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The significance of selected cognitive and emotional personality traits for the relation between skills and school failure

Mateusz Referda



Meaning of resources in social inclusion, part 1

*Joanna Chwaszcz
Iwona Niewiadomska*

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sekretariat@natanaelum.pl

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The significance of selected cognitive and emotional personality traits for the relation between skills and school failure

Mateusz Referda

ABSTRACT

This study presents findings from research carried out in upper secondary schools. They show the significance of selected cognitive and emotional personality traits for the relation between skills and school failure. The author focused on the personality variables, as found in the literature on the subject, that impact on the quality of students' performance at school. Selected variables included trait emotional intelligence, fear of failure and hope for success. The conducted statistical analyses showed that abstract- and logical-thinking skills and fluency of speech have real yet minor significance for the way students perform at school. It was further demonstrated that the personality factors listed above determine the significance of the level of skill for the rates of failure at school. They can either strengthen or weaken the functional role of skill. Identified correlations corroborate the claim found in scientific literature, according to which the use of one's intellectual capabilities and the quality of one's functioning at (upper-secondary) school is determined largely by external factors, such as the selected cognitive and emotional personality factors described in this work.

Keywords: school failure, cognitive skills, intelligence, school adjustment, emotional intelligence, hope for success, fear of failure, moderator analyses

Introduction

Preventing school failure is a current and very important social issue. It was recognised by UNESCO as one of major worldwide problems already in the early 1970s. Statistics show that difficulties in learning are widespread among the student community. UNESCO reports that approx. 33% of students experience various problems with their performance at school

(Karpińska, 2008). In addition, recent years have seen an increase in the number of students who fail to meet school requirements and need to seek support with a psychologist or psychiatrist (c.f. Ciżkowicz, 2009). Therefore, it seems reasonable to investigate the factors behind school failure. This study is also an attempt to systematise and verify the empirical analyses, as found in the literature on the subject, that address the significance of selected personality variables for the relationship between the level of skill and one's performance at school. In defining the determinants of school failure, the study also affords an opportunity to identify students whose personality makes them more predisposed to experience school difficulties, and to provide them with appropriate support and assistance.

The significance of cognitive skills for complying with school requirements

Contemporary analyses of the determinants of school performance show that it is a complex and multifaceted process. Initially, the leading role in this respect has been ascribed to intellectual skills. It was argued that considerable cognitive capabilities were conducive to success at school, and poor IQ was responsible for failure at school. Subsequent studies challenged this view. In fact, it was proven that individuals with superior intelligence are particularly likely to struggle with a number of emotional/social difficulties and to perform below their potential (Sękowski & Jurko, 2010; Boryszewska, 2008). The current view is that the role of cognitive capabilities is significant but not as much as it was assumed before. Scholars agree that the correlation between intelligence and school performance is about 0.5 but depends on the method used for measuring school performance and the age of students, because on the subsequent stages of education its significance gradually decreases (Boryszewska, 2008; Klinkosz, 2010; Czerniawska, 2006; Kossowska, 2004).

An interesting approach to the role of cognitive capabilities in complying with school requirements is advocated by Zajenkowski (2009). He makes references to Ackerman to argue "that average intelligence, rather than high IQ, is the most accurate predictor of success in life, since in life our attitude to intellectual processes is more important than our actual intelligence level" (p. 17). Zajenkowski seeks non-intellectual factors that determine success, also in the school context. He considers personality-related variables as particularly important. In his opinion, a research approach that addresses both intelligence and personality issues provides opportunities for a more holistic description of the subjects' individual performance characteristics. This standpoint is most prevalent in the psychology of giftedness. A number of authors have argued that IQ itself does not directly translate into school achievements and that it is important to seek other, indirect contributing factors, including personality ones (c.f. Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2012; Limont, 2012; Deary, 2012; Czerniawska & Zawadzki, 2010; Sękowski & Jurko, 2010; Klinkosz, 2010; Łubianka, 2010; Zajenkowski, 2009; Boryszewska, 2008; Przybylska, 2008; Czerniawska, 2006; Kossowska, 2004; Sękowski, 2001).

