

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357753099>

How to Be a Man Differently: Intersectionality of Gender and Disability in the Life Course of a Powerchair Athlete

Article in *Men and Masculinities* · January 2022

DOI: 10.1177/1097184X211064320

CITATIONS

9

READS

282

2 authors:



Anne Marcellini

Université de Montpellier

113 PUBLICATIONS 940 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE




Laurent Paccaud

University of Lausanne

25 PUBLICATIONS 49 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

How to Be a Man Differently: The intersection of Gender and Disability in the Life Course of a Powerchair Athlete

Men and Masculinities
2022, Vol. 25(4) 581–601
© The Author(s) 2022
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/1097184X211064320
journals.sagepub.com/home/jmm


Laurent Paccaud¹ and Anne Marcellini²

Abstract

This article focuses on the intersection of gender, dis/ability and other social forces in the life course of a young man who has had physical impairments from an early age. Drawing on interactionist theories and applying an ethnographic approach, we analyze the life experiences taking place in multiple social spheres throughout the life phases of Simon, a Swiss powerchair hockey player with cerebral palsy. During his childhood and adolescence, Simon was not in a position to embody the familial ways of performing hegemonic masculinity, and he was functionally dependent on women. Through his ongoing transition to adulthood, his commitment to sport and the process of technologizing his body enabled him to do gender differently and emancipate himself from the familial masculine figure, while remaining reliant on the care provided by women. Thus, we show how the body, context, and life phases contribute to the performances of gender and dis/ability.

Keywords

gender, intersectionality, masculinity, disability, impairment, dependency, life-course approach, transition to adulthood, sport, powerchair hockey, cerebral palsy

¹School of Social Work and Health Sciences, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO), Lausanne, Switzerland

²Sport Sciences Institute, University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland

Corresponding Author:

Laurent Paccaud, School of Social Work and Health Sciences, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO), Lausanne, Switzerland.

Email: laurent.paccaud.prof@gmail.com

Introduction

Looking for a nice girl, between 25 and 35, who is brave enough to go out with me, using a wheelchair. My physical disabilities do not allow me to walk or climb mountains, but I am always in a good mood and in good shape. I work at home as a webmaster. I'm always ready to go anywhere. I love life. Otherwise, I've just realized one of my dreams: I received my driving license, which gives me more independence. [...] But I feel lonely.¹

Simon,² a thirty-two-year-old man with physical impairments, posted the above description to a dating website. The call for company was accompanied by a picture of him in sportswear, a medal around his neck, and very few visible signs of his physical dis/abilities.³ Born and raised in Switzerland, he positioned himself in relation to gender norms, bodily norms, and ability standards. Simon, who has a working-class background, presented himself as a white, heterosexual sportsman with dis/abilities in search of a “nice girl” who, as we will see, should be “able-bodied”⁴ and ready to engage in caregiving. Simon’s singular presentation of himself raises many questions: How have these gender and dis/ability identities been constructed throughout Simon’s life phases? Which socialization, social forces, and systems of oppression have influenced these identities’ dynamics, especially during Simon’s “transition to adulthood” (Bidart 2005)? How have these identities been shaped by sport, which is often described as a highly sexist and ableist social context (Hargreaves and Anderson 2014; Messner 1992; Wedgwood 2011)?

In this paper, we attempt to provide answers to these complex questions by examining Simon’s life course from an intersectional perspective. We aim to shed light on the shifting commitments to masculinity along the life course and to understand how dis/ability shapes these processes. Thus, we provide a better comprehension of how dis/ability intersects with gender and other social forces like sexuality, social class, and race. Simon’s life trajectory appears to be a particularly interesting case study with which to address this problematic. Indeed, on the one hand, considering his physical impairments, acquired at birth, Simon does not meet all ability standards. On the other hand, at some point in his life, he has participated in sport, a social context in which the gender order and ability-disability order are generally perpetuated. Drawing on one specific case study—that of a young man with cerebral palsy—we seek to show the complexity involved in constructing the identity of a man with physical dis/abilities and understand how different systems of oppression, context, and life phases influence the interaction between physical dis/abilities and masculinities. Thus, this paper contributes to the enrichment of intersectional approaches by providing an intersectional analysis of masculinity that takes physical dis/abilities into account.

Studies on Masculinities and Dis/Abilities

Feminist sociologists have considered how gender intersects (Crenshaw 1991) with dis/ability since at least the late 1980s (Fine and Asch 1988; Garland-Thomson 2002;

Wendel 1989). Feminist dis/ability scholarship highlights the particularly prominent role of women—especially women of color and working-class women—in the work of caring for people with dis/abilities (Bailey and Mobley 2019; Schalk and Kim 2020). These studies have also revealed the processes of pathologization and over-medicalization affecting both women and people with dis/abilities, the cycles of poverty in which they find themselves, the high rates of violence and sexual assault they experience, the reproductive injustices they suffer as a results of health and dis/ability politics, thereby demonstrating how women with dis/abilities—and especially women of color—find themselves in marginalized and difficult positions (Bailey and Mobley 2019; Garland-Thomson 2002; Schalk and Kim 2020; Smith and Hutchison 2004; Wendel 1989).

Few dis/ability studies have observed what sort of “dilemmas” men with dis/abilities confront when faced with masculine expectations in their daily interactions (Shuttleworth 2004). This first wave of studies on masculinities and dis/ability (Shakespeare 1999; Gerschick 2000; Gerschick and Miller 1995; Wilson 2004; Shuttleworth 2004) refer to Connell’s concept of “hegemonic masculinity” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) to examine “how [...] having a disability affect[s] [...] men’s abilities to enact gender” (Gerschick 2000, 1263).

According to Connell (2005), in the current Global North gender order, power relations between and within genders are centered on a single structural fact: the global dominance of men over women. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees [...] the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (77). According to Connell, gender practices are performed by actors belonging to various social groups based on class, race, dis/ability, sexuality, and age, among others. Thus, among cis men—like among cis women, nonbinary, and trans individuals—certain groups are subordinate to hegemonic practice, such as those who deviate from the heterosexual norm, while other groups are marginalized, such as men of color. Hegemonic and complicit masculinities ultimately participate in both the subordination of women and of socially disadvantaged men. More recent studies also show the role of local variations of hegemonic masculinity in providing “models of relations with women and solutions to problems of gender relations” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 838) that answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy in the local social context. In this paper, looking at local variations of hegemonic masculinity will be crucial to understanding Simon’s commitments to masculinity in the family context, as well as in the context of powerchair hockey.

