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Masculinity from the perspective of men with intellectual disability

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Current scientific publications present different paradigms of masculinity, but research in this area is a relatively new perspective. However, the specific nature of the everyday experience of people with intellectual disability is still neglected and unrecognised. The aim of this article is to show the concept of masculinity from the perspective of men with intellectual disability. The research is placed in the stream of qualitative research using a case study as a method. The subject of the research covers the statements of men with intellectual disability concerning masculinity. The analysis of the research material obtained from 12 interviews allowed for the identification of four types of masculinity.

KEY WORDS: masculinity, intellectual disability, types of masculinity

Introduction

Sex is one of the most important aspects of self-image. It allows for the identification, classification and categorisation of people into women and men. It is necessary to build knowledge about oneself, ideas, but also to design the future. Therefore, it is worth investigating how men with intellectual disability perceive sex as a concept

and their characteristic, because this issue seems not only important, but also neglected in the source literature. It is worth noting that in considerations about people with intellectual disability, the impersonal form is most often used, and after all the sex of these people does not disappear after the diagnosis and is undoubtedly one of the main elements of building their identity. Therefore, it is necessary to thoroughly explore the specific nature of everyday experience of people with intellectual disability and include it in the discourse of special andragogy. The aim of this article is to show the concept of masculinity from the perspective of men with intellectual disability.

Gender as a complex psychosocial construct

The problem of sex can be considered from various perspectives, but mainly from two main ones: one provides essentialism that derives masculinity and femininity from "natural", biological features, and then sex relates to the physiological and anatomical features of sexuality, and the other one is base on social constructivism, which assumes that differences are the result of significantly different social and cultural influences on men and women. In each of these perspectives, the fundamental issue includes the differences that exist between the sexes. Because of the ambiguity of the concept of "sex differences", and due to the fact that it implies their biological basis, the concept of sex was replaced by another term, that is gender. It is assumed that the term describes the features and behaviours considered appropriate in a given culture for men or women. As such, it constitutes a social label that encompasses both characteristics assigned to a given sex by a society and those that people perceive in themselves. This is well expressed in the definition of "gender" by C. Sheriff, according to which it is "a schema for the social categorisation of individuals.[1] It should be noted that

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[1] L. Brannon, Psychologia rodzaju. Kobiety i mężczyźni: podobni czy różni, Gdańsk, 2002, p. 34.

"gender" as a psychological and cultural category may be completely independent of biological sex, and may even be contrary to it.

In modern science at least four types of gender are distinguished: biological, psychological, social and cultural one.[2] The term of biological gender primarily refers to the anatomical differences that result from sexual dimorphism. These differences, mainly related to body structure, include anatomical, hormonal and reproductive functions and are independent of social factors. Psychological gender is shaped by a combination of biological and social factors. The results of numerous scientific studies carried out in the last two decades[3] have resulted in significant changes in the perception of psychological gender. The postulate about the dichotomy of social roles, according to which femininity and masculinity constituted the bipolar dimen-

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[2] The following criteria are used to determine human sex:

   1) chromosomal (genotypic) sex – males have a karyotype of 46, XY, and females have a karyotype of 46, XX (karyotypes with abnormal sex chromosome configuration also occur)
   2) gonadal sex – presence of gonads (testes in males, ovaries in females)
   3) Internal sex (gonadophoric) – the presence of primary gonadal ducts (in males the Wolff ducts produce the vas deferens, in females the Müller ducts produce the fallopian tubes, the uterus and the distal part of the vagina)
   4) external sex – external genital organs, penis in males and vulva in females
   5) Phenotypic sex (somatotypic, biotypic) – secondary and tertiary sex characteristics present in an adult individual
   6) The relationship between the relative amounts of secreted sex hormones (androgens predominate in males and estrogens in females)
   7) metabolic sex – enzymatic apparatus characteristic of certain metabolic systems
   8) social sex (metric, legal) – to determine the performance of male or female role, determined by the external reproductive organs at birth
   9) cerebral sex – differentiation of the brain in terms of endocrine function of the hypothalamus and pituitary gland
   10) psychological sex – identification with male or female sex, a sense of belonging to a particular sex.

[3] K. Donnelly, J.M. Twenge, Masculine and feminine traits on the bem sex-role inventory, 1993–2012: A cross-temporal meta-analysis, "Sex Roles" 2016, pp. 1–10; E. Mandal, Kobiecość i męskość, Warszawa, 2003.

sion of one continuum was rejected. Sandra Lipsitz-Bem, who rejected the division into male and female attributes, significantly verified the concept of psychological gender. The author assumed that femininity and masculinity constitute two separate personality dimensions and are not in opposition to each other.[4] The definitions of femininity and masculinity include a gender-specific compilation of features that relate to both the anatomical structure and the personality attributes assigned by a given society to a specific sex.

On the other hand, social gender is a set of roles, expectations, stereotypes, defined as masculine or feminine, somehow built around biological features. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines social gender as the socially created roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a given society deems appropriate for men and women. Social gender, unlike biological gender, is contextual and shaped differently in individual societies. The second feature of gender, or socially shaped sex, is its changeability over time. There are numerous examples – from the prohibition of higher education or voting rights for women in force at the end of the 19th century to the recently changed regulation about dependency leave which could not be taken by men in Poland. Gender, as a social category, imposes belonging to a specific social group consistent with the gender. It affects the ways of interaction, communication, personality shaping and the functioning of an individual in society. The adoption of gender schemas largely depends on socialisation, and therefore on the extent to which gender differences were emphasised in the upbringing process and the extent to which the child learned to be a woman or a man.

