in various forms of professional activity. They learned about their tools of the trade and their uses. Work in such a broad scope was the source of many interpersonal (being among other people doing specific work, experiencing various levels of communication, learning the understanding of relations related to the personal structure at work) and intrapersonal experiences (awareness of oneself, of one's abilities, discovering new possibilities, learning and mastering things, that is, new knowledge, placing oneself within the structure of the team and within the social structure). Another significant aspect of such work causes the "visualisation of a person" with their difficulties, as an employee, meaning someone who, despite their limitations, is able to operate independently. For the social image of disabled people, in particular intellectually-disabled people, this has profound importance as it shatters stereotypes, prejudice, in many cases lifting the stigma.

Such an idea of socialisation was the guiding light for the "Warcisław" social cooperative, which implemented, with the participation of the Office of the Marshall of the Voivodeship of Western Pomerania, a programme for the countering of social exclusion of

2006, no. 94, item 651, the Polish act of September 16th, 1982, the cooperative law (Pl. Prawo spółdzielcze), unified text – Journal of Laws of 2003, no. 188, item 1848.

²³ The bylaws of the "Warcisław" social cooperative in Kamień Pomorski.

persons threatened by exclusion. In the programme participated persons indicated by the local employment agency, the county agency for family aid, as well as seven participants of the occupational therapy workshops at the Polish society for the intellectually disabled in Kamień Pomorski. The cooperation programme with the social cooperative covered a six-month internship which as a consequence could fruit in permanent employment of the intellectually disabled. Participants in the programme had prior to that undergone appropriate training in OHS and spanning specific activities related to the undertaken internship. The programme concluded in the year 2015. Sadly, none of the participants of the occupational therapy workshops was willing to commence employment after the programme. Four persons returned to the workshops, with the remaining three²⁴, those under research, did not undertake any activity. And here arose an emancipational dilemma. Why, having such rich experience, these people preferred returning home to do nothing? Why did they make such choices? Were these independent choices, or were the decisions made for them? Assuming that work is one of the pillars of rehabilitation, it should fall within the area of interest of the intellectually disabled themselves, as well as their families. This was not the case, however. These questions formed the basis of my research. An attempt at answering them was sought in the statements of the caretaker therapist, the statements of the people who did not commence employment, and the representatives of their family environments.

The therapist, the person who participated in this programme, seeks the causes of failure to undertake employment within the attitudes of the unemployed themselves.

...they did not always show up for work, sometimes we had to bring them in because they overslept or simply did not feel like coming...(...)...the wheelbarrow was a cause of a dispute or insult (...) it was like that there, probably who

²⁴ The interviewees are males aged 29, 34 and 36, inhabitants of Kamień Pomorski, remaining under family care. Their internships at the social cooperative were based on prior evaluation of their abilities to make interpersonal contacts, their abilities, and primarily their expressed willingness to work.

had the wheelbarrow, they had the rule, they felt important... (...)...In the beginning they wanted very much, they were important... but when it turned it out that one had to arrive on time and do something specific, they lost interest in this....

The statements of the therapist also permit the conclusion that the work had nobilitating character only in the declaratory layer. In the area of activity, it became a burden and a task requiring control from the outside, which was noticed by the intellectually disabled and not accepted.

...the persons running the work would sometimes bemoaned that they constantly needed to drive those from the workshops... that violent disputes arise... I believe that it was just that others were more able and worked faster.

How is this issue remembered by the intellectually disabled themselves?

M1 (29 years)

...work in the rain, on Sundays.....we were constantly guarded, like in prison...

The person making the statement refers to the work as if it was compulsory, this stems from the fact his view of the work differed from that which he had to provide himself.

M2 (34 years)

...there was no car to drive the equipment, and one would walk across all of the town with these wheelbarrows... it was cold... the manager shouted that we are loafing around, but when it was cold she would quickly retreat to the office.

We are clearly seeing here a dislike for work caused by the working conditions, weather conditions, with simultaneous painful experiences of the freedom of another person who was able to „re-treat“. The next male's expressions had a similar tone, noting the bad conditions of employment. He did not analyse the tempo of his work, perhaps the failure to adjust his behaviour, but his memory retained the experience of „verbal abuse“.