Selected cognitive/emotional personality factors and school performance

Theoreticians investigating school performance have emphasised that the inclusion of personality psychology variables in the considerations regarding the reasons for school failure provides new opportunities for their analysis and interpretation (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2012; Czerniawska & Zawadzki, 2010; Sękowski & Jurko, 2010). Over the last 15 years, studies based on the Big Five model have enjoyed great popularity. They demonstrated, i.a. the considerable role of conscientiousness, and other selected personality factors defined in that model, in predicting school performance (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2006; Wagerman & Funder, 2007; c.f. Czerniawska & Zawadzki, 2010; Bratko, Chamorro-Premuzic & Saks, 2006). The obtained findings encourage further research into other factors that could be significant for school life and adjustment. This study shall present three personality psychology variables, namely trait emotional intelligence, fear of failure and hope for success.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Both in its scientific and colloquial definition, this term has become very popular and has spawned a number of concepts. As a result, this notion became ambiguous and difficult to apply. These problems can be overcome by the trait EI theory. Petrides and Furnham, the authors of this approach, argue that emotional intelligence is “a constellation of behavioural dispositions and self-perceptions concerning one’s ability to recognise, process, and utilise emotion-laden information” (Wytykowska & Petrides, 2007, p. 99; c.f. Martowska, 2012). In analysing this definition, one can notice that the objective IE level is not as important as the individual’s perception of it. It is also important to note that trait EI is not understood as a cure-all. Some emotions in certain situations produce adaptive behaviour and in others the result is the opposite. Similar is true for emotional intelligence. High EI is a trait that does not always facilitate successful problem management, because everything depends on the situation. The presumption that individuals with high EI always perform better than those with low EI is, as noted by the authors of this theory, likely a myth (Petrides, 2011).

The above-mentioned approach has been the subject of many empirical studies. Research shows that low trait emotional intelligence co-occurs with a number of difficulties, e.g. in social relations and personal adjustment, and also with emotional disorders (Frederickson, Petrides & Simmonds, 2012; Petrides, 2011). Furthermore, the role of this disposition in complying with school requirements has been the subject of many reports, while analyses that demonstrate the direct impact of trait EI on learning performance are rare, which could suggest its significance in governing the relation between skills and school performance (Hansenne, Legrand, 2012). This assumption is supported by empirical analyses conducted by Petrides et al. (2004), which prove that EI governs the relation between crystallised intelligence and school performance. It has been demonstrated that high EI is conducive to improved school performance in students with low cognitive ability (Petrides, Frederickson & Furnham, 2004). It needs to be noted that the significance of low emotional intelligence for school performance, as well as for the relation between skills and school failure, is yet to be fully explored.

Fear of failure

Another factor analysed in this study is the fear of failure. This concept is based on the cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion by Lazarus. He developed a hierarchical, multi-dimensional model for unpleasant consequences that contribute to fear of failure, with emotions at its core. Lazarus (1991) defines emotions as the outcome of a specific relation between individuals and their environment. An emotion is experienced when the individual notices a change in this relation that can impact on the accomplishment of goals the individual pursues. These perceived changes can either be real or imaginary, but the individual must appraise them as influencing their objectives. This cognitive appraisal provides information on whether the change is significant, what is its nature (whether it helps or makes it difficult to achieve one's goals) and what is the essence of its objectives (c.f. Haghbin, McCaffrey & Pychyl, 2012; Sagar & Stoeber, 2009; Zdankiewicz-Ścigała & Maruszewski, 2004). A considerable contribution to the further development of this concept was made by David Conroy. This psychologist, building on Lazarus' theory, advocated that fear of failure is manifested in situations when the fulfilment of objectives perceived by the individual as important is threatened. In the course of their social interactions, individuals with this trait pronounced have learned to associate failure with unpleasant consequences. They see many events as posing a risk of failure and believe that failure entails negative consequences (Conroy, 2001; Conroy, 2003; Sagar, Boardley & Kavussanu, 2011; Sagar & Stoeber, 2009).