Cultural gender, on the other hand, is a set of norms regarding everything that in a given culture or society is considered appropriate for a woman/girl or a man/boy. And broadly understood social roles, which are often clearly assigned to one gender, may be considered appropriate. They constitute a set of dos and don'ts, expecta-

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[4] S. Bem-Lipsitz, Androgynia psychiczna a tożsamość płciowa, [in:] P. Zimbardo (Ed), Psychologia i życie, Warszawa 1997, pp. 435–438; S. Bem-Lipsitz, Męskość, kobiecość. O różnicach wynikających z płci, Gdańsk, 2000.

tions of society directed towards women and men about what should be a "real woman" and what should be a "real man".

Gender plays an important role in shaping this image, to which specific behaviour, features and social roles are assigned. As Cross and Markus write, "the gender schema is described as an interpretative framework that gives meaning and ensures consistency to own experience and the experience of others".[5] Each person has a developed gender schema that is expressed by traits typical of men and women, or combines traits of both (as in the case of androgynous people) or has none of them.[6] Gender is a multidimensional construct consisting of: stereotypes associated with sex, activity and preference for interests understood as feminine and masculine, personality attributions (e.g. character traits) and types of social relationships.[7]

According to the gender schema theory, knowledge about gender stereotypes is accumulated in the form of representations in the form of cognitive schemas.[8] These representations may include the image of a social group, as well as the image of an individual, in terms of "feminine" – "masculine" categories. These categories are developed around the age of three years and are largely resistant to changes.[9] In earlier studies, masculinity and femininity were treated

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[5] S.E. Cros, H.R. Marcus, Płeć w myśleniu, przekonaniach i działaniu: podejście poznawcze. In: Wojciszke B. (Ed.), Kobiety i mężczyźni: odmienne spojrzenie na różnice, Gdańsk, 2004, pp. 48–80.

[6] S.E. Cros, H.R. Marcus, Płeć w myśleniu, przekonaniach i działaniu: podejście poznawcze. In: Wojciszke B. (Ed.), Kobiety i mężczyźni: odmienne spojrzenie na różnice, Gdańsk, 2004, pp. 48–80.

[7] A.C. Huston, The development of sex typing: themes from recent research, Developmental Reviev, 5, 1985, pp. 1–17.

[8] S.L. Bem, Gender schema theory: A cognitive account of sex typing, „Psychological Review" 1981, 88, 4, pp. 354–364

[9] N. Chodorow, Osobowość płci a reprodukcja macierzyństwa, [in:] A. Jasińska-Kania, L.M. Nijakowski, J. Szacki, M. Ziółkowski (Ed.), Współczesne teorie socjologiczne, No. 2, Warszawa, 2006, pp. 1206–1209; Strykowska, M., Regulacyjna funkcja tożsamości płciowej kobiet a ich praca zawodowa, „Kolokwia Psychologiczne", 1, 1992, pp. 121–136.

as two ends of the same dimension.[10] In the modern gender paradigm, specialisation in the field of femininity and masculinity, or the division of social roles by gender, is replaced by the concept of complementarity and androgyny.[11] This means that the perception of biological gender as conditioning social roles is abandoned, and it is recognised that femininity and masculinity are two independent dimensions of personality, and individuals may simultaneously manifest both of these components. It is only a form of social stigma and symbolization which of these traits are perceived as masculine and feminine.[12] The phenomenon of relativisation of gender characteristics also causes that the categories of "real" femininity and masculinity are becoming nowadays increasingly blurred.[13] The configuration of the traits belonging to these dimensions possessed by individuals, allows for the "classification" of a person in terms of the type of gender schema, or their psychological gender:

- androgynous type – has numerous traits from both dimensions,
- agender type – few features of both dimensions,
- schematic feminine type – numerous traits included in the "femininity" dimension and few traits from the "masculinity" dimension,
- schematic masculine type – numerous traits included in the "masculinity" dimension and few traits from the "femininity" dimension,

People defined as schematic (masculine men and feminine women) are more ready to activate gender stereotypes in the course

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[10] Gough, 1957, [in:] B. Wojciszke, Sprawczość i wspólnotowość. Podstawowe wymiary spostrzegania społecznego, Gdańsk, 2010.

[11] K. Arcimowicz, Obraz mężczyzny w polskich mediach. Prawda Fałsz Stereotyp, GWP, Gdańsk, 2003.

[12] S. Bem-Lipsitz, Męskość, kobiecość. O różnicach wynikających z płci, Gdańsk, 2000; A. Kwiatkowska, Siła tradycji i pokusa zmiany, czyli o stereotypach, [in:] J. Miluska, P. Boski (Ed.), Męskość i kobiecość w perspektywie indywidualnej i kulturowej, Warszawa, 1999, pp. 143–172.