Scholarship on dis/ability and masculinities show that, for men with dis/abilities, the acquisition of impairments, after an accident or illness, operates as a “biographical disruption” (Bury 1982; Wilson 2004) that leads to profound changes in their lives (housing arrangements, work, friendships, love relationships, sexuality, etc.). These transformations can affect their masculine sense of self as well as their social entitlements. By encountering the stigma of impairment, men with dis/abilities lose some (but not all) of their masculine privileges (Gerschick 2000). Gerschick explains that, by doing gender through the performance of the social roles attributed to them according to

the “sex category” (West and Zimmerman 1987) to which they have been assigned, individuals perpetuate and reinforce gender norms and related power relations. Yet, according to Gerschick, the body plays a central role in others recognizing good compliance with gender norms. Physical abilities that are socially expected for one’s “sex category” constitute an important dimension of building a masculine or feminine sense of self and of being perceived by others as properly gendered.

As Shuttleworth (2004, 166) explains: “certain typical masculine expectations such as initiative, competitiveness, self-control, assertiveness, and independence, incorporated as dispositions to varying degrees, manifest in bodily comportment” and are key aspects of hegemonic masculinities in the Global North. Yet, due to structural barriers and ableist norms, men with dis/abilities face difficulties enacting some characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, men living with physical dis/abilities are likely to be seen as weak, dependent, passive, and pitiful, but also asexualized and non-gendered (Gerschick and Miller 1995).

According to Shuttleworth, Wedgwood, and Wilson (2012), Gerschick and Miller’s (1995) typology of how men with dis/abilities respond to pressures to approximate hegemonic masculinity is the most elaborated sociological framework within which to study the lived experiences of men with dis/abilities. Gerschick and Miller provide three ideal-type responses to hegemonic masculinity: men whose sense of self relies on approximating hegemonic masculinity, men who reformulate hegemonic masculinity by redefining the ideal characteristics and behaviors of masculinity, and men who reject hegemonic masculinity altogether, “formulating instead an alternate masculinity for themselves” (Shuttleworth et al. 2012, 177). Following Shuttleworth et al. (2012), Gerschick and Miller’s theoretical framework constituted a first step in the study of men and dis/abilities. Nevertheless, the foregoing authors enjoin scholars to address the following three gaps.

First, they identify the need to shift from focusing on “masculinity and how it intersects with ‘disability’ as an almost generic category” (Shuttleworth et al. 2012, 176) to a focus on how various types of impairments intersect differently with multiple masculinities. Indeed, the vast majority of studies about men with dis/abilities investigate the lived experiences of men with acquired spinal cord injuries. This focus on “real” men who have “lost their masculinity, rather than [on] those who were never perceived as masculine in the first place” (Shuttleworth et al. 2012, 183) because of the earlier onset of their impairment, reflects an ableist and sexist viewpoint.

Second, Shuttleworth et al. advocate for wider recognition of the structural forces of gender and ableism. Indeed, by focusing on the process of self-change at an individual level, early researchers may have minimized the institutional and societal constraints that people with impairments face. Moreover, earlier research, for the most part, does not consider how gender and dis/ability intersect with other social forces, such as race, age, or class.

Third, they emphasize that research focusing not only on socio-historical changes but also on the changes occurring along one’s life course enables a better understanding of the dynamism of “disabled masculinity.” They advocate for scholars who account for

the diachronic dimension of the lived experience and focus on the changes that can occur from one life phase to the next.

More recent research has begun to address these blind spots in this still-emerging field of research. For example, [Abbott, Carpenter, and Bushby \(2012\)](#), [Gibson et al. \(2014\)](#), and [Hamdani, Mistry, and Gibson \(2015\)](#) have investigated the life course of men living with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a disease that, from a very young age, leads to a progressive worsening of physical impairments. They explain that structures and dis/ability policies are not adapted to the specificity of their “chronic illness trajectories” ([Strauss et al. 1975](#)), which results in a difficult, if not impossible, transition to adulthood that complies with ability norms. They highlight the difficulties encountered by these men in terms of access to employment, independent housing, love relationships, and shared sexuality. Other studies have shown how the acquisition of physical impairment during the transition to adulthood constitutes a biographical disruption for young racialized men ([Berger 2008](#); [Wedgwood et al. 2020](#)). For example, Berger’s study of the life course of a young Black man, who became paraplegic as a result of a fight between urban gangs, shows that the acquiring of physical dis/abilities represents a turning point in life, at which he takes a different life path than the other member of his gang (i.e., a commitment to higher education and to high-level parasport).

Yet, despite increasing interest in the intersectionality of masculinities and dis/ability among researchers, much work remains to be done if we want to understand the lived experiences of men living with “severe” physical dis/abilities since birth. By providing an in-depth case study of a young white cis man with early onset impairments who lives in Switzerland, we help to meet the three recommendations mentioned above. The focus on a specific case study allows us to see the complexity of the interplay of social forces and events that shape a life course. It also allows us to consider all of Simon’s life trajectories (i.e., education, family, insurance, health, romance, recreation, profession, housing). The long-term perspective—the scale of a lifetime—makes it possible to avoid placing too much importance on situational events; this in turn allows us to expose the effects of social forces in the shifting commitments to masculinity along the life course.

Theoretical Approach

To highlight the multidimensionality of the systems of oppression shaping the lived experiences of men with dis/abilities, we apply the concept of intersectionality. The most salient systems of oppression at the center of this analysis are gender, dis/ability, and class. Simon’s trajectory should be understood as also being shaped by the privileges he holds as a white heterosexual cis man without a migrant background.

As [Crawley \(2019\)](#) advocates, we will use interpretative and critical epistemological approaches cumulatively to capitalize on the benefits of how each may inform our case study. Interpretive approaches allow us to understand the sense Simon makes of his lived experiences, while critical approaches allow us to put it into perspective within

systems of oppression. Regarding gender, we refer to West and Zimmerman's (1987) concept of "doing gender." But we also refer to Connell's (2005) concept of "hegemonic masculinity" to critically examine Simon's everyday accomplishment of masculinity in relation to heterosexual gender norms, sexism, and patriarchy. Regarding dis/ability, we refer to the social model of dis/ability, and in particular the *Human Development Model–Disability Creation Process* (Fougeyrollas 2010). According to Fougeyrollas (2010), dis/ability is situational and consists of a limitation in the fulfillment of a "normal" lifestyle that emerges from the interaction between individuals and their environments. In addition, we draw on the theoretical framework of critical dis/ability studies to better address the bodily dimension of the lived experiences of people with dis/abilities and provide a critical examination of ability norms and ableism (Campbell 2009) that define normative ways of doing gender, and the possibility of approximating hegemonic masculinity or not.