It is important to note that the literature on the subject offers scarce empirical evidence on the significance of fear of failure for the quality of school performance, even though this disposition could show some interesting relations in this respect. This is corroborated by studies conducted by Caraway, Tucker, Reinke and Hall (2003) in south-eastern USA on 206 students aged 13–19. These studies showed a correlation between grades and fear of failure. This relation was negative, which suggests that deep fear co-occurs with poor performance at school, as measured by GPA (Caraway et al., 2003). These findings seem reasonable given that deep fear of failure can cause difficulty concentrating and autonomic nervous system reactions, and in the face of unpleasant emotions it can lead to withdrawal from action (Fortuna, 2012; Morschitzky, 2008).

Hope for success

The last factor to be analysed here is hope for success. This concept was introduced in mid-1980s by Snyder, an American psychologist. He defined it as a positive state of motivation based on two types of beliefs. The first concerns the possibility of implementing one's plans. In other words, it is the individual's conviction that they "can start pursuing a goal the way they deem fit and persevere despite obstacles along the way" (Łaguna, Trzebiński & Zięba, 2005, p. 7). It can be assumed that this type refers to the strength of one's will, which becomes particularly important in the face of difficulties encountered along the way towards achieving one's goals. When the individual feels doubt, becomes tired and/or runs into obstacles, believing that they have a strong will can provide them with energy necessary to keep themselves on track. The second type that makes up hope, as defined by Snyder, is one's conviction of having the ability to find solutions. At its core is the perception of one-

self as a resourceful, smart and creative person. With these skills one can find or create effective ways to pursue one's goals and accomplish them (Snyder, Shorey, Cheavens, Pulvers, Adams & Wiklund, 2002; Snyder, Rand & Sigmon, 2002a; Snyder, 2000; Snyder, Cheavens, & Simpson, 1997; Łaguna, 2006; Łaguna 2010; Łaguna et al., 2005).

Under this approach, hope is to be considered as hope for success, as it is understood as an anticipation of positive outcomes of one's actions (Łaguna, 2010). Snyder categorised his concept as a cognitive one. He explained that it builds on cognitive processes, not emotions, as in theories advocated by some scholars. His theory puts cognition first, and emotions only appear secondary in relation to cognitive processes (Snyder et al., 2002; Shorey, Snyder, Rand, Hockemeyer & Feldman, 2002; Łaguna et al., 2005). Snyder stressed that hope for success is a conscious disposition. It is considered both as a conviction and a thought process that accompanies specific action and the associated choice situations. This disposition is relatively fixed and manifests itself in the form of thoughts triggered by specific actions. This causes the individual to perceive themselves as agents of action, who can act on their resolutions and come up with and discover new ways of overcoming difficulties encountered along their way to accomplish their goals (Łaguna, 2010; Łaguna et al., 2005; c.f. Snyder, Simpson, Ybasco, Borders, Babyak & Higgins, 1996).