M3 (36 years)

...in the beginning I liked it... but the manager kept complaining... do this... do that... I hated worst that I had to get up early... and outside, outside... it was very cold...

A further area of consideration was the relationship with former occupation, whether they were happy with it, and in this case all three indicated being satisfied.

M 1

I learned a lot about flowers, how to care for them. One could talk, joke around.

I had money, I could buy cake for the family, coffee or something else. (...) I have a friend where I live.

What is impactful in this statement is a completely different approach to money. The man benefits from a monthly pension, but the money gained from work had a different dimension. They placed him in a group able to decide on one's resources. They certainly broadened the perspective of one's self-perception, as someone providing their own, autonomous activity for the home environment.

M 2

I was satisfied, even very satisfied, in the beginning. It was different later, because when those from the agency came, they wanted to show us that they were better, but they loafed around. (...) but sometimes I could choose the task myself, because I know a lot about flowers. Sometimes even our manager would ask what to do so that they don't freeze over.

In this statement clear is the experience of competition, feeling worse in light of others, those Different. This is doubtless a very personal and deep experience. Uncovering the truth about oneself, however, we see here also ascribing a meaning to one's own abilities.

M 3

We would joke around or talk up women. I even had a date with one, I think three times. If one has money, one has women. Now I don't do meetings any

more... When they let us go, we don't meet any more. Do I regret it? I don't know... I think so... but she has someone. Also from the cooperative... but he was from the agency.

In this statement as well, other money is also of importance, money for work, but they are basically a secondary problem in light of the fact of facing the myth of women. Like his colleague, the man experiences Otherness. And even though he does not clearly stress it, the fact that a competitor was from outside the workshop made him, in his view, more valuable for the woman.

Why did the men not take up employment after the completed internships?

The issue is very complex. On the one hand, it was related to the restructuring of the cooperative itself, on the other hand the men could receive references permitting them to get employment anywhere in gardening. Discussions with the men permit the conclusion that they were held back from independent work by fear of whether they would make it? At the cooperative, there was someone who would organise the work, issue orders as to the scope of tasks, control the day from the beginning until the end of work.

M1

...I was told to go to X but the father said that you will not work for him... because he won't pay... here they said that he abuses people...(..) I won't go back to the workshops, no... there is no work for me there (...) what is there to speak about with them...

These fragments of the statement seemed interesting to me for two reasons. First of all, one can get the impression that the man was perhaps ready to start working, were he motivated by the family and if that motivation was maintained. Second of all, he clearly indicated his uniqueness, Difference, maybe even being „better“ than former colleagues. He is thus ready to live in a certain isolation from the environment, so that he would not need, before himself, to identify with the group that he „graduated from“.

M2

I already had enough of the cold... I did not want to ride there. What kind of money that was... now I just get... and I also have money. My sister even sought work for me, but I'm not going back to gardening... rain - work, wind - work... it's not bad... I'm not going anywhere... from the workshops I got colleagues, but they call, call, I would sometimes go... from the cooperative I also have colleagues, but I do not meet them.

The entire attitude of the man is an expression of his unwillingness to work, any discussion on the subject even irritates him. He also does not see himself in any other area of work. He relates work only with unpleasant experiences. In the discussion, the subject of undertaking any other employment does not show up at all. Important are in turn relationships with friends. A certain dichotomy is noticeable here. The workshop activities do not interest the man, but he remains in contact with the persons that remain there. One could make the assumption that the force of the relationships entered into earlier is strong. The completed internship had perhaps become important for the self-assessment of the man, but it did not influence the emergence of new bonds.

M3

...they did not extend it, so there was nothing... I did not want to do the workshops any more, I am too old... I have friends... here, neighbours, a friend from the cooperative comes in, but he also does not go there (to the workshops)... I know something of working in a small garden... I help out my neighbour in his garden...

The interviewee does not understand the fact that he participated in a scheme that opened up for him the route to employment. When the scheme was over, he did not feel the need to continue it. He behaves as if that time in his life was not an important event. The experience of work did not give rise in him to changes in his life. He did not strive to maintain the status of an employee, colleague or co-worker. It is as it is. He lives with his extended family,

receives his social pension. He makes the impression of being satisfied with life.

Among the members of the family, only the sister of one of the men (M2) consented to talk to me

I found him a job in gardening, they were quite satisfied because my brother is strong, one has to carry crates, soil... but what do I say, he got bored with it... once he would go, once he wouldn't... the time I spent encouraging him... he's not one to consider an explanation. he has the pension, but he goes here to do something... I do not understand this, after all, he was satisfied.

In case of this man, the sister's engagement was very strong. What is interesting is that the search for employment was aimed in the direction of former work. The sister was convinced that the man could make it. I believe, however, that other factors weighed in that were not present in the employment. First of all, the man worked alone, he was formerly in a group. Independent work was task-oriented and it was related to making even minor decisions. At the cooperative, the work day, irrespective of the tasks, had its specific beginning and end. It cannot be excluded that one needs also rituals to accept work that were missing from the place of independent work.

Is not undertaking work already a way towards emancipation?

Constructing an emancipational paradigm of special education requires referring to many groups of disabled people. It is thus a process, the birth and the path of which we are observing. One could, however, say with full responsibility, that it assumes as the primary term, the feeling of conscious freedom of man. Freedom that lets one design their own life and live it according to that design. Freedom that liberates one from the oppression of stereotype, exclusion, marginalisation. Why a stereotype? In the introductory portion of this article I have indicated the negative consequences of unemployment. The entanglement in the condition of passivity that degrades one and pushes them to the margins of life. Special education ascribes a great importance to work as emancipating disabled people, and in the global sense this is undoubtedly the case. A disabled person at work, as a colleague, friend, subordinate, etc., is

a great merit of special education. In individual experiences, it shines through that it need not necessarily have this dimension. The undertaken effort, social constructions, determine the common standards, and a departure from them gives rise to disquiet and amazement. There exists the fear of exclusion. The interviewees did not have this feeling, they live in their own worlds, and even though its scope may seem limited, this is where they experience their daily lives that do not seem unpleasant to them. So, we come to marginalisation. It can be perceived in many ways, but in most cases we consider here the unavailability, limitations in the implementation of needs. In my discussions with the evaluated men, I did not notice this, and commencing these, I pondered exactly what needs do they not fulfil. The attitude of passivity, acceptance of reality, the lack of expectations is quite stunning. It would seem that the experience from the workshops, from the social cooperative could awaken the needs, encourage changes. Not every home environment is accompanied by passivity, and yet, despite the struggle, intellectually disabled persons cannot be encouraged to be active, even though they have relevant experiences. The analysed persons do not experience the passage of time, they do not identify themselves as belonging to the group of those who do not work. They do not experience discomfort stemming from non-participation in the activities of any environment. Returning thus to the stated question, whether one could speak of emancipation in terms of these three men? The response is difficult to find. The social model of disability accepts research usability of individual persons, and yet the decisions made by the interviewees stem from the collected experiences, the feeling of difference, of self-assessment. It would seem that despite the varied attitudes of the family environment, these are their own decisions. Every man exhibits emancipation abilities according to their own measure²⁵. The work had released in the interviewees

²⁵ B. Cytowska, *Trudne drogi adaptacji. Wątki emancypacyjne w analizie sytuacji dorosłych osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną we współczesnym społeczeństwie polskim*. Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2012.

the potential to adapt, but at the same time it had also become the basis for the choices that were made. Did they make these choices alone? Their attitudes confirm this. However, disturbing is the unwillingness of the men to undertake any activity. Perhaps they had gained new knowledge of themselves that makes the return to former experiences difficult. This is doubtless an interesting research field.

The process of emancipation is extensive in character, and in most cases constitutes a continuum, from claims through aspirations, to specifically exhibited efforts. If we are ready to assume that it is a competence of intellectually disabled persons to consciously not undertake work, then we see here within the readiness for a change of method. Self-realisation against common and social views can become a measure of emancipation²⁶. The assumption of this measure may become the cause of antagonisation in an environment of professionals, but it can also become a proposition of „critical awareness”, in which the emancipational paradigm of special paedagogy ceases to seem distant.

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