Finally, we draw on the tools developed by life-course studies. This allows us to "elicit rich documentation of social structures and institutions, as well as personal experience and subjectivity" (Wedgwood et al. 2020, 22). Life-course scholarship analyzes continuity and changes to individual life paths (Settersten and Settersten 2003). The life courses of individuals are traversed by commitments to "careers" (Becker 1963) or "trajectories" within different "social worlds" (Strauss et al. 1975). It is therefore important to identify the events, the institutionalized transitions, and the turning points that punctuate these trajectories (Bessin, Bidart, and Grossetti 2010), because it is on these occasions that individuals are led to (re)define their "networks of interdependence" (Winance 2007), the roles they perform and status they hold in their interactions.

The Study

We first met Simon when he was training for powerchair hockey.⁵ He was 30 years old; and at that time, we were conducting a multi-sited ethnographic study of powerchair hockey in Switzerland as white, able-bodied researchers in sport sociology interested in adapted physical activities (Paccaud 2021). Since then, we have met Simon several times at trainings and national competitions. When we invited him to participate more actively in our research, he accepted with a great deal of enthusiasm.

The method for studying the life course of powerchair hockey players involved three data collection tools. First, we conducted a three-hour "life-course interview" (Bertaux 2013) with Simon at his home. A few weeks later, we conducted a 7-day immersion in Simon's life, where we moved through and interacted with Simon's physical and social environment to capture his commitment to sport, as well as his various other commitments and daily habits. We recorded those exchanges, as well as our observations, in a field journal, both during the interactions and at the end of the day. On the last day of immersion, we concluded with a three-hour "photo elicitation interview" (Paccaud and Marcellini, 2021), during which we asked Simon about twenty pictures he chose as best representing different life phases. This methodology allows us to cross-reference

information from the life stories reconstructed *a posteriori* by Simon with the observations and information we gathered through discussions with his relatives.

Our analysis was based on an inductive approach. We attempted to reveal Simon's social status and attitudes in different social contexts in his life. We have given particular attention to the relations by opposition that emerge spontaneously in the interviewee's discourse to uncover the meanings that Simon gives to the various lived experiences that have occurred along his life course. This has spotlighted changes in how Simon commits to masculinity given his dis/ability over time. We identified four successive phases of Simon's life trajectory that reveal the identity-constructing processes of a male with physical dis/abilities, which we will discuss below.

Findings

A Childhood Constrained by a Dis/Abling Environment

Simon was born in 1985, the first child of a couple living in French-speaking Switzerland. Before Simon's birth, his father worked as a sales representative and his mother was a chemistry lab assistant. Simon's birth was extremely challenging, and during the delivery, he was deprived of oxygen. Eight months later, through consultation with the doctors, Simon's parents realized that their son would have chronic health issues. Simon's mother recalled: "The doctors told me 'don't get ideas, he's going to be a vegetable. If you want, you can leave him to us.' It was a little rough. But, it was either they gave him back to me, or I would jump off the bridge."

Simon's mother did not return to formal work after giving birth. She devoted all her time and energy to the household and to the care of Simon. She was rarely apart from Simon, who would become the eldest of two kids. Simon's father, meanwhile, became the sole breadwinner of the family. Simon's family's financial situation worsened, with only one relatively low salary to rely on, also limiting the financial resources for adapting Simon's living environment and making it accessible.

Although Simon had a speech impairment, as well as motor impairments in the lower and upper limbs, making it impossible for him to learn to walk, his mother explained to us that it was very important to both her and her husband that Simon lived the same lifestyle as "normal children." She explained that, for a long time, she objected to letting Simon use a wheelchair: "It was very difficult because, for me, the wheelchair was equated with disability. So, as long as I pushed him in a baby carriage or carried him, he was not disabled, he was my baby." She finally agreed that her son could use a manual wheelchair when he started school "so that he could sit in front of his desk like his schoolmates." Indeed, in 1990, Simon's parents decided to enroll their son in the local "ordinary school." As Simon's parents explained to us, they disagreed with Swiss dis/ability politics of the time, according to which children with impairments were supposed attend "special schools"⁶ for children with dis/abilities. The director of the

“ordinary school” accepted their demand “as long as it did not disturb the other children.”

For the first years of his life, Simon could not move alone. He was always either carried by his mother or pushed in a carriage and then in his manual chair. Thus, he was functionally dependent on his family and especially his mother in order to move. Simon lived this as a very frustrating restriction on his freedom. According to Simon, his social participation was constrained by his functional dependence. He could not leave the family home by himself. He could not interact with others without the presence (and control) of his mother. Moreover, most of the time, his counterparts talked to his mother rather than to him. As his mother told us: “When I’m there, nobody comes to speak to him. Because of his speech impairment, I’m always the one people talk to.”

Although Simon has happy memories of attending the local “ordinary school”, he was also excluded from physical education classes and recreational outdoor activities. Although other children could move, exercise, and play, Simon was constrained by immobility and forced to stay inside the classroom. He experienced the social relations in the “living sphere” of school as asymmetrical. His discourse presents the other schoolchildren as active, while Simon presents himself, at this time, as passive, carried, and assisted, among other descriptions. Even the male “terrors” of the school were kind to him, while his female schoolmates played with him “like with a puppet.” Simon’s status was one of exceptionality.

Thus, as we have shown, Simon’s birth was, for his parents and particularly his mother, the triggering of a “biographical crisis” (Strauss et al. 1975). The ableist process that the medical institution reserved for Simon in light of his impairments, not considering him worthy of living and foreseeing a very short life, made this event even more difficult for the family. These ableist process has also been observed with men with Duchenne muscular dystrophy (Abbott et al. 2012). Families are told to take care of their child and enjoy life while he or she is still alive. At the structural level, these children do not warrant a life project beyond the social script of a lifetime of dependency on specialized institutions or the family. Indeed, the medical institution, and more generally the state, does not provide sufficient resources, in terms of knowledge, support networks, or financial aid. Simon’s family is all the more affected since, given their social class, they do not have the financial means to hire professional help and have few people in their network to support them. Here, the social forces related to social class intersect those related to dis/ability.

Confronted with this difficult situation, Simon’s family organized itself through a gendered division of labor, according to the traditional gendered model of the 1980s in Switzerland and the assignment of Simon’s mother to care was reinforced by the functional dependence of her son.

Simon’s parents attempted to counteract these marginalizing social forces. Through their efforts, they ensured that their child performed some of the so-called “normal” routine practices for a child of his age. Nevertheless, the inclusion process that Simon’s parents wanted for him led him to live experiences of functional dependence, forced immobility, exclusion as well as dis/abling situations due to architectural, social, and

institutional barriers. Through his experiences of dependency, Simon embodied the receipt of care from female significant others. Simon, through his enrollment in a so-called “normal” environment, has developed a sense of ab-normality, as he had not been able to identify with any group. He was unable to engage in the same activities—especially in outdoor and motion activities—that able-bodied boys his age did. Thus, at a very early age, he was already in a subordinated position in relation to the hegemonic masculinity embodied by young able-bodied boys. Unlike men who acquire physical dis/abilities later in life, Simon has been marginalized since the beginning of his life. For the former, the acquiring of physical dis/abilities constitutes a biographical disruption from which they reconstruct themselves (Berger 2008; Wilson 2004). For Simon, this disruption occurred at birth and has influenced his entire life, from the beginning.

Becoming a Powerchair User

Beginning at age eight, Simon attended a “special school” for children with physical and/or intellectual dis/abilities. Simon had been prevented by his teacher, the principal of his school, and social workers from attending the “ordinary school.” Simon’s parents explained that the school building was not wheelchair-accessible and that his pace of learning was slower than that of his classmates. When changes in the environmental factors (physical as well as pedagogical modalities) were necessary for Simon’s social participation in the “ordinary school,” the institutional response was to exclude him. Despite their efforts, Simon’s parents were not able to prevent Simon’s enrollment in a “special school.” Throughout our study, we met parents of children with physical impairments like Simon’s from a more privileged social class. Unlike Simon’s family, these parents managed to counteract this process of exclusion by contacting dis/ability rights associations and paying lawyers to compel the enforcement of dis/ability equality rights (Paccaud 2021).

Simon’s enrollment in the sphere of “special school” appears as a turning point in his life course and has led to significant changes in his social interactions. Indeed, the physiotherapist of the school invited Simon to use an electric wheelchair. For the first time in his life, Simon was able to move without help from anyone. Simon’s mother explained: “He left us in the corridors. It was special for us because we were no longer behind him.” Since then, Simon’s father, and later also his brother, have been repairing his chair and improving its functionality. The process of technologizing his body gave him more independence.

By entering the “world of dis/ability,” which may be considered a form of segregation, Simon accessed certain therapeutic services (follow-up by a specialized physician, a physiotherapist, and an occupational therapist). These services were not aimed at healing Simon nor normalizing him in terms of able-bodied standards. Rather, they assisted Simon in reducing the impact of his dis/abilities and increasing his social participation. In Switzerland in the 1990s, access to medical care and therapeutic services for children with dis/abilities from working-class backgrounds could be

challenging due to structural barriers (difficulty accessing information, medical expenses not fully covered by insurance, insufficient state support, etc.). Thus, access to care was still an important issue.

Simon's involvement in the "world of dis/ability" was also coupled with the depletion of his other social ties. Simon lost contact with his peers from the "ordinary school." Moreover, when Simon was 13 years old, his parents decided to move and buy a "wheelchair-friendly" house located in a hamlet of about ten farms, very far from any urban area and not accessible by public transportation. Thus, Simon became more and more dependent on the only ties he had outside school (i.e., family ties). Nevertheless, at the "special school," Simon met, for the first time in his life, other children who used wheelchairs. Simon has positive memories of his shared experiences with male powerchair users, especially his experiences of sport-oriented games in the institution or during occasional sporting events, such as wheelchair races, organized by the physiotherapist of the institution:

Well, unlike the normal school with the normal children, at the [special school], they all had powerchairs. [...] During the breaks, we did powerchair races in the corridors. We had fun. [...] And us, the powerchair users. It was nice. [...] With the boys, it was cool [...] because I could do the same things [...] the other boys did. You know, not always being the one you have to protect. Being able to act like a kingpin, during the races with the powerchair.

Attending the "normal school with normal children," Simon could not identify with others because of the asymmetrical relationships he had with them. By contrast, at the "special school", he felt part of a peer group: "the powerchair users." The relations he had with his classmates were then symmetrical, and he could experience being in competition with other boys. Whereas Simon had previously been excluded from such social practices, in this peer group, where a reformulation of masculinity with respect to techno-corporeal practices and bodily standards exists, Simon had the opportunity to engage in gender practices like the other boys in the group, including physical and sports activities, contributing to the construction of a sense of masculine self. Indeed, as several authors have shown, sport, where boys are encouraged to prove their strength, compete with others, overcome limits, or take risks, plays an important role in the embodiment, diffusion, and perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity ([Hargreaves and Anderson 2014](#); [Messner 1992](#)).

Although Simon greatly appreciated participating in extracurricular sports activities, he nonetheless experienced a dis/abling situation at the special school: exclusion from intellectual education. Indeed, Simon and his parents explained to us that, considering Simon's pace of learning, the principal and teachers determined that Simon would be unable to attend the "ordinary" educational program. Thus, against his parent's will, Simon was enrolled in a practical educational program, after which he would not be able to pursue higher education. Simon has lived this orientation as particularly unfair due to the discrepancy between the abilities needed for the practical tasks at hand and

his own dis/abilities. This alignment of Simon's educational trajectory with the social script that Switzerland used to plan, at that time, for people with "severe" physical impairments highlights the scale of the structural determinisms that Simon experienced.

Transition to the Status of "Invalid": Withdrawal into Family and Return to Immobility

At the age of eighteen, Simon left school without any certificate of academic or professional competences. Although Simon and his parents contacted various specialized institutions integrating technical educational programs for people with physical impairments, they got no positive results. Indeed, when Simon turned eighteen—the age of legal majority in Switzerland—a new status took effect in his Invalidity Insurance (IA). After examination of his "profile," the IA agency assumed that Simon's physical impairments were "too severe"—and therefore his earning potential too low—to justify the investments required for his professional integration.⁷ Belonging to the structural category of "invalid" made it impossible for Simon to access the institutional structures that could enable his transition to working life. He explained:

So, I lived one day at a time. It was hard for me to be able to project myself into the future. [...] And after that, I did not want to see anyone anymore [...] and I was tired of seeing other disabled persons. I spent a few years quiet at home. Since there was no working place for me in the specialized institutions for people with disabilities. [...] I did two weeks of training, and they didn't take me.

In reaction to this dis/abling lived experience, Simon distanced himself from the "world of dis/ability." He then lived 7 years in the family home, going out on rare occasions only.