The described disposition also plays important roles in school performance. Empirical studies show that young people at risk of dropping out of school, who show a high level of hope for success are considerably more likely to graduate successfully than their peers with low levels of this disposition. From these studies it can be inferred that hope plays an important protective function in the lives of these teenagers (Worrel & Hale, 2001; c.f. Snyder et al., 2002a). Further surveys seem to confirm these claims. Longitudinal studies carried out among adolescents in Australia show that hope for success is a variable that can be used to predict educational success in the form of higher grades for up to three consecutive years (Leeson, Ciarrochi & Heaven, 2008). Snyder et al. arrived at similar findings. His research, conducted among 808 students in the USA, showed that hope for success contributed to higher grades, thus reducing the risk of dropping out of the university. This predictive value of hope remained significant even when such variables as intelligence, self-esteem or previous grades were controlled (Snyder et al., 2002; c.f. Łaguna, 2010; Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, Rand & Feldman, 2003; Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby & Rehm, 1997). Studies by Gilman et al. show that teenagers with low level of hope for success achieve low scores on adaptation scales and high scores on social and school maladjustment scales. In contrast, their peers with average or high hopes for success obtain results that suggest that they are significantly better adjusted (Gilman, Dodey & Florell, 2006). These studies show that the level of hope for success can be of significance for the quality of students' school performance.

The cited findings provide only an incomplete description of school failure and fall short of explaining the importance of the above-mentioned personality factors for the quality of students' performance at school. This has become the point of departure for defining the research problem and hypotheses in this study.

Research problem and hypotheses

This study focuses on determining the significance of selected cognitive/emotional personality factors for the relationship between one's skill level and school failure experience. In view of this, the author asked the following general research question:

What is the significance of the selected personality factors for governing the relationship between skills and school failure?

Based on the analysis of the literature on the subject, the author identified three cognitive/emotional personality factors that could be of significance for the relations between skills and school performance. The selected variables included trait emotional intelligence, fear of failure and hope for success. These variables served as the basis for formulating three hypotheses.

- H1: Students with low emotional intelligence levels show a significant relationship between poor skills and high rates of school failure.
- H2: Students with a deep fear of failure show a significant relationship between poor skills and high rates of school failure.
- H3: Students with a faint hope for success show a significant relationship between poor skills and high rates of school failure.

Method

Variable operationalisation

In order to examine the hypotheses and to answer the research question, the study used a personal data form and questionnaire methods.

“School failure”, as the investigated variable, was construed as a component in three major factors that determine school performance, i.e. final grades in core subjects (Polish, Mathematics, History and Physics), conduct grade and subjective school adjustment (c.f. Ciżkowicz, 2009; Boryszewska, 2008; Pytka, 2005). Having accounted for these elements, the author conducted a factor analysis. This data testing method provides information on the homogeneity of the analysed research problem, thus facilitating the assessment whether one is dealing with a single psychological property or rather it is possible to distinguish its separate dimensions (Bedyńska & Cypryńska, 2007). The level of subjective school adjustment was measured with the School Maladjustment sub-scale that is part of the Social Maladjustment Scale (SNS) developed by Lesław Pytka, revised for the purposes of this study. High scores corresponded to considerable difficulty in school adjustment, while low scores indicated no or small difficulties in this respect. The internal consistency of the overall score in this scale in its original version is high. Reliability ratio, based on the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, is 0.92 (Pytka, 2005, p. 381).

The factor analysis identified the tested variable as one-dimensional.

Table 1 *Component-factor relation*

<i>Component matrix</i>	<i>Component</i>
School maladjustment	0.716
Final grade in Polish	0.660
Final grade in History	0.611
Final grade in Mathematics	0.674
Final grade in Physics	0.665
Final grade in Conduct	0.690
Number of established components=1	

The extracted factor accounted for all the elements included in the analysis. It showed the highest score for school maladjustment and grades in Conduct, Mathematics, Polish and Physics. The component with the weakest correlation was the grade in History. The extracted factor was named *school failure*.

The variable that accounts for capabilities was measured with two sub-tests that are part of the APIS-Z battery of tests by Anna Ciechanowicz, Aleksandra Jaworowska, Anna Matczak and Teresa Szustrowa. *New Words*, the first sub-scale, is one of two tests to measure verbal skills. The factor measured on this scale is the fluency in speech production, considered as one of the primary dimensions of intelligence. *Operations on Numbers*, the second sub-scale, is a test used to measure abstract- and logical-thinking skills. In order to be completed correctly, this test requires reasoning by analogy in relation to numerical data. The reliability of these tests is satisfactory and ranges from 0.72 to 0.73 (Matczak, Jaworowska, Szustrowa & Ciechanowicz, 1995). For the purposes of this work, the scores obtained in both these sub-tests were added up and considered jointly.

The first moderator, trait emotional intelligence, was measured using the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form (TEIQue-SF) (K. V. Petrides, PhD), as adapted by Agata Wytykowska (Wytykowska & Petrides, 2007). This tool produces general and factor-specific scores. Polish studies conducted among upper-secondary school students using TEUQue-SF show an overall score reliability (Cronbach's α) of 0.87 (N = 534).

Another moderator, fear of failure, was measured with the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (D.E. Conroy, PhD), as adapted by Mateusz Referda. The Polish version of this tool was prepared by reverse translation. The Inventory includes 5 scales corresponding to the dimensions of the fear of failure and can produce an overall score to identify the intensity of a particular personality disposition. Polish studies conducted in upper-secondary schools show its high reliability of 0.91 (Cronbach's α , N = 588).

The last moderator was measured with the Hope for Success Questionnaire (HSQ), as adapted by Mariola Łaguna, Jerzy Trzebiński and Mariusz Zięba. This method comprises 12 statements, including 8 diagnostic and 4 buffer ones. The tool measures hope expressed as two components to obtain an overall score. The reliability of the HSQ is 0.82 (Łaguna et al., 2005).

Sample

The survey was conducted from June to September 2014 in four randomly selected upper-secondary schools in Warsaw. In order to prevent any distorting factors from affecting study results, the procedure excluded 1st and 3rd grade students. The study covered students who were in the 2nd grade in the school year 2013/2014. The author carried out the survey by himself. All respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. Their participation was voluntary. The research procedure was the same in each school. The survey was conducted in groups and took place during selected lessons agreed with the school administration. Capacity assessment and the corresponding questionnaires took 40 to 55 minutes to complete. In total, the study covered 375 students. The following stage involved the verification of the completeness and correctness of the data. Study questionnaires with missing answers on school failure or in more than one form were disregarded. During the next stage, factor analysis was used to extract the *school failure* factor, and the data was subject to initial processing to eliminate any marginal cases and complete any missing answers. Ultimately, 321 study questionnaires qualified for further analysis.

Study subjects included students aged 16 to 19, with the majority being 18 (71%) or 17 years old (24%). Gender proportions were similar, with approx. 44% female and 54% male respondents. The families of the subjects usually had higher education. This applied to 64% of mothers and nearly 54% of fathers. Parents with secondary/vocational education constituted the second most numerous group, with as many as 31% of mothers and 42% of fathers included under this category. The majority of respondents were satisfied with their families' level of affluence, with 43% perceiving their financial situation as good, 25% as quite good, and 21% as very good. A group of about 9% of students were not happy with their families' level of wealth. A substantial majority of respondents had siblings. The most popular answer was one brother or sister (49%). Nearly 22% of respondents declared having two siblings, and about 11% reported more siblings. Almost 16% of subjects were the only children in their families.

Analysis of results

Before proceeding to hypothesis examination, it was important to identify the underlying relationship between skills and school failure. To this end, the study conducted a simple analysis of linear regression, with school failure as the dependent variable and skills as the explanatory variable. The corresponding results are presented in the table below.

Table 2 A regression analysis of the relationship between skills and school failure

Skills	B	Standard error	Beta	t	Significance	Model summary		
						F	R	R-squared (adjusted)
(Constant)	0.37	0.16		2.30	0.022	F(1,319) = 6.26	0.14	0.02
APIS_OS	-0.04	0.02	-0.14	-2.50	0.013			

The proposed dependence model proved to match the data well, with $F(1.320) = 6.37, p < 0.05$. The analysis showed that the level of skill is significantly yet weakly connected with the experience of school failure ($\beta = -0.14, p < 0.05$). This means that students with poor skills can have serious problems with their school performance, but skill level explains only 2% of school failure variability.

The significance of emotional intelligence for the relationship between skills and school failure

Hypothesis 1 predicted that students with low emotional intelligence levels would show a significant relationship between poor skills and high rates of school failure. In order to test this, the study conducted moderator analyses. The general results of the TEIQue were divided into 4 sub-groups, with each accounting for approx. 25% of findings. This produced a sub-group with poor emotional intelligence (the first 25%), a subgroup with a tendency towards poor EI, a group with a tendency towards high EI, and a group with high EI. These sub-groups were subsequently subject to simple regression analyses (c.f. Bedyńska & Książek, 2012, pp. 127–131; Lucio, Hunt & Bornovalova, 2012, p. 424).

Table 3 *The significance of emotional intelligence for the relationship between skills and school failure – regression model parameters*

<i>Emotional intelligence</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Model summary</i>		
						<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R-squared (adjusted)</i>
1. Low	-0.07	0.02	-0.35	-3.38	0.001	$F(1.80) = 11.40$	0.35	0.11
2. Tendency towards low	-0.04	0.03	-0.14	-1.26	0.210	$F(1.80) = 1.60$	0.14	0.01
3. Tendency towards high	-0.02	0.03	-0.07	-0.60	0.553	$F(1.82) = 0.35$	0.07	-0.01
4 High	-0.01	0.04	-0.02	-0.21	0.834	$F(1.71) = 0.04$	0.03	-0.01

The above data shows that Hypothesis 1 was confirmed and the regression model matched the data well, with $F(1.80) = 11.40, p < 0.001$. The data presented in the table above indicate that the sub-group of students with low emotional intelligence exhibits a statistically significant relationship between skills and school failure ($\beta = -0.35, p < 0.05$), with skill level accounting for approx. 13% of the presented dependent variable. In view of this, poor cognitive capacity corresponds to increased difficulties at school, and good skills contribute to reducing school failure rates. Therefore, it can be concluded that in students with low EI resources, high level of skill serves adaptation purposes for school performance, while low level of skill correlates with excessive school failure.

*The significance of the fear of failure for the relationship
between skills and failing at school*

Hypothesis 2 predicted that students with a deep fear of failure would show a significant relation between poor skills and high rates of school failure. This assumption was tested with a moderator analysis where the moderator was divided between four groups with a similar number of subjects. Next, each sub-group was subject to a regression analysis.

The results presented in the table below suggest that in the group of students with a deep fear of failure, the model did not match the data well, with $F(1.76) = 0.63$, $p > 0.05$. The groups of students with low levels of fear and with a tendency towards high levels of fear also did not demonstrate statistical significance. Only the group with a tendency towards low level of fear met the condition of statistical significance, with $F(1.76) = 5.43$, $p < 0.05$.

Table 4 *The significance of fear of failure for the relationship between skills and school failure – regression model parameters*

<i>Fear of failure</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Model summary</i>		
						<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R-squared (adjusted)</i>
1. Low	-0.02	0.03	-0.06	-0.52	0.603	$F(1.80) = 0.27$	0.06	-0.01
2. Tendency towards low	-0.09	0.04	-0.26	-2.33	0.022	$F(1.76) = 5.43$	0.26	0.05
3. Tendency towards high	-0.04	0.03	-0.17	-1.55	0.125	$F(1.81) = 2.41$	0.17	0.02
4 High	-0.02	0.02	-0.09	-0.79	0.431	$F(1.76) = 0.63$	0.09	0.00

This analysis shows that high levels of the fear of failure do not determine the relationship between skills and school failure, hence disproving Hypothesis 2. It revealed, however, another, unexpected relationship. The group of students with a tendency towards low levels of the fear of failure was found to show a significant correlation between low levels of skill and increased rates of school failure ($\beta = -0.26$, $p < 0.05$). This means that only in the students with a tendency towards low levels of the fear of failure do skills show a significant impact on their school performance.