[13] Z. Melosik, Kryzys męskości w kulturze współczesnej, Poznań, 2002; S. Biddulph, *Męskość*, Poznań, 2004.

of processing information about the environment and engage in behaviour consistent with the stereotype of their own gender than androgynous and agender people.[14] Therefore, the category of "gender" possible to stereotype, is an integral part of the core of the self, influencing the self-categorisation process in schematic people.

Adopting the perspective of representatives of the interactionist and ethnomethodological trend in sociology, it is therefore possible to state that gender is shaped in interactions and is a social status that must be achieved; that the gender difference is produced by social institutions by e.g. restroom segregation or sports segregation; that although it is cultural and needs to be learned, once assigned to a given category, it is very difficult to change, that gender is a certain type of work, something that is formed.[15]

Regulatory function of gender

Among numerous social and cultural factors, gender has the greatest influence on our behaviour, thoughts, and feelings. During development, a typification process takes place, as a result of which an individual develops a specific type of gender identity, manifested by its identification with a specific gender. This identification consists of a set of variants of a given person's behaviour, resulting from the performance of a specific gender role and the mental sense of belonging to a given gender. This is expressed in the way of per-

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[14] S.L. Bem, Gender schema theory: A cognitive account of sex typing, „Psychological Review" 1981, 88, 4, pp. 354–364; A. Kuczyńska, Płeć psychologiczna. Podstawy teoretyczne, dane empiryczne oraz narzędzia pomiaru, „Przegląd Psychologiczny" 1992, 2, pp. 237–247; M. Strykowska, Regulacyjna funkcja tożsamości płciowej kobiet a ich praca zawodowa, „Kolokwia Psychologiczne", 1, 1992, pp. 121–136.

[15] H. Garfinkel, Studia z etnometodologii, Warszawa, 2007; E. Goffman, The Arrangement between the Sexes, Theory and Society 4: 301, 1977; Kessler, S. J., Mckenna, W., Gender: An ethnomethodological approach, New York, 1987, NY: John Wiley & Sons; C. West, D. Zimmerman, Doing gender, „Gender & Society", 1(2), 1978, pp. 125–151.

sonal, individual living, feeling and experiencing the gender role that is performed on a daily basis.

Gender, as the most visible, distinctive and universal trait, is a particularly good basis for creating stereotypes. Stereotypes are sets of beliefs about the traits possessed by representatives of a given category – in this case: the category of a woman or a man. They strengthen the ordering function of social roles that determine the behaviour of group members and become the binding standard for their regulation. The influence of roles associated with gender on behaviour is explained by the concepts of normative influence, the concepts of self-fulfilling prophecy and the different variants of the role.[16]

The content of the stereotype results from the structure of a given society. The prevalence of gender role stereotypes and their regulatory power is determined by the type of social organisation. The psychological mechanism explaining the gender identity of an individual is the formation and appropriate location of the gender schema in their "self" structure. Gender schemas provide patterns of expectations about behaviour, interests, traits, skills, and people generally behave in ways that are consistent with them. The "self" structure, regardless of age-related changes and environmental differences, is a relatively constant personality trait, and the gender schema is its most stable element. Depending on biological conditions and cultural patterns, the gender schema may occupy a more or less central position in the "self" structure. It can be assumed that in typical women (with a schema of femininity) and typical men (with a schema of masculinity), it will occupy a central position in their "self" structure. As a result, these individuals strictly adapt to the prevailing gender stereotypes. On the other hand, the more peripheral the position of the schema (the less significant it is), the more the individual is able to demonstrate flexibility in behaviour depending on the situation, which is characteristic of androgynous people.[17] This can be briefly expressed as the statement that gender

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[16] J. Miluska, Tożsamość kobiet i mężczyzn w cyklu życia, Poznań, 1996.

[17] M. Strykowska, Regulacyjna funkcja tożsamości płciowej kobiet a ich praca zawodowa, „Kolokwia Psychologiczne", 1, 1992, pp. 121–136.

influences the self-image in two areas: in the content of the image (filling it with gender-related traits, behaviour and inclinations) and within the structure and functioning of the "self" system (conditioning the ways of undertaking social interaction).

Research on masculinity and femininity

The beginnings of interest in gender are dated at as late as the end of the 19th century[18] and are associated with research on intelligence. Subsequently, gender was understood in terms of femininity and masculinity understood as "global personality traits", and this period was closed in 1983 by S.L. Bem, who introduced the concept of androgyny as two independent dimensions of masculinity and femininity. In the 1980s, the concept of gender as a social category was also initiated, and in the 1990s a number of theories describing gender at the interpersonal level, or at the level of behaviour perceived as appropriate for a given sex, were developed.[19] Previous studies focused mainly on the functional and adaptive aspects of gender identity, less often on whether and what socialisation- and personality-related factors may influence the formation of such a set of characteristics in individuals that determines belonging to a specific type of psychological gender. In the history of views on the differences between what is masculine and what is feminine, two

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[18] Ashmore, In: E. Mandal, Podmiotowe i interpersonalne konsekwencje stereotypów związanych z płcią, Katowice 2000.