During the first 2 years after finishing school, Simon stayed "quiet at home," with no activities or projects. Nevertheless, in 2005, when he was twenty, the family was able to finance home training so that Simon could learn the basics skills required to become a webmaster. In 2007, Simon's father founded a local family business in the field of renewable energies. Since that time, Simon's father and brother have managed relations with clients as well as manual labor. Simon's mother has performed administrative duties while also taking care of the household and of Simon. Simon, meanwhile, has been the webmaster of the company's website. Thus, the division of work within the family has fulfilled normative "gender accountability" (West and Zimmerman 1987) of men being in the public sphere and working blue-collar jobs. Even if Simon has not been able to enter working life in the traditional sense, he still embodies an adult role within his family by participating in the running of the family business. However, he spent little time with the men of the family. He was constrained inside the home, which is, in his family, "the domain of women." Thus, Simon was not in a position to perform the familial variation of hegemonic masculinity.

The third phase of Simon's life is characterized by his exclusion from the labor market, due to marginalization experienced at a younger age in terms of access to education, and then unfulfillment of ability standards imposed by Invalidity Insurance. In this regard, our findings differ from those of [Wedgwood et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Berger \(2008\)](#), which show that men who acquire physical dis/abilities later in life and who have had full access to education are able to access the labor market, working as intellectuals. Even if the insurance system and dis/ability programs in Australia, the United States, and Switzerland are quite different, we can hypothesize that Simon, given his higher degree and earlier acquisition of physical impairments, suffers greater structural barriers to entering the labor market. Although the "social world of work" now seems ready, if supported by dis/ability programs, to integrate people with certain physical impairments, it does not yet seem ready to welcome people with so-called "severe" physical impairments like Simon or men with Duchenne muscular dystrophy ([Gibson et al. 2014](#)).

Back to Mobility: Sport as a Resource for Self-Determination

In 2010, at the age of twenty-five, during a trip to the next town, Simon was noticed by the father of a powerchair hockey player, who invited him to come and watch a training session. When he returned home, Simon explained to his mother that, after so many years of being alone at home, he was ready to meet people with dis/abilities again, "especially if it's to play sports." A few weeks later, he asked her to drive him to his first training.

Becoming a Sportsman with Dis/Abilities. Several changes in Simon's daily interactions were triggered by his commitment to powerchair hockey. First, by playing powerchair hockey, Simon experienced moving in fast motion with a highly reactive sports powerchair. This led Simon to experience new sensations: "The speed, the adrenaline that rose, it was weird. [...] It was new: the first time I had this sensation. It made my heart beat fast." He (re)discovered his body as sensitive, fast, performant, and differently mobile. Second, Simon competed in national championships and international competitions between clubs and traveled widely throughout Switzerland and western Europe. In his discourse, traveling, being mobile, appears to be the most important motivation for his commitment to sport. In his own words, he transitioned from being "home loving," like his father and brother, to being "cosmopolitan." Third, Simon reactivated and expanded his network of powerchair users. As Simon's mother told us, through these new friendships, her son discovered the very different life situations of people with impairments.

[Two male players] are super good, their techniques, super fast, [...] always going beyond the limits, courageous, the right attitude: they are conquerors on the field, [...] but also play fair. They are models for me, in sports, but... I could say also beyond sport... how they live and everything [...] traveling, living alone with their assistants [...] and also having

girlfriends... even if their bodies are not normal, you know, no strength and that kind of stuff.

Through his sport socialization, Simon, like his role models, has gradually embodied a way of enacting masculinity with his singular body. He has performed strength, risk-taking, and self-confidence. As in Berger's (2008, 2010) life history of a man who became an elite wheelchair basketball player after being shot and paralyzed, sport serves as a "practical resource that helped [Simon] take pleasure in his [...] body's performance" (328) and, to some extent, redefine the ideal characteristics and behaviors of masculinity as having a high degree of physical strength. In this way, Simon's gender identity dynamics observed through his sports career are similar to those studied by Lindemann and Cherney (2008) of men with spinal cord injuries who play Murderball. In the world of powerchair hockey, Simon has indeed found social spaces where he can learn, share, and perform a certain way of being masculine, which enables him to better approximate hegemonic masculinity, as a man with physical dis/abilities.

In the world of dis/ability sport, Simon has found role models of men with physical impairments. He considers these men as having the "right attitude." This contrasts with the findings of Sparkes and Smith (2002) that former elite athletes with spinal cord injuries faced difficulties and demonstrated reluctance to commit to wheelchair rugby, a sport they considered not sufficiently masculine. Unlike these men, Simon did not rely heavily on hegemonic masculinity prior to his career in dis/ability sport. Here, we believe that the moment of onset of physical in/disabilities plays an important role in these men's experiences of dis/ability sport, as well as in the construction of a masculine sense of self through sport.

By playing powerchair hockey, Simon meets "peers with dis/abilities" and discovers another way of approximating hegemonic masculinity: that of embodying sport masculinity without enacting physical strength and mobility. The experience of progressive diversification of gender-related postures allows him to put into perspective the unique marginalized position to which he was previously assigned in his familial environment. Doing so, Simon begins to assert his own sense of masculine self. Here, it should be emphasized that in powerchair hockey, a sport only played in the Global North, the male ideals are compliant with whiteness and heterosexuality (Paccaud 2021; Paccaud and Baril 2021), reinforcing the normative social order related to sexuality, skin color, ethnicity, and geopolitical origin among people with dis/abilities.

Playing Sports and Creating a Life Project as an Adult. Simon's commitment to sport has led to changes that go beyond the living sphere of the sport itself. Indeed, the construction of the self as a sportsman with dis/abilities allows Simon to conceive and articulate in front of others the project of being professional, the project of leaving the family home, and the project of being in a romantic relationship. First, he became the webmaster of the website of his sports club. Thus, being webmaster became recognized beyond the family sphere and partially remunerated. Second, his sport experiences enabled Simon to evolve a "life project," whereas he had previously always lived "from day-to-day."

At the beginning of his sports career, Simon had no driver's license. He was dependent on his mother to drive him to trainings and competitions. In 2011, Simon came up with the idea of getting his driver's license to "be able to go to trainings by [himself]." Obtaining the driving license has been a 5-year process filled with challenges. Simon had to undergo a very invasive brain operation to reach the normative ability standards required for car drivers: an ableist structural constraint to comply with able-bodied ideals. Electrodes have been implanted in his brain to "reduce" his "uncontrolled" movements. At the age of 30, Simon passed the driving exam on his first attempt. Thus, Simon enacted another aspect of hegemonic masculinity, being independent, mobile, and in the public sphere.

During this long process, Simon contacted the Swiss Paraplegic Center, which he previously discovered through his powerchair hockey competitions. In 2015, a doctor suggested that Simon enter a multidisciplinary care program (with doctors, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists, among others) "to become fully autonomous and live on his own." Yet, Simon does not intend to be fully functionally independent or to live on his own. Instead of having "full independence," Simon plans to settle and live together with an able-bodied woman, with the assumption that his partner would engage in caregiving and functional support. By so doing, Simon subverts the injunction to independence inherent to the "medical trajectory" (Strauss et al. 1975) as defined by functional rehabilitation specialists. At the same time, his project is based on the support of people who provide him with care, who are generally women of color and/or working-class women (Bailey and Mobley 2019). In Switzerland, these caregivers have irregular work schedules and are either unpaid or earn very low salaries (Invalidity Insurance contributing only up to the legal minimum wage).

For Simon, the configuration of a man with impairments being in a relationship with an able-bodied woman is the only one that could reduce or even eliminate the dis/abling situations he faces. On his dating profile, Simon mentions that he is looking for a "nice girl." This singular formulation raises several questions. Is this girl's niceness reliant on her being a caregiver? Would a girl or woman who would not want to be a caregiver somehow not be "nice"? Simon's project of being in a heterosexual couple relationship subverts the social representations of people with dis/abilities as asexual and non-gendered (Gerschick and Miller 1995) but relies deeply on heterosexual men's entitlement to women's bodies and labor. In this ongoing process, Simon's deeply embedded disposition to receiving care from able-bodied women, as well as his disinterest (especially sexual) in women with dis/abilities, perpetuates systems of oppression regarding gender and dis/ability: internalized ableism intersecting with (hetero)sexism. Indeed, all Simon's social practices always confirmed the normative gendered role of women: able-bodied women take care of men with dis/abilities, love them, and compensate for their dis/abilities.

In his attempts to meet his partner-to-be, Simon refuses his mother's support, driving alone to attend his dates. In dating, Simon mobilizes his sports experiences as cultural, social, and symbolic resources to "make the conversation," "because before playing sport, I had nothing interesting to tell." Simon, unlike some men Shuttleworth (2004)

interviewed, relies on hegemonic masculinity in his efforts to date. On an individual level, playing sports, being a champion, and driving his car represent an expansion of Simon's "masculine repertoire." Nevertheless, on a macro level, no reformulation or rejection of hegemonic masculinity exists.

Despite the initiatives undertaken, Simon faces significant difficulties in finding loving and/or sexual partners. By the end of the data collection period, he had not yet been in a position either to fulfill his long-standing desire for shared sexuality or to construct a couple relationship.

Conclusion: Transitioning to Adulthood: How to be a Man Differently

Simon's "transition to adulthood" appears a key phase in Simon's gender-enacting transformation and in the transformation of his relation to dis/ability. Bidart (2005, 53), taking able-bodiedness for granted, defines the "transition to adulthood" as the process of transitioning "from education to employment, from family home living to independent living, from the original family to the foundation of a couple and a family." Battagliola, Brown, and Jaspard (1997) show that the process of this transition differs according to an individual's "sex category" and social class. Simon's case study shows that living with physical impairments can also significantly impact the course of this "institutionalized rite." Thus, we show that ableism, in addition to classism and (hetero) sexism, also shapes the lived experiences of transitioning to adulthood for a white man. This result is an invitation to life course, feminist, and gender scholars, and more generally to researchers applying intersectionality, to centrally integrate dis/ability as a category of analysis in future research.

First, structural determinism made transitioning to employment challenging for Simon. Indeed, the social script that was structurally planned for "people with severe dis/abilities" at that time did not provide for a transition to employment. The discrimination Simon faced when trying to access intellectual education prevented him from pursuing higher education, which in turn limited his opportunities to pursue intellectual labor. In this respect, Simon's life course differs significantly from those uncovered by Berger (2008; 2010) and Wedgwood et al. (2020). Indeed, in both the United States and Australia, the young adults these authors met had access to higher education (even if they encountered environmental barriers), which provided them with very important resources for their transition to adulthood, especially for accessing professions compatible with their physical impairments (i.e., intellectual labor) and for compelling the enforcement of dis/ability equality rights. In Simon's case, we believe that the earlier acquisition and higher degree of physical impairments played an important role in the discrimination he experienced. Indeed, other people with "less severe" physical impairments whom we met in Switzerland during our study were considered by Invalidity Insurance as capable of earning money in the labor market and therefore received state support for their education and professional integration. Simon's family, as part of the working-class, had limited resources to cope with these

structural determinisms. The state's delegation of the responsibility of caring for children with dis/abilities to children's families exacerbates class inequalities. Indeed, only families from the more privileged social classes, with stable financial situations, high levels of education, and strong networks, can counter these ableist social forces. Simon had to find a way to become an adult different from that of his father and brother. He had to find a way to be a man with a body that does not enable him to enact working-class masculinity through physical labor. The first step he took was to become a webmaster, which gave him a more valued role within his family and allowed him to contribute economically to the family's needs by performing intellectual labor. In that sense, Simon reformulated working-class masculinity to include intellectual labor and exclude the enacting of physical strength. Then, when he diversified his networks of interdependence by committing himself to dis/ability sport, Simon found the opportunity to extend his professional activities outside the family sphere and to obtain a wider social recognition of his professional identity.

Second, the social script of a lifetime of dependency on specialized institutions or family, which Simon has been assigned by doctors and Swiss dis/ability politics, did not provide for a transition from family home living to independent living. This has also been the case for men with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a condition that results in shorter life expectancy (Abbott et al. 2012; Gibson et al. 2014; Hamdani et al. 2015). Indeed, as for Simon just as for those men, at "diagnosis, parents were likely to be told a variance of 'Go home, enjoy your boy, have nice holidays and prepare for the worst'" (Abbott et al. 2019, 8). Regarding his functional dependence on his caregiver, a role carried out by women and, in particular, by his mother, Simon had to strategically arrange to transition without breaking or replacing those ties. As Stevens (2019) points out, due to the structural barriers that men with physical dis/abilities face in independent housing, it is particularly important for them to maintain strong ties of interdependency with their parents. However, these ties can also be overwhelming when they restrain agency. Being "disaffiliated" at the end of his schooling, Simon was highly dependent on his unique network of interdependences: the familial one. Living in a rural area, being unable to drive his wheelchair outside the family house, not attending school, not being trained or employed, nor having any concrete friendships or ties with associations, Simon became highly dependent on this unique living sphere. This lived segregation further reinforced his assignation to a narrow identity positioning in terms of gender (assignment to feminized social spaces, difficulties in performing the familial variation of hegemonic masculinity), in terms of dis/ability (very low social participation) and in terms of sexuality (no shared sexuality). Thus, our study sheds light on how the depletion in networks of interdependence very rapidly leads to vulnerabilities for people with physical impairments. We also show how opportunities for the multiplication of both the networks of interdependence and the living spheres are catalysts for self-determination and empowerment.

In Simon's case, it is the family and contact with groups of people with dis/abilities through sport socialization that provide him with the resources to partially overcome structural oppressions. Through dis/ability sport, Simon encountered multidisciplinary

health and medical specialists who encouraged him to undertake the project of living independently in complete “autonomy.” Nevertheless, Simon, judging this project to be unrealistic, subverted this ideal of so-called “complete autonomy” and thus the project of integration through assimilation with able-bodied norms. In this sense, while distancing himself from the social script of a lifetime of dependency on specialized institutions or family, Simon subverts the new script proposed to him and formulates the alternative project of living with a love partner who will provide him with the care and functional assistance he needs.

Third, regarding Simon’s transition “from original family to the foundation of a couple and a family” (Bidart 2005, 23), the project of leaving the family home is complementary to the project of settling as part of a couple. Through this ongoing process, Simon capitalizes on the expansion of his “masculine repertoire” (Shullesworth, 2004) embedded in his sport socialization. Strategically, Simon chose the social world of highly technologized dis/ability sports, where he could be recognized as masculine and partly emancipate himself from the familial gender practices associated with masculinity, while also remaining compatible with the dominant social representation of masculinity. In so doing, on the one hand, Simon relies on hegemonic masculinity (playing sports, driving a car, traveling, being a competitor and a breadwinner) and, on the other hand, he reformulates hegemonic masculinity (in terms of in/dependence and physical performance). However, as we have shown, this project is founded on an ableist, patriarchal, and heteronormative conception of a relationship. Moreover, it is based on the assigning of caregiving to his partner and the rejecting of women with dis/abilities.

Additionally, Simon’s transition schedule does not conform to the normalized schedule. Indeed, at the age of thirty-two, Simon had not yet achieved his transition to adulthood as defined by Bidart (2005). Nevertheless, given that his physical condition is relatively stable, Simon did not seem to feel time pressure and did not develop a sense of fatalism; this contrasts with what Gibson et al. (2014) and Abbott et al. (2012) have shown in men with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, whose physical conditions are progressive and life expectancies shorter.

As we have illustrated, Simon has to some extent managed to bifurcate from the social script structurally intended for him, that of a lifetime as a child dependent on family. Yet, Simon’s transitioning process to adulthood relies largely on an able-bodied, (hetero)sexist, and classist conception of what adulthood is or should be. We postulate that the non-deconstruction of this normativity restricts his margins of maneuver and the possibilities of rejecting or reformulating hegemonic masculinity. Simon’s agency has been restricted by the structural constraints he has encountered cumulatively throughout the successive phases of his life. By having “severe” physical impairments from early childhood, Simon has limited and limiting ways of being a man in the current gender order in Switzerland. Thus, our study shows some of the singularities of the lived experiences of men who have physical impairments from a very young age. As pioneer scholars on men with dis/abilities have shown, for these men, the acquisition of impairments constitutes a “biographical disruption” (Bury 1982), which can lead to an

identity crisis. Nevertheless, they may capitalize on previous socialization to manage their new identity and social positions, whereas Simon has been marginalized since the very beginning of his life.

In conclusion, the life-course approach that we have taken and the original methodological choice to focus on a single, in-depth, case study has allowed us to reveal the complexity of interrelations between different social forces during the life course of a white man living with physical impairments from a very young age. Our study shows how contingent and planned events contribute to framing the institutionalized transition and turning points occurring along Simon's life trajectory. Thus, we shed light on the shifting commitments to masculinity along the life course of a man with dis/abilities and show how the ability-disability order shapes those processes.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. All quotations of study participants have been translated from French to English by the authors.
2. All participants' names have been modified.
3. In this paper, we will use the terms "people with dis/abilities" or "people with impairments" in reference to the Human Development Model—Disability Creation Process (HDM-DCP) (Fougeyrollas 2010), and to imply that when we look at "people with impairments," we should not only focus on their "disabilities" but also their many "abilities." In his daily interactions, Simon sometimes uses identity-first language and sometimes person-first language without any consistency. He does not seem to distinguish between the two. For clarity, unless citing a direct quotation, we will use person-first language.
4. According to Campbell (2009), the able-bodied identity refers to a cultural understanding of what it means to have "normal" body-mind functioning in an ableist system. Dis/ability is constructed in opposition to and as an imperfection with respect to the so-called normalcy of able-bodiedness.
5. For more information about this sport practice, see Paccaud (2017, 2021).
6. Simon's family uses the term "special school," as opposed to "ordinary school," without criticism of this terminology.
7. According to Piecek et al., 2017, the categories of the IA are established based on norms of capabilities as well as the estimated ability to achieve gainful employment.

References

- Abbott, D., J. Carpenter, and K. Bushby. 2012. "Transition to Adulthood for Young Men with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy: Research from the UK." *Neuromuscular Disorders* 22 (5): 445–446.
- Abbott, D., J. Carpenter, B. E. Gibson, J. Hastie, M. Jepson, and B. Smith. 2019. "Disabled Men with Muscular Dystrophy Negotiate Gender." *Disability & Society* 34 (5): 683–703.
- Bailey, M., and I. A. Mobley. 2019. "Work in the Intersections: A Black Feminist Disability Framework." *Gender & Society* 33 (1): 19–40.
- Battagliola, F., E. Brown, and M. Jaspard. 1997. "Itinéraires de passage à l'âge adulte. Différences de sexe, différences de classe." *Sociétés Contemporaines* 25 (1): 85–103.
- Becker, H. 1963. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: Free Press.
- Berger, R. 2010. *Hoop Dreams on Wheels: Disability and The Competitive Wheelchair Athlete*. New York: Routledge.
- Berger, R. 2008. "Agency, Structure, and the Transition to Disability: A Case Study with Implications for Life History Research." *The Sociological Quarterly* 49 (2): 309–333.
- Bertaux, D. 2013. *Le récit de vie*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Bessin, M., C. Bidart, and M. Grossetti. 2010. *Bifurcations. Les sciences sociales face aux ruptures et à l'événement*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Bidart, C. 2005. "Les temps de la vie et les cheminements vers l'âge adulte." *Lien social et Politiques* (54): 51–63.
- Bury, M. 1982. "Chronic Illness as Biographical Disruption." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 4 (2): 167–183.
- Campbell, F. 2009. *Contours of Ableism: The Production of Disability and Aabledness*. Melbourne: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Connell, R. 2005. *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Connell, R., & J. Messerschmidt. 2005. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender & Society* 19 (6): 829–859.
- Crawley, S. 2019. "Reality Disjunctures and Epistemological Encampment: Addressing Relevance in Constructionist Perspectives on Social Problems." *The American Sociologist* 50 (2): 255–270.
- Crenshaw, K. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6): 1241–1299.
- Fine, M., and A. Asch. 1988. *Women with Disabilities: Essays in Psychology, Culture and Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Fougeyrollas, P. 2010. *La funambule, le fil et la toile: transformations réciproques du sens du handicap*. Laval: Presses de l'Université Laval Québec.
- Garland-Thomson, R. 2002. "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory." *NWSA Journal* 14 (3): 1–32.
- Gerschick, T. 2000. "Toward a Theory of Disability and Gender." *Signs* 25 (4): 112–131.
- Gerschick, T., and A. Miller. 1995. "Coming to Terms: masculinity and Physical Disability." In *Men's Health and Illness: Gender, Power, and the Body*, edited by Donald Sabo and David F Gordon, 183–204. Thousand Oask: Sage.

- Gibson, B., B. Mistry, B. Smith, K. Yoshida, D. Abbott, S. Lindsay, and Y. Hamdani. 2014. "Becoming Men: Gender, Disability, and Transitioning to Adulthood." *Health* 18 (1): 95–114.
- Hamdani, Y., B. Mistry, and B. E. Gibson. 2015. "Transitioning to Adulthood with a Progressive Condition: Best Practice Assumptions and Individual Experiences of Young Men with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy." *Disability and Rehabilitation* 37 (13): 1144–1151.
- Hargreaves, J., and E. Anderson. 2014. *Routledge Handbook of Sport, Gender and Sexuality*. London: Routledge.
- Messner, M. 1992. *Power at Play: Sports and the Problems of Masculinity*. Boston: Bacon Press.
- Paccaud, L. 2017. "Émergence et développement du E-hockey : une pratique inclusive?" *Revue Développement humain, handicap et changement social* 23 (1): 25–39.
- Paccaud, L. 2021. Faire carrière dans le powerchair hockey: Formation et transformation des parcours de vie de personnes ayant des in/capacité physique "sévères". Doctoral Thesis, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Lausanne.
- Paccaud, L., and A. Baril. 2021. "Corps dérangent, corps dégenré: performer la féminité supercrip dans le milieu du powerchair hockey." *Recherches Féministes* 34 (1). In press.
- Paccaud, L., and A. Marcellini. 2021. "Enquêter sur les parcours de vie de personnes rencontrant des situations de handicap: expérimentation collaborative de l'entretien par *photo-elicitation*." *Revue Française des Méthodes Visuelles* 6. In press.
- Piecek, M., J.-P. Tabin, C. Perrin, and I. Probst. 2017. "La normalité en société capacitiste. Une étude de cas (assurance invalidité suisse)." *SociologieS*. <http://journals.openedition.org/sociologies/6412>.
- Schalk, S., and J. Kim. 2020. "Integrating Race, Transforming Feminist Disability Studies." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 46 (1): 31–55.
- Settersten, R., and R. Settersten. 2003. *Invitation to the life course: Toward new understandings of later life*. New York: Routledge.
- Smith, B., and B. Hutchison. 2004. *Gendering Disability*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Shakespeare, T. 1999. "The sexual Politics of Disabled Masculinity." *Sexuality and Disability* 17 (1): 53–64.
- Shuttleworth, R. 2004. "Disabled Masculinity: Expanding the Masculine Repertoire." In *Gendering Disability*, edited by Bonnie G. Smith and Beth Hutchison, 166–178. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Shuttleworth, R., N. Wedgwood, and N. Wilson. 2012. "The Dilemma of Disabled Masculinity." *Men and Masculinities* 15 (2): 174–194.
- Stevens, J. D. 2019. "Stuck in Transition with You: Variable Pathways to In(ter)dependence for Emerging Adult Men with Mobility Impairments." In *New Narratives of Disability: Constructions, Clashes, and Controversies*, edited by Sara Green and Donileen Loseke, 169–184. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Strauss, A. L., J. Corbin, S. Fagerhaugh, B. Glaser, D. Maines, C. Suczeck, and C. Wiener. 1975. *Chronic illness and the quality of life*. Saint Louis: CV Mesby Company.

- Wedgwood, N. 2011. "Can anybody Play? An Introduction to the Sociology of Sport and Disability." In *Youth Sport in Australia*, edited by Steve Georgakis and Kate Russell, 101–117. Sydney: Sydney University Press.
- Wedgwood, N., L. Smith, T. Hendl, and R. Shuttleworth. 2020. "Boy Interrupted—Biographical Disruption During the Transition to Adulthood." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 42 (1): 20–34.
- Wendel, S. 1989. "Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability." *Hypatia* 4 (2): 104–124.
- West, C., and D. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing gender." *Gender and Society* 1 (2): 125–151.
- Wilson, D. 2004. "Fighting Polio Like a Man: Intersections of Masculinity, Disability and Ageing." In *Gendering Disability*, edited by Bonnie G. Smith and Beth Hutchison, 119–133. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Winance, M. 2007. "Dépendance versus autonomie... De la signification et de l'imprégnation de ces notions dans les pratiques médicosociales." *Sciences sociales et santé* 25 (4): 83–91.

Author biography

Laurent Paccaud has completed a PHD in sociology of sport at the Sport Science Institute of the University of Lausanne, under the supervision of Professor Anne Marcellini. Drawing on an ethnographic approach, his research focuses on the identity dynamics of people living with severe physical impairments who are involved in sport, and more specifically on the intersectionality of gender and dis/ability in those processes. Since 2021, he works as a research fellow at the School of Social Work and Health Sciences, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO), Lausanne, Switzerland. He is a member of the Health and Social Work Research Laboratory (LaReSS).

Anne Marcellini is a sport sociologist specialized in adapted physical activities and health. She is a professor at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Lausanne University, Switzerland. Previously she worked as Director of the Research Unit Health, Education and Disabling Situations at Montpellier University, France. Her research focuses on the social participation of people with dis/abilities in relation to body uses, identity, stigma, and social integration process.