The significance of hope for success for the relationship between skills and school failure

Hypothesis 3 predicted that students with a faint hope for success would show a significant relationship between poor skills and high rates of school failure. Similarly to the previous hypothesis, moderator was again divided between 4 sub-groups with a similar number of students each, to conduct regression analyses.

Table 5 *The significance of hope for success for the relationship between skills and school failure – regression model parameters*

<i>Hope for success</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Model summary</i>		
						<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R-squared (adjusted)</i>
1. Low	-0.06	0.03	-0.26	-2.42	0.018	F(1.80)=5.84	0.26	0.06
2. Tendency towards low	-0.01	0.03	-0.03	-0.26	0.793	F(1.89)=0.07	0.03	-0.01
3. Tendency towards high	-0.09	0.03	-0.30	-2.63	0.010	F(1.72)=6.93	0.30	0.08
4 High	0.01	0.04	0.02	0.20	0.842	F(1.72)=0.04	0.02	-0.01

The above table presents the results of statistical analyses confirming that the model matches the data in two sub-groups. This applies to students with low hopes for success, i.e. $F(1.80) = 5.84$, $p < 0.05$, and those with a tendency towards high levels of hope, i.e. $F(1.72) = 6.69$, $p < 0.01$. These statistical investigations prove that students with a faint hope for success indeed show a significant relationship between poor skills and high rates of school failure. This relationship is negative and weak ($\beta = -0.26$, $p < 0.05$), and accounts for approx. 6% of the dependent variable. The study demonstrated also another correlation. It showed that the group of students with a tendency towards high hopes exhibit a similar relationship but with slightly higher parameters ($\beta = -0.30$, $p < 0.01$, accounting for approx. 8% of school failure variability).

In conclusion, Hypothesis 3, which assumed the moderating role of hope for success, was supported. The above-mentioned analysis shows that low levels of hope for success emphasise the significance of skill for school performance. In addition, students with a tendency towards high hopes for success also demonstrate a significant relationship between poor skills and increased school failure rates.

Discussion

The conducted study allows the conclusion that abstract- and logical-thinking skills and fluency of speech have real yet minor significance for explaining school failure. It was further demonstrated that the personality factors listed above determine the significance of the level of skill for the experience of failure at school. They can either strengthen or weaken the functional role of skill. Identified correlations corroborate the claim found in the literature on the subject, according to which the use of one's intellectual capabilities and the quality of one's performance in upper-secondary school is determined largely by external factors, such as the selected cognitive and emotional personality factors described in this work.

It was established that the group of students with poor emotional intelligence exhibit a significant relationship between low level of skill and high rates of school failure. This relationship is valid also conversely, meaning that the high levels of skill are associated with low rates of school failure. When one considers the underlying relationship between skills

and school failure, where the level of abstract- and logical-thinking skills and fluency of speech production accounts only for 2% of the variance in the dependent variable, and compares this relationship with the results of students with low EI, where the proportion of the variance is much higher, one can conclude that in this group of students skills play a significant role in governing students' school performance. These findings bridge the gap in the literature on the subject. Previous studies had focused on the significance of high levels of this disposition. They demonstrated that high trait EI is associated with better learning performance in selected school subjects in groups of students having poor or average cognitive skills, but not with high intelligence levels (Agnoli, Mancini, Pozzoli, Baldaro, Russo & Surcinelli, 2012). This was also corroborated by studies in which the level of crystallised intelligence was controlled. These showed a pattern where students with low levels of cognitive skills exhibited a significant correlation between high EI and improved learning performance (Petrides et al., 2004). Furthermore, the overall emotional intelligence level is associated with improved personal adjustment among students, i.e. frequent social behaviour and rare emotional and behavioural disorders or difficulties in social relations (Gugliandolo, Costa, Cuzzocrea, Larