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Aware and unaware - stereotypes and gender scripts in family environment in the process of socialization

**Świadome i nieświadome-stereotypy i skrypty płci i rodzaju
w rodzinnych narracjach w procesie wychowania i socjalizacji**

Abstract: The aim of the article is to discuss the issues of shaping gender roles in children of early school age, taking into account the importance of stereotypes and gender scripts in this process.

First of all, the basic concepts of roles, stereotypes and scripts referring to gender were presented, then I briefly reconstructed the basic assumptions of theories explaining the process of shaping a child's gender identity, in the second part of the considerations I discuss the most common patterns of female and male roles in Polish culture and present their relationships with the construction of identity. Next, I shared information on what behaviors should be avoided and how can we replace them so as not to disturb the formation of the child's ideas about functioning in gender roles. I am looking for answers to questions important from the research point of view: what role does communicative knowledge play in the process of shaping children's ideas about gender roles, and what role does explicit knowledge (experience) play? Is it possible to avoid stereotyping that comes from the dichotomy of gender roles in interactions with a child? How do images of gender roles become scripts? What is the significance of interference of messages from different environments (family, school, peer group) for the formation of a child's gender identity?

Finally I emphasize the importance of both the narrative and dialogical character of education as a process of influence on the formation of the child's ideas about gender roles (explicit knowledge), but also the broader impact of socialization processes, including intergenerational transmission (implicit knowledge).

Keywords: stereotype, gender roles, gender identity, education.

Introduction

Upbringing as an intentional activity which engages and develops parents' self-awareness. As a form of interaction between people, it is based on dialogue, which takes a material, personal or existential form. Dialogue, as Marian Nowak writes: „arises from differences in the perception of the world and ourselves, which consists of our impressions, our individual and collective memory, our aspirations and character” (Nowak, 2010, p. 86). Dialogue enables opening up towards another person (dialogue as an attitude), adopting a point of view other than one's own, discussing different positions and arguing (dialogue as a method/skill), sacrificing one's right or advantage for the good of others (dialogue as a process), in dialogue we also realize our reflectiveness, critical judgment not only of what is happening around us, but also of ourselves.

The dialogical and narrative nature of upbringing turns out to be important in the article on the development of gender identity, because we often forget about dialogue, assuming that self-image, gender roles, gender expression develop „by themselves”, and that there is no need to talk about it (with the child). Meanwhile, as research results indicate (e.g. C. Renzetti, & D. Curran, Polish ed. 2008; K. Deaux, & L. Lewis, 1984, 2002), various forms of socialization messages, such as toys, are important, among them: the content of fairy tales, illustrations or advertising films that the child watches as well as the parents' statements. All of them are explaining gender differences and attitude towards stereotypes regarding gender roles.

The issues raised are not new as theories of gender roles and factors influencing their formation in the USA dates back to the 1960s, while in Europe research on them began about a decade later. In Poland, many issues regarding the formation of gender identity and its determinants in various environments have been developed, by (among others) such researchers as: Lucyna Kopciewicz (2007), Maja Chomczyńska-Rubacha (2005, 2006), Jolanta Miluska (1996), Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik (2017), Eugenia Mandal (2000), Joanna Ostroch (2004) and Iwona Chmura-Rutkowska

(et al. 2016). However, in the following considerations I do not focus on the well known conditions of constructing gender identity as it seems more important to link this process with gender role patterns constituting a specific background; the susceptibility of the latter to becoming scripts and the role of various types of communication, both based on statements, also require closer attention. What is spoken and explained to a child is a kind of explicit knowledge but there is also child's experience and contact with behaviors, both shaping gender identity (implicit knowledge).

In the following article, I will first introduce the basic concepts of gender roles, stereotypes and scripts, then I will briefly reconstruct the basic assumptions of theories explaining the process of shaping a child's gender identity. In the second part of the considerations I will discuss the most common patterns of female and male roles in Polish culture and present their connections with constructing identity. At the end I will share information on what behaviors should be avoided and what should replace them so as not to disturb the development of the child's ideas about functioning in gender roles.