[19] The 1960s and 1970s brought, mainly in Western Europe, the United States, and Australia) the development of men's studies. They grew out of the continuation of feminist movment, and research conducted from this perspective, sought to deepen the analysis of masculinity and the male experience as socially, culturally, and historically conditioned issues. In the years that followed, "as a result of many kinds of critique – primarily feminist, but also from representatives of the scholarly gay and lesbian perspective, and as a response by men themselves, especially pro-feminist men, to feminism and debates about gender relations" (Hearn, 2006, pp. 49–50), critical studies on men developed. The 1980s brought a critique of the traditional male role and its associated stereotypes.

positions – minimalist and maximalist, which differ in their assessment of the scope and role of gender in the functioning of the individual, can be distinguished.[20] The maximalist approach recognises that gender plays a very important role in human life. Fundamental differences between the genders are assumed here. Supporters of the minimalist approach perceive little significant difference between the genders (they concern some cognitive abilities and emotional characteristics) and suggest that it is society that contributes to their formation. However, meta-analyses conducted in recent years have shown the validity of the recognition of gender as a predictor of differences in, for example, the abilities of men and women.

Masculinity – traditional and modern approach

Masculinity is a concept that has evolved over the centuries, both in terms of its perception and implementation. With the transformation of societies, the models of both masculinity and femininity changed, but they have always been connected with the performance of specific roles. In the Dictionary of Polish Language, masculinity is defined as "the totality of features typical of a man, characteristic of a man.[21] However, this concept requires elaboration mainly based on life roles.

K. Arcimowicz believes that in modern Poland we are dealing with two paradigms of masculinity: "According to the traditional paradigm, masculinity is associated with dominance and specialisation in specific areas. It is based on the dualism of gender roles, the asymmetry of male and female characteristics. It requires a man to dominate other men, women and children. It means the necessity to suppress feelings and emotions. The new paradigm of masculinity emphasises equality and partnership between men and women, rec-

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[20] E. Mandal, Kobiecość i męskość, Warszawa 2003; L. Brannon, Psychologia rodzaju. Kobiety i mężczyźni: podobni czy różni, GWP, Gdańsk, 2002.

[21] S. Auderska, H. Łempicka, Z. Skorupka (Ed.), Mały słownik języka polskiego, Warszawa, 1996.

ognising these values as fundamental in creating a new social order. It contains the concepts of androgyny and self-development understood as striving for full humanity. This paradigm allows a man to display both masculine and feminine characteristics. Their life motto is collaboration, not domination, they are partners for women and children. The new version of masculinity – in contrast to the traditional paradigm – does not impair non-heterosexual sexual identities".[22] Thus, in the traditional model of masculinity, dominance and specialisation are assumed to be the key characteristics of a man. The man is the head of the household, the breadwinner of the family. Male domination is understood here as supremacy in the physical, mental and social spheres, including the economic one. The traditional male type is physically strong, decision-making and has the highest position in the family space. He includes no elements of femininity, and his image is built in a way to be its opposite. He is a human being with strong emotional control, rational and not showing weakness. He negates in themselves everything that is perceived as feminine in culture, building his image of a strong, self-confident, competent and dominant person. Generally speaking, it can be said that the image of a man has been created over the years in opposition to the image of a woman. The traits attributed to men are those that women lack.

In contrast, the modern paradigm emphasises the complementarity of genders, emphasising the equality and partnership of women and men. Modern masculinity diverges more and more from the stereotypical image that has never before associated it with the ethos of beauty. Physical beauty of a man begins to be a feature of their masculinity, which contradicts the stereotypical vision of masculinity. As K. Siewicz[23] writes, the pressure of idealism that is characteristic of modern times makes a man begin to search for his identity closer to the identity of women. The gender blurring confronts men with the problem of determining their own masculinity.

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[22] K. Arcimowicz, Obraz mężczyzny w polskich mediach. Prawda, fałsz, stereotyp, Gdańsk, 2003.

[23] K. Siewicz, Wpływ przekazu medialnego na współczesny wzorzec męskości a implikacje dla edukacji, „Kultura-media-teologia" No 15, 2013, pp. 8–21.

And so the modern image of a man can be presented by distinguishing several types:

- a metrosexual man – has some characteristic traits – he is a young resident of the city, he is heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual, and sexual orientation does not matter much here, because the main object of adoration is himself. He is a regular visitor of clubs, discos and beauty salons. He cares a lot about his physical appearance, often decides to do make-up, dye his hair, wear jewellery. He dresses fashionably, sometimes even eccentrically. He is self-confident and expresses his emotions openly;
- a lumbersexual man (from English word lumberjack) – he is hypermasculine, has facial hair, is not afraid of technical and technological challenges, is resourceful. He has all the traits stereotypically attributed to men. "A masculine man" with the element of femininity, which is manifested in taking care of himself and expressing emotions;
- a retrosexual man – a gallant gentleman in a suit, self-confident and tough, a combination of an intellectual, romantic and macho. He does not focus all his attention on physical appearance, he does not lament over his own fate;
- a princesexual man – elegant, stylised as a prince from a fairy tale.[24]

In turn, Zbyszko Melosik distinguished five models of dominant masculinity:

- a successful man – he is characterised by a high social status and power resulting from his financial position. His duty is to earn and support financially his family;
- a body-builder – masculinity is manifested in his physical appearance, primarily in the developed musculature;
- a Rambo man – personifies masculinity as violence, aggression, associating masculinity with a machine;

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[24] In: Wojciechowska, Kobiece i męskie wzory (re)konstrukcji biografii w perspektywie zmiany zawodowej, Wydawnictwo UW, Warszawa, 2018.

