
IDF Veterans at the Crossroad of Identities

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Résumé

Background:

In this paper, I use CDA to analyze documentary films about physically disabled IDF veterans and explore the potential linkage between disabled masculinity and independence. I focus on the tension of needing assistance and facing a newly limited body. The main theoretical framework is masculinity studies and critical disability studies (Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare, 2006).

According to literature, some key characteristics of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell, 1995) are associated with activity and agency over the body, leading to control and independence, which are essential characteristics of normative scripts of masculinity (Duncanson, 2015; Shuttleworth et al., 2012). Therefore, men who perform physical activities have access to important spheres associated with the production of masculine identity, mainly the ability to be bodily active (Barrett, 2014).

By intersecting masculinity and disability studies (Gerschick & Miller, 1997; King et al., 2020; Shuttleworth, 2012), this paper explores the effect of independence on masculinity, participation, and rehabilitation. The paper contributes to the growing knowledge of the intersection of disability and masculinity, an under-explored issue in masculinity studies (Cserni & Essig, 2019).

Methodology:

The paper uses CDA to analyze documentary films about disabled IDF veterans climbing mountains worldwide. It reflects on the language used and the introspections shared by participants to demonstrate the different dilemmas of physically disabled men regarding independence, participation, and rehabilitation.

Results:

As technology and medical devices improve, they seem to provide greater independence and self-sufficiency for veterans with a disability. As such, the potential dilemma between masculinity and disability, specifically dependence and assistance, may become less distinct. Moreover, the depiction of assistance and dependence in the movies may lead to a more complex discussion about disability and masculinity. This discussion can contribute to knowledge about identity and disability and to potential rehabilitation measures for the independence and participation of men with disabilities.

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*Intervenant

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