The following research questions form the basis of the undertaken analysis: what role do explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge (experience) play in the process of shaping children's ideas about gender roles? Is it possible to avoid stereotyping what results from the dichotomy of gender roles in interactions with a child? How do images of gender roles become scripts? What is the importance of the interference of messages from different environments (family, school, peer group) for the development of a child's gender identity?

Basic concepts. Gender roles and stereotypes

Let's start with the necessary terminological clarifications. Gender roles, like other elements of gender identity, are shaped by the biological sphere (anatomical and hormonal conditions determining primary and secondary sexual characteristics) and the socio-cultural sphere (mental conditions, emotions, expression creating third-order sexual characteristics).

As gender role, following Dorota Pankowska, I mean a way of acting, a set of behaviors related to a certain situation or social position, in this case, being a woman or a man (Pankowska, 2005, p. 16). Male and female roles are role models that show us how to play masculinity and femininity (Brannon, 2002). The problem arises when there are too many of these patterns, when they are mutually exclusive or function at the level of stereotypes. Images of gender roles are shaped in the process of typification, which means that

a child acquires and develops attitudes and behaviors appropriate to her/his gender (Mandal, 2000). Differences in the way of understanding and playing roles (in the case of children, this order is not at all obvious, it happens that a child imitates someone, but does not understand the meaning of what is followed) are therefore the result of the typification process, but also of the way the child is labelled (how parents call her/him) and informed what behaviors are praised and what are punished. This applies to parents, peers and teachers alike. As Katarzyna Palus notes, children, influenced by the attitudes towards gender presented by their parents, may themselves manifest rigid or flexible attitudes. Rigid attitudes accompany traditional behaviors and non-complementary division of roles in the family environment, in which parents are not egalitarian in terms of gender (their statements and/or behaviors introduce a gender 'hierarchy' in an aware or unaware way) and leave little margin for freedom or alternatives to the attitudes they present. In turn, parents who are flexible in terms of gender are more egalitarian and open to alternatives in the child's actions: the division of roles in such families is usually complementary, and the parents complement each other in performing their duties. Research has shown that the higher the social status of parents, the more flexible the approach to the typification process is (Palus, 2006).

To sum up, when a boy and a girl are born, they have the same opportunities to develop different ideas about the world and different ways of acting in it. They change ways of thinking about masculinity and femininity due to the socialization patterns and imposed beliefs, which in turn lead to the creation of patterns of thinking and then (or in parallel) patterns of action. The last ones are the basis for constructing gender roles (Palus, 2006).

Table 1. Examples of patterns exemplifying differences in the perception of gender roles

A WOMAN	A MAN
seeking peers' acceptance	seeking peers' respect
striving for understanding, cooperation	independence, autonomy
speaking out (in private)	speaking out (public)
sharing problems with others	keeping problems in secret (for yourself)
showing empathy, compassion	keeping emotions in secret (for yourself)
striving for understanding problems	striving for solving problems
asking for help, instructions	offering help, giving instructions
focusing on details	focusing on facts

Source: own study based on: Deaux, K. Kite, M. (2002). *Gender stereotypes. Women and men. Different perspectives on differences*. Gdańsk: GWP, see also Krajewska, J. (2023).

Table 2. Examples of features exemplifying differences in gender perception

A WOMAN	A MAN
sensitive	tough
emotional	rational
delicate	strong
focusing on children/family	focusing on a career
elegant	not caring about visual impressions
not as much involved in her job	strongly involved in his job
home as main activity/interest	outside world as main activity /interest
humanistic mind	scientific mind
member of a team	leader
subordinate	manager

Source: see above.