– a Macho man – he is associated with the sexual plane: he is a symbol of sexual potential; combining domination with phallocentrism and at the same time with aggression, risk and fear;

– a Playboy man – focused on consumption and treating women in this way.[25]

So the modern category of masculinity is dynamic and constantly subjected to discourse. It should also be emphasised that in the modern era, mass media are an important tool of cultural influence, so a significant part of knowledge about contemporary men is shaped by what can be watched on the Internet and on television. Since the end of the seventies of the last century, a modern stereotype of a "softman" has been present, which is a composition of feminine delicacy, caring and sensitivity, with still highly valued mental strength and professional activity.[26] The advantages of the emotional openness of men began to be emphasised, along with the promotion of the partnership model of the family, in which men more and more often take over functions considered in the traditional paradigm as typically feminine. According to Polish research, the following appear among the new models of masculinity[27]:

– in family life, a partner and guardian for a child (next to the traditional role of breadwinner and head of the household),

– a partner or a single in a relationship with a woman (next to the traditional macho and playboy model),

– in a homosexual relationship with a man (next to the traditional rival or friend model),

– in the professional sphere, a model (based on the traditional concept of typically masculine characteristics and attributes) of a businessman, politician and athlete).[28]

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[25] Z. Melosik, Kryzys męskości w kulturze współczesnej, Wydawnictwo Wolumin, Poznań, 2002.

[26] E. Badinter, XY Tożsamość mężczyzny, Wydawnictwo W.A.B., Warszawa, 1993.

[27] K. Arcimowicz, Obraz mężczyzny w polskich mediach. Prawda Fałsz Stereotyp, GWP, Gdańsk, 2003.

[28] K. Arcimowicz, Obraz mężczyzny w polskich mediach. Prawda Fałsz Stereotyp, GWP, Gdańsk, 2003.

When discussing the issue of masculinity, it is impossible to ignore the influence of the works of Raewyn Connell. She first presented her concept of hegemonic masculinity in the article entitled *The Concept of Role And What To Do With It*, published in 1979. The author believes that there is no one type of masculinity with fixed determinants or parameters – masculinity has many constructs, varied depending on e.g. the social (social group), cultural, but also historical or geographical context. According to Connell[29], also within one culture or society, or even within one institution, a "multiplicity of masculinity" can be observed. Moreover, the author drew attention to the hierarchy of masculinity and distinguished its three levels. The first is the cultural ideal of masculinity that the vast majority of men in a given society strive for. It is rarely achieved, and it is defined by the traits of physical appearance (muscular, strong figure), heterosexuality, as well as high social and economic position, authority and power (hegemonic masculinity). This is the type of man who brings others under his control. In the pyramid of the hierarchy, directly behind the concept of hegemonic masculinity, there are men who strive to achieve this "ideal" (hegemonic) masculinity but are unable to meet its requirements. Raewyn Connell calls this type "complicit masculinity". Representatives of this model are supporters of patriarchalism and the dominant model of masculinity, but for various reasons, e.g. because of their family or other dependencies, they are forced to make certain compromises. Men representing the type of complicit masculinity are husbands, fathers, local activists. They somehow "enjoy" the privileges and benefits associated with the functioning of the hegemonic model, but relations with other masculinity models are here constantly negotiated and ambiguous. The last model is "subordinate masculinity", which includes all other men, that is, those who cannot, do not want or are unable to follow the ideal of hegemonic and complicit masculinity. Therefore, subordinate masculinity covers the range of traits and behaviours that do not fit in with the ideal associated with the attitude of a man domi-

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[29] R. W. Connel, J. Messerschmidt, Hegemonic masculinity. Rethinking the concept, "Gender & Society", Vol. 19, No. 6, 2005, pp. 829–859.

nating the rest of gender categories. According to Connell, non-heterosexual men occupy the very bottom of the hierarchy of masculinity, or they constitute masculinity that is subordinate and most excluded as a result of symbolic connection.

The works of Connell, as a precursor of the theory of masculinity, were also followed by numerous critical studies. Years later she verified, supplemented and developed some of them. One of the theorists who significantly argued with selected Connell's theories is Eric Anderson, author of the inclusive masculinity theory. He distinguished two types of masculinity: the first – traditional one, called orthodox masculinity, is characterised by homophobia and misogyny. This type enhances heterosexism and supports patriarchy. The second type is inclusive masculinity.

Inclusive masculinity, according to this theory, does not compete for hegemony. It includes men who are able to demonstrate both emotional and physical intimacy. Eric Anderson brought to masculinity research the importance of recognizing the equality of masculine types.

A relatively new theory is the "hybrid masculinities" theory. According to this approach, men – although more and more often undertake tasks that were considered non-masculine – still maintain their privileged position. Research on hybrid masculinities suggests that hybrid masculinity distances itself from traditional masculine norms while recreating and enhancing hegemonic masculinity.

Another type of masculinity described in the literature includes caring masculinities, the definition of which is primarily attributed to Karin Elliott. The main characteristics of caring masculinities are: rejection of domination, adoption of care-related values, understanding of the interdependence of individuals and their relationships. There are various ways of practising such masculinity, e.g. involvement of men in childcare. As Suwada writes[30]: "In the model of caring masculinity it is assumed that through practice men

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[30] K. Suwada, Męskości opiekuńcze. Zaangażowanie w ojcostwo a rekonstrukcja modeli męskości, "Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica" 2017, 18(2), pp. 77–90.

change the ways of constructing their male identity". Protective masculinity is an alternative to hegemonic masculinity. According to Karla Elliott, caring masculinity rejects the pursuit of domination, assigning high value to positive emotions. Providing care allows men to feel responsible, competent and happy.

Research on the masculinity of people with intellectual disability

Issues related to the gender of people with disability have gained the interest of scientists only recently. Disability, especially intellectual disability, is often identified with weakness, helplessness and dependence[31], and masculinity with strength, autonomy and domination, thus remaining "in opposition" to each other. As written by Wilson et al.[32], the "gender powerlessness" described in the literature arises both due to the loss of cognitive abilities and limited possibilities of independent decision making.

Research that is conducted in the area of intellectual disability and sexuality most often focuses on the sexuality of people with intellectual disability (mainly in the context of their needs) and on parenthood (more often motherhood than fatherhood). Their results often show that intellectual disability does not have to exclude the possibility of fulfilling the role of a partner and father, and often even reveal the ability to fulfil them in an atmosphere of love and support. It should be emphasised that in recent years there has been an increase in interest in these issues. This is the right approach, also given the deeply entrenched social stereotypes and prejudices. Certain changes in views, attitudes and behaviour, and a shift away from focusing on differences between people within the intellectual

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[31] A. Ostrowska, Niepełnosprawni w społeczeństwie 1993–2013, Warszawa, 2015.

[32] N.J. Wilson, T.R. Parmenter, R.J. Stancliffe, R.P. Shuttleworth, From diminished men to conditionally masculine: sexuality and Australian men and adolescent boys with intellectual disability, "Culture, Health & Sexuality", 15(6), 2011, pp. 738–751.

norm and beyond, to the benefit of emphasising common features can also be observed. As M. Kościelska writes, "We grow up as a society to perceive the similarity of mental needs of people with intellectual disability, including sexual and erotic needs – to the general population".[33] Research on sexuality and intimate relationships of people with intellectual disability in various aspects and in various age cohorts was carried out by, among others, D. Mejnartowicz[34], R. Pichalski[35], B. Antoszewska, K. Ćwirynkało[36], R. Kijak[37], and among foreign researchers by, among others, L. Conod L. Servais[38], N.J. Wilson et al.[39], E. Rushbrooke C. Murray S. Townsend[40],

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[33] M. Kościelska, Czy i jak wspomagać rozwój poczucia tożsamości seksualnej u osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną? In: M. Kościelska, B. Aouil (Ed.), *Człowiek niepełnosprawny. Rodzina i praca,* Bydgoszcz, 2004, p. 104.

[34] D. Mejnartowicz, Seksualność osób z zespołem Downa. In: Wieczne dzieci czy dorośli, J. Graban (Ed.), Problem seksualności osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną, Stowarzyszenie Rodzin i Opiekunów Osób z Zespołem Downa Bardziej kochani, Warszawa, 2002.

[35] R. Pichalski, Potrzeby seksualne młodzieży szkolnej z lekkim upośledzeniem umysłowym (w porównaniu z młodzieżą w normie intelektualnej, J. Głodkowska, A. Giryński (Ed.), Seksualność osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną – uwalnianie od schematów i uprzedzeń, Warszawa, 2005.

[36] B. Antoszewska, K. Ćwirynkało, Wiedza na temat płci i identyfikacja płciowa młodzieży z lekką niepełnosprawnością intelektualną, Kwartalnik „Szkice Humanistyczne", Vol. XII, No 1 (vol. 27) 2012, pp. 115–130.

[37] R. Kijak, Seks i niepełnosprawność – doświadczenia seksualne osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualna, Kraków, 2010; R. Kijak, Seksualność człowieka z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną a rodzina, Warszawa, 2014; R. Kijak, Dorośli z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną jako partnerzy małżonkowie i rodzice, Kraków, 2016.

[38] L. Conod, L. Servais, Sexual life in subjects with intellectual disability. Salud pública Méx, 2008; 50: suppl. 2.

[39] N.J. Wilson, T.R. Parmenter, R.J. Stancliffe, R.P. Shuttleworth, Conditionally Sexual: Men and Teenage Boys with Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability. "Sexuality and Disability", 29, 2011, pp. 275–289; N.J. Wilson, T.R. Parmenter, R.J. Stancliffe, R.P. Shuttleworth, From diminished men to conditionally masculine: sexuality and Australian men and adolescent boys with intellectual disability. Culture, Health & Sexuality, 15(6), 2013, pp. 738–751.

[40] E. Rushbrooke, C. Murray, S. Townsend, The Experiences of Intimate Relationships by People with Intellectual Disabilities, "A Qualitative Study. Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities", 27(6), 2014, pp. 531–541.

N. Banks[41], C. Friedman et al.[42] On the other hand, the fatherhood of intellectually disabled, which an issue less frequently described, was the subject of scientific interests, of, among others, the following authors: G. Llewellyn, D. Traustadóttir, McConnell, H.B. Sigurjónsdóttir[43], R. Mayes H.B. Sigurjónsdóttir[44], R. Kijak.[45] The review of theoretical concepts and research in the field of masculinity and intellectual disability in an international dimension was also performed by three Polish researchers: K. Ćwirynkało, B. Borowska--Beszta and U. Bartnikowska in the publication entitled: "Masculinity and Intellectual Disability: A Review of Theoretical Concepts and Research". However, there is still little research that explores the masculinity of people with intellectual disability from their own perspective.

Methodology of own research

The research discussed in this article is placed in the stream of qualitative research using a case study as a method. The subject of the research covers the statements of men with intellectual disability concerning masculinity. The aim of the study was to describe and

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[41] N. Banks, Sexually harmful behaviour in adolescents in a context of gender and intellectual disability: Implications for child psychologists, "Educational & Child Psychology", 31(3), 2014, pp. 9–21.

[42] C. Friedman, C. Arnold, A. Owen, L. Sandman (2014), "Remember Our Voices are Our Tools": Sexual Self-advocacy as Defined by People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Sexuality and Disability, 32(4), pp. 515–532.

[43] G. Llewellyn, R. Traustadóttir, D. Mcconnell, H.B. Sigurjónsdóttir, Introduction, [in:] G. Llewellyn, R. Traustadóttir, D. McConnell, H.B. Sigurjónsdóttir (red.), Parents with Intellectual Disabilities. Past, Present and Futures. Oxford 2010, JohnWiley & Sons Ltd., pp. 1–14.

[44] R. Mayes, H.B. Sigurjónsdóttir, Becoming a Mother – Becoming a Father, [in:] G. Llewellyn, R. Traustadóttir, D. McConnell, H.B. Sigurjónsdóttir (Eds.), Parents with Intellectual Disabilities. Past, Present and Futures Oxford 2010, JohnWiley & Sons Ltd. pp. 17–31.

[45] R. Kijak, Macierzyństwo i ojcostwo osób niepełnosprawnych intelektualnie, „Niepełnosprawność i Rehabilitacja", 2013, No 3, pp. 136–145.

understand the concept of masculinity of adult men with intellectual disability. The goal is inspirational[46] and is related to the knowledge gap in the field of masculinity research. A research problem focused around the question: "How do men with intellectual disability perceive their masculinity?"

The rationale for the choice of the research method, which is multiple case study, is its understanding adopted after Robert K. Yinem[47], who defines it as an empirical study that explores a contemporary phenomenon ("case") in the context of reality, especially when the boundaries between the context and the phenomenon are not completely obvious. Yin distinguishes three types of case studies – explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory one. A starting point for the present study was the last type aimed at identifying and describing the phenomenon under study. The applied technique is the free-form, partially guided interview[48], while the tool includes the instructions for the interview.

The analysis covered 12 interviews with men with intellectual disability, aged from 20 to 57, diagnosed with moderate intellectual disability. They all had preserved verbal communication. The interviews lasted from one to three hours and were of different dynamics and course. The respondents stayed in the following social environments:

– nursing home (5 interviews)
– communal home of mutual aid (5 interviews)
– family home (2 interviews).

All respondents live in the Łódź Voivodeship.

Results of the study

The analysis of the research material allowed for the identification of 4 types of masculinity.

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[46] P. Apanowicz, Metodologia ogólna, Gdynia, 2002, p. 71.

[47] K.R. Yin, Studium przypadku w badaniach naukowych. Projektowanie i metody, Kraków, 2015.

[48] J. Rubacha, Metodologia badań nad edukacją, Warszawa, 2008.

- **"Crippled" masculinity (3 people)** – issues related to health and/or disability are the most important. Somatic disorders and ailments occupy a central place in the self-image. The respondents perceive themselves from the angle of their disability, through the dysfunctions of their body. Functioning is simplified here to the disease and the treatment process. They are the main area of interest, and other aspects seem to be treated as unimportant and often neglected. A person (man) is reduced here to the biological limitations and possibilities of the body, and disability is always identified with a disease. This type of man differs from the dominant male model. Men of this type cannot fulfil the male role as they imagine (e.g. they do not provide for their family). The sense of dissatisfaction with life, and the inability to fulfil plans and dreams are visible. Among this type of men, the effects of long-term helplessness training are visible, which resulted in a lack of life initiative. The striking element in the statements is the feeling of considerable dependence on others (parents ordered, the girl wanted, the doctor decided). Agency is replaced here with a feeling of helplessness and inability to accept their fate. Pain and suffering are its visible manifestation. The man feels disadvantaged and sometimes worse than others.
- **"Neutralised" masculinity (3 people)** – the dominant image in the statements is the respondents' sense of dependence on other people and the inability to decide about themselves and their lives. This sense of dependence covers many spheres, including intellectual one. The respondents rarely perceive their contribution to the possibility of changing the situation, e.g. obtaining a profession, starting a job, getting married, and they believe that they cannot function as they would like, work, start a family, move freely. The respondents show knowledge about real restrictions and prohibitions. The sense of prohibitions and orders restricting them violates their visible needs for fulfilling social roles, including those related, in the opinion of the respondents, to gender. Usually, they are aware of their own limitations in fulfilling the role of an adult male, but they have no clearly

defined image of their abilities. There is a lack of evaluation of one's own agency-related possibilities, a sense of autonomy and clearly defined boundaries. The sense of agency is located somewhat outside the respondents, or outside, and this results in a sense of inability, helplessness and the need to accept the fate. However, this attitude is not without emancipatory elements. The respondents often feel competent and able to act as a parent or partner. The impossibility of fulfilling masculinity does not mean its loss, however it has been "neutralised".

- **"Essential" masculinity (4 people)** – the experience of being a man is most often associated with a sense of specific competence, mainly related to strength, but also to interpersonal relationships or the lack of them. A characteristic feature is checking oneself, one's abilities and relationships between the respondent and other people. Being a man is not a moot point here. Masculinity appears here as a psychophysical unity, or it is important for the respondents both in the physical aspect and in the sense of a personal trait, and is an emanation of strength, which is the basic element in constructing their masculinity. It is also part of certain skills, e.g. controlling emotions (I am strong, I do not cry for any reason), the ability to control others (…) the ability to control the situation (then, I pushed him away and shouted that he should go and leave her alone, I defended her). It also refers to the position system in various social relations, positions defined as "masculine", e.g. the superior position in relation to others (women are a bit less… you know, rather a bit less wise than men), the dominant position in relation to others men (…), the position related to power (everyone obeys me here, I am the captain and manager, because if not I can show who is stronger). The nature of this type of masculinity is the superior position of a man, which is manifested in controlling the situation, controlling others, but also self-control (controlling emotions and the forms of their expression). The respondents sometimes very precisely define in what situations and in relation to which people they can show "real emotions". As the respond-

ents believe that emotions are synonymous with weakness, the ability to control them (which is a fight against one's own weaknesses) turns out to be a certificate confirming true masculinity. Masculinity turns out to be the driving force here. The superior position means not showing signs of weakness.

- **"Fluctuating" masculinity (2 people)** – the statements of the respondents show limited possibilities of unambiguous synthesis. The assessment of one's own type of gender is to a certain extent variable and labile. This variability most often results from the context of the situation to which the respondent relates (Sometimes I am the man, well, if it is needed to bring something, or to do other things, for example). In the research material, it is also possible to find examples of the identification of the respondents with their own gender and, at the same time, questioning it (I wear trousers and I have a suit, I guess I am a man, but girls also do, so do not know). It can be assumed that this is the result of disharmony between the role of the dependent person and the conscious components of identity. In this type, the aversion to the masculine role is sometimes visible, which may result from humiliation that the respondent suffered earlier in life, which was caused by men. Bitterness, traumatic experience and failures have shaped the way of perceiving oneself and one's place in the world as a man. Experience particularly important for the formation of masculinity of the respondents included: the feeling of disability, dependence, being weaker, inferior, lack of love, and occurred already in childhood. Strategies for dealing with this experience are usually related to the subordination to the environment, obedience, and accepting the views of others.

Summary

Masculinity constitutes an important identification category for the respondents. All respondents used a rather consistent conceptual system to describe themselves and their own gender. High accu-

racy of the selected cultural symbolism of sexuality can also be observed. The study revealed important threads related to the biography of the respondents. In the statements, most often a dominant sense of the obviousness of one's own gender and the life of the respondents related to it can be found. The main components for defining masculinity were physical appearance, physical attractiveness (or its lack), interpersonal relationships, and social roles. Intellectual disability appears here primarily as a limitation of the life opportunities of the respondents. It is an obstacle in having one's own family, one's own home, and usually a job. The sense of being inferior activates the mechanisms of cognitive distortion, including the area of reduced agency. The socially functioning model of masculinity and the role of the passive recipient make it difficult or even impossible to perceive the intellectually disabled in terms of culturally understood masculinity. The problem of gender identification is even more complicated here than in the case of people with other types of disability. It is mainly influenced by the social environment in which the person was brought up. The intellectually disabled are largely deprived of the possibility of making important life decisions. Their sexuality is denied, compared to children, depriving them of self-determination. Due to the infantilisation of the relationship, the inability to fulfil the role of husband and father, the very process of identification with the gender role is disturbed. All the requirements constituting the social construct of masculinity are extremely difficult to meet by men defined as intellectually disabled.

The aim of this article was to draw attention to the fact that the experience and problems of men with intellectual disability vary. The specific nature of the needs of this social group and the problems related to the masculine gender should be recognised. The presented research is to be not so much an answer as a question about the identity of a man with intellectual disability, and an attempt to provoke reflection on the perception of masculinity in the face of this disability. As in the case of other social groups, it is not a homogeneous group. A man with intellectual disability is not

without gender, even though society often tries to deprive him of his sex. Research also allows for the agreement with the postulate proposed by Simone de Beauvoir in "The Second Sex", and developed, among others, by representatives of feminist "positioning theory", that gender remains an eternal mystery and a sealed book, no matter how carefully it is studied and how much it is discussed.

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