

The Intersection of Masculinity and Disability in the Spatial Experience of Visually Impaired Men

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Abstract : The scholarly literature demonstrates disability and masculinity in conflict with each other. While disability is associated with dependence, weakness, or helplessness, masculinity is associated with independence, strength, and power. Thus, disabled masculinity might be a dilemma experienced on a personal level. The relationship between masculinity and disability is also interesting from a geographical point of view because the conception of space is gendered. In our society, the skills like spatial orientation, working with the maps, and navigation technologies as same as with scale are associated with masculinity. And because these skills are related to the visual imagination, it is the blindness that is associated with the limitation or even the absence of them. Thus, the conflict of masculinity and disability in the spatial experience is very well apparent in the case of visually impaired men. To study this conflict can tell us a lot not only about the experience of visually impaired men but also about the conception of space in geography and in our society. The paper uses Henri Lefebvre's theory of space based on a triad of spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space. It answers the question: How masculinity and disability intersect in the spatial experience of visually impaired men? The data come from research conducted in Brno and Prague (Czechia) in 2020 and 2021 and include 7 interviews and 6 go-alongs with visually impaired men.

Keywords : disability, masculinity, abstract space, spatial experience, visually impaired men

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