As is usually the case with patterns, the differences in the examples presented above are not only abstracted from the social context, but also do not take into account the individuality of specific people. Do they explain the differences in female and male behaviors that the child is exposed to? Yes and no - because, as one can easily see, a lot depends on the specific situation and individual characteristics. Moreover, patterns describe an idealized, hypothetical and assumed state of affairs. Therefore, it is dangerous to treat them as the current state of affairs. It is worth noting the differences: the implementation of female role models requires the presence of other people, which is why women are usually considered to be better emotionally developed and more socialized. In turn, male role models require isolation, non-identification with others, emphasizing one's distinctiveness - hence the impression of dominance of cognitive development over emotional and social development as a characteristic feature of male role models.

From the gender role model to its stereotype. What is a gender schema?

From a research point of view, it seems important to distinguish the pattern of action in the male/female role from stereotypes of these roles and from gender schemas.

Stereotypes, like role models, are related to social expectations towards women and men, but they are simplifications, some kind of mental short-cuts that allow the creation of mental representations of gender roles and everything related to their fulfillment. Let's focus on all the environments a child has to deal with: family, school, peers, media. The means of transmitting and internalizing images of gender roles and the simplifications within them are language and images (toys, colors of clothes, the participation of men and women in household routines observed by the child, expression

of emotions, textbooks, teacher's statements and ways of boys and girls are called/named, advertising, fairy tales, etc.).

Not each role model is a stereotype; a form of „resistance” to stereotyping is demonstrated by those patterns that can be easily „reversed” and which do not imply negative evaluations related to their reversal or disregard. For example, the image of a woman preparing meals for the whole family can be replaced with the image of a man in a kitchen clothes cooking, frying pancakes or baking a cake. But another situation, related to certain areas of „masculine” and „feminine” activities - a woman repairing broken household appliances or a car, is more difficult to imagine - hence few people consider cooking to be an inherent attribute of the female role and something inappropriate for a man, but few people consider repairing cars or household appliances as an appropriate occupation for women. Stereotypes are an expression of social expectations and are associated with messages about masculinity and femininity. These messages often include (adults') judgments about behaviors appropriate for women and men, and these ones which are not appropriate: a woman crying at their daughter's wedding is appropriate and a father who does the same is inappropriate. The behavior of a woman speaking authoritative language during a meeting is described as practice of domination; a man who acts in the same way as having all under control.

It happens because a stereotype was built on the basis of the pattern defining the emotions and social behavior of women and men, with which the presented behaviors - emotional expression or speaking up in specific social situations - are incompatible. Gender stereotypes are a broader concept than behavioral patterns and may also refer to: personality traits, especially emotional expression, chosen professions and types of education or external appearance. It is because of their prevalence that it is so difficult to find a woman working as a car mechanic or a man who is a kindergarten teacher, for the same reason women have greater permission to laugh, cry or show anger in public, and the sight of a man wearing make-up, high heels or long, painted nails still shock (some) people. When raising children, one should remember that our behavior does not have to be determined by gender stereotypes: everyone can play football, dance in ballet, speak in public, cry and laugh, and feel free to choose the colors of their clothes. It is social circumstances, not gender, that determine whether a person's behavior and appearance match them, do not violate social norms and do not hurt the feelings of others.

Stereotypes are created when it is difficult to find a simple and unambiguous explanation for someone's behavior, but also when parents formulate

judgments about other people related to gender roles or strongly suggest the child chooses toys, clothes in specific colors, watching or not another fairy tale, propose specific games - different choices, assigning them to a gender different from that of their daughter/son. Among the factors limiting the impact of stereotypes on shaping children's ideas about gender roles, flexibility in interpreting the latter and leaving a margin of freedom in understanding specific behaviors is also worth mentioning. The influence of stereotypes is also limited by games based on interactions, which provide an opportunity not only to demonstrate specific behaviors, but also to justify them.

As research shows, stereotyping tendencies appear less frequently in single-parent families (Palus, 2006) than in full families. This is justified because the range and scope of activities of a single parent is so wide that the child has the opportunity to learn about the mother's/father's activities in the professional sphere, but also on a daily basis comes into contact with the various household duties performed by a woman or a man. The child also experiences daily care from the same person - hence his or her ideas about male/female roles are more comprehensive. This is, of course, not a voice promoting upbringing in a single-parent family, but only an attempt to justify why a son or daughter raised by one parent often has a more complete picture of roles - male or female - than the same children raised in a full family. A child is most susceptible to the influence of gender stereotypes and accumulates the most knowledge in this area until approximately the age of eight, which is associated with the subsequent expansion of the circle of interactions including the broadly understood school environment.

Finally, let's discuss the broadest of the above concepts - the gender schema (Brannon, 2002). The source of gender schemas is culture, and the schema focuses more on thinking, attention and memory, and therefore refers to the cognitive components of the attitude, than a stereotype or pattern referring to specific behaviors (behavioral component).

The process of shaping ideas about gender roles and creating stereotypes is explained within theories that prefer the influence of biological and etiological, or cognitive-developmental and/or cultural factors (gender schema theory). The child, through contact with peers and adults at home, kindergarten and school, gradually gains understanding of issues related to gender and gender identity: she/he gains knowledge of its own gender, identifies itself as a boy or a girl, and confronts the fact that gender is unchangeable throughout life, finally learns about the differences in the appearance and behavior of boys and girls in order to construct ideas about

roles - as mentioned earlier.¹ The gender schema is a kind of filter through which a child absorbs all information in the socialization process (Palus, 2006). On this basis, (s)he categorizes and evaluates them, and internalizes gender norms and divisions. This scheme also helps to deal with contradictory information - the child first compares it, then matches it to what he or she has seen, heard and experienced in his or her close environment - this stage is related to the ability to use the schemas in practice, comply with them or reject them. Schemas influence a child's self-esteem related to the sense of adequacy of their own behavior, but also to whether they are accepted by the environment. The greater the differences between information and the greater cultural and civilizational progress, the less obvious and unambiguous male and female roles are - hence the emergence of stereotypes as elements simplifying the understanding of gender-related behavior. Therefore, the scheme plays an important role in constructing gender identity - it not only provides information from which we build our ideas about gender, but also regulates the child's behavior, encouraging her/him to undertake specific activities, directs attention to certain situations and becomes the basis for drawing conclusions about what he/she sees/hears and experiences. Thus, along with role models, it becomes the basis for gender expression - that is the way of expressing one's identity through specific statements, actions, clothing or preferred activities. As developmental psychologists note (cf. Bem, 2000), an extremely important issue is the dialectic of the relationship between the information provided by culture and environment and the child's readiness to classify and organize them. Without this ability, it is impossible to use gender schemas in the process of identity construction.

Of course, it is worth remembering that the author of the gender schema theory, the already mentioned Sandra Bem (2000), did not take into account the historical conditions, variability and cultural relativization of the contexts in which gender roles are expressed, or intersectionality, i.e. the intersection of various dimensions of identity - race, gender, culture, but we should also not forget that so far there has been no theory that better explains the consequences of a child's contact with the gender dichotomy in the world around.

¹ All this information is useful as long as we base our knowledge about gender on its binary.

Gender socialization, scripts and family narratives in the upbringing process

Script often appears among the concepts of great importance for the analysis of the process of shaping ideas about gender roles. In psychology, we encounter narrower and broader approaches to it. In a narrow sense, script is a kind of action scenario, a ready-made program intended for a child. It is cognitive, executive and unaware in its nature; unlike attitude, and devoid of any emotional element (Wojciszke, 2012). Eric Berne, in turn, perceives the script much more broadly, seeing it close to all socialization procedures carried out in the process of intergenerational transmission, and only in the longer term, a life plan resembling a script and assigning a specific role to a person (Berne, 2018). Next to the role, there are prototypes of concepts related to it - for example: woman, man, mother, father, sister, brother. The script contains motives for actions, values, current and past experiences, and rituals, so it may impose a framework for the interpretation of certain situations and behaviors. However, it does not leave much room for individuality, as it consists of: orders (be/do), prohibitions (don't do/don't be) and permissions (in this situation you can/it's better that...). Many authors draw attention to the importance of scripts as elements of intergenerational transmission, including: Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger (2017), Irena Namysłowska (2020) and Magdalena Sękowska (2017).

Despite ongoing research, it is difficult to provide a clear and unambiguous explanation of how transgenerational transmission occurs, including family traumas, emotions, but also attitudes towards difficult events that are crucial for the family's past, and often also for its survival. Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger mentions the 'unconscious inheritance' of what is usually kept in secret, what is hidden, unspoken and what can often reveal itself in the form of diseases, unfortunate accidents, as well as sudden and premature deaths (Schutzenberger, 2017). As a transmission mechanism, the author considers 'body memory', the functioning of which would involve such complex and insufficiently explained mechanisms as mirror neurons or morphogenetic fields.

Fortunately, the ways of understanding gender roles, knowledge what does mean to be a mother, father, daughter, son, sister, brother, husband or wife, not always or not totally come from ancestors, more often they are transmitted by parents - so we are dealing here with a close, not distant intergenerational transmission. In individual family stories and narratives that constitute what is important to its members, there are also suggestions regarding parents' expectations towards the child, often taking the form

of ideas about the son or daughter, desired character traits and behaviors that parents would prefer to avoid in the child. The similarity of the child to one of their ancestors - grandfather, grandmother or cousins, noticed by parents is of great importance and it does not matter whether it is real or just imagined. As Magdalena Sękowska notes, these messages may concern character traits, tendencies in behavior, choice of profession or life partner, and the most effective are those that are consistent and come from several family members. When messages related to roles are contradictory, usually at an subconscious level, the child chooses the one that comes from a mentally stronger person (Sękowska, 2017). Messages related to emotions, hierarchizing specific elements of reality or simply looking for answers to questions about what is important in life and what is not also play an important role in intergenerational transmission. We should note their significance for the process of identity construction - the tendency according to which girls are forced to ready-made solutions, and boys are stimulated to explore problems independently. Evaluative messages about how to live, how to behave to be accepted, and what features to develop are no less important (Sękowska, 2017).

Some of them are gender-related, some are not. In childhood, each of us heard statements such as: „boys don't cry”, „a girl can't walk around dirty and with messy hair”, „just cry and it will pass”, „the most important things are invisible to the eyes”, „true friends are found in poverty”, „it's important how someone finishes, not how he starts” and more like these mentioned. Whether a child treats these statements situationally or universalizes them, depends on his/her level of development, but also on the social context in which they were heard, as well as his/her emotional attitude to the author of the statement.

Family stories often repeat beliefs about the differences between women and men, dividing life into stages, referring to significant people in the family, and gender is an indirect criterion for these divisions. They are communicated, for example, with statements such as: „a man must have a reason to come home”, „for a woman, life begins at 40, when the children are already raised”, „as soon as you give birth to a child, you will see”, „when I retire, I will care about grandchildren”, „grandfather always said that learning was the most important thing”, „grandma worked hard in the laundry and factory during the war so that we would have something to eat”, and so on.

There are a lot sources of scripts: not only well known beliefs about the social world, but also observation or social modeling; both culture and family narratives, as well as what is unspoken, but also what is experienced,

lived and observed, stereotypes or role patterns and child's everyday interactions with adults (Karkowska, 2020).

The script seems to represent everything that constitutes the implicit experience (Krzychała, 2016), it is created without the participation of the consciousness of the person to whom it is transmitted, it is only possible to interpret consciously certain elements of the role pattern that contribute to it. Most of them have their origins in the family and/or refer to cultural narratives.

Concluding from observations, certain role models, both male and female, became popular in Polish culture, and their appearance was related to difficult historical conditions, parents' ambitions, and the influence of specific ideologies (patriarchy) on the way of thinking about the family. They contain stereotypes, patterns of thought and action, as well as beliefs expressed by parents, leading to specific attitudes towards the child. However, a careful reader will notice that these patterns are not free from scripts - they set certain standards of behavior, without offering explanations of their source - we know nothing about the way of understanding one's role where does it come from and why it is better than another. Sometimes the only justification is the statement: „this is how I was brought up”.

So what gender role patterns are we talking about?

Let us mention four of them: Polish Mother² (female role), „daddy's little girl” (female role), macho (male role) and Peter Pan/eternal boy (male role)(cf. Karkowska, 2020). The above-mentioned patterns show an oppositional nature to themselves (macho vs. Peter Pan and daddy's girl vs. Polish Mother), but also towards important areas of male and female identity, which include:

- attitude towards professional career and education - comparing female role models, we can see that a Polish Mother, when she finishes her education, has already set her goals, considering home and family as her priority, she focuses on activities related to housekeeping and raising subsequent children, but often for economic reasons, at the same time she works professionally, continues her education and earns a similar amount of money to that of her husband and the father of their common children. Therefore

² Polish Mother is a figure present in Polish culture describing a historical pattern of being a woman. It could be also translated as 'working class mummy' which seems to be more adequate to English context or slightly in a literary manner as Mother of Poles (per analogiam to Maid of Orleans).

the implementation of such a female role model requires great effort and is often associated with a sense of emotional burnout. In turn, „daddy’s girl” focuses on education and obtaining maximum professional competences that will allow her to be financially independent, treating her professional career as a priority, delays starting a family or remains single. She is focused on her professional activities, often competes with men, quickly advancing and occupying high positions in the professional hierarchy;

- choosing a life partner and creating relationships - let’s look at male role models - a macho usually implements his matrimonial plans at a young age, but first carefully looks at the candidate for a wife, who must meet certain requirements - be resourceful, dutiful, perfectly organized and able to lead home, without expecting any support from the man in this area. Macho follows the pattern of functioning of the family of origin; his father was also dominant, he believed in patriarchy but, above all, he felt responsible for the family. In opposition to the macho, Peter Pan remains single and does not formalize relationships with women because he is not ready to take responsibility for the people close to him. He indicates various reasons for it - either he does not have the money to buy/rent an apartment, or he does not earn enough to support someone more than himself, or he directly communicates that it is very comfortable to live with his parents, believing that he still has a lot of time to start a family. Even if he is in a relationship with a woman, the couple usually does not get married and does not cohabit;
- relationships with parents - let’s compare male and female patterns - Peter Pan is an example of a very strong, often symbiotic emotional relationship with his mother, whom he considers the most important person in his life. So important that she has the final say on where her son will live, the extent to which he participates in the finances of their joint household or the choice of a candidate for his wife. Similarly, „daddy’s little girl” is usually strongly attached to her father, she fulfills his ambitions, often realizing only years later that her motivations, plans and achievements were related to the fact that the father, having never had a son, chose her as a form of self-fulfillment and self-presentation.. This is where the subconscious impact of the script is most clearly visible - whether

it is related to the pursuit of professional success or the child's inseparable bond with the parent of the opposite sex;

- subjectivity and self-esteem - let's compare male and female role models - a Polish Mother (dominated by her family members, with a low sense of subjectivity and low self-esteem) and a „daddy's girl”, in whose case, with high subjectivity, self-esteem depends on the degree to which she realized her father's ambitions, but also on how (often) she is being convinced about her success in as many as possible areas of life. The situation is slightly different in the case of male role models - macho, whose axiological identifications and attitude towards other people indicate very high self-esteem, is a counterweight to Peter Pan. He, while seemingly enjoying eternal youth and freedom, is in fact strongly dominated by his mother, who makes his subjectivity to suffer.

As Irena Namysłowska writes, the lack of emotional, symbolic leaving of the family of origin by an adolescent girl/boy may cause serious problems (Namysłowska, 2020) with identification, with valuation, and, as can be deduced from the above analysis, with the construction of identity in gender roles.

To some extent these problems can be avoided through dialogue, negotiating one's position instead of arbitrarily imposing one's will on children or spouse, solving problems together, and therefore experiencing parenthood more consciously while recognizing the fact that we are shaped by the family environment, but also culture, so we cannot influence everything that a child learns about the world and life.

Dialogue at the personal level is also needed to talk about gender, puberty, and ask what others think about our observations and thoughts - the partner of such a conversation does not necessarily have to be a specialist, it can be a teacher, parent, or peer. Almost every person during childhood and then adolescence, which is also the time of shaping gender identity, experiences doubts, dilemmas and faces choices. It is therefore worth creating opportunities for both younger and older children to express their views on gender stereotypes, because only an exchange of views and thoughts makes it possible to understand that no one has a monopoly on the truth. Perhaps some of our (parents', teachers') assumptions or what we consider to be 'normal', what we have become accustomed to is not entirely true. Dialogue, which is an element of an open attitude and at the same time an introduction to tolerance towards others and their beliefs, teaches the child not to be ashamed of being himself, but also not to ignore or tease anyone,

because they seem „different” or „strange”. Usually it is not the otherness or strangeness that is the problem, but how we treat it, how we read its meaning, what we know about its origins or its impact on someone’s everyday life.

Summary

Summarizing the so far considerations, I will try to formulate conclusions from the analysis undertaken. The process of constructing a child’s gender identity includes the processes of differentiation (distinguishing him/herself from who he/she is not), identification with a parent of the same sex and typification, as a result of which, thanks to gender schemas, the child learns about gender role models - male and female. Role models are not same with stereotypes, but due to their complexity, they may contain simplifications, mental shortcuts, and even distortions embedded in verbal communication. Confronting them seems to be a big challenge, and because stereotypes are rarely adequate to reality, they limit the development of self-awareness necessary to understand the role and its requirements. Role models also include scripts, i.e. ready-made scenarios of behavior in specific situations, attitudes, but also prohibitions, orders and permissions. Due to their prevalence, it is extremely difficult to completely eliminate the influence of stereotypes on the typification processes in children as well as the way they perceive the world and themselves in this world. Even parents who are very involved in the upbringing process and are aware of the impact of gender stereotypes cannot always eliminate it completely. This is due to the fact that our ideas about the world are shaped by both explicit and implicit knowledge based on experience, observation and participation in social situations. Moreover, it sometimes happens that children are exposed to the same experiences and information, but learn something different. This is because the family is only a part of a broader socio-cultural context in which the process of gender socialization takes place, so it is difficult to separate the influence of messages from different environments and circles of axiological identification. Implicit knowledge that results from experience, observations and social participation constitutes a kind of *background* for shaping children’s image of the world. What is experienced is more difficult to modify than information that results from dialogue, conversations, pointing to examples, and therefore has a communicative nature. In the process of shaping gender identity, there is not only interference of messages about gender that come from different environments, but also overlapping of implicit experiences, i.e. what is unconscious, with explicit knowledge, i.e. what is conscious, and vice versa. The less interference of content and

images concerns a child, the greater the coherence of ideas and constructs that constitute gender identity is.

Since the influence on the full spectrum of ideas about the world that a child acquires is limited, all activities of both parents and teachers in the sphere of verbal interactions and modeling should be aimed at making the child notice and then understand that there are no behaviors, reactions or statements reserved for one gender. As Joanna Krajewska (2023) notes, it is socialization training and not emotional expression, sensitivity, sharing one's feelings or attentiveness to other people that make boys' behaviour 'inadequate - exactly, for what? To the male role, family protector and caretaker, woman's partner and father of children, or to stereotypical ideas about „masculinity”, or perhaps to intergenerational scripts, examples of which were discussed above? The situation is similar with the upbringing of a girl - encouraging her to be assertive person, presenting her opinions, take actions leading to solving problems, instead of only looking for consensus is not about behaving like a boy, but about acquiring new competences, expanding awareness of one's place and role in the world. They may made the child, no matter a girl or a boy more open, happier, not only well adapted to the environment she/he is living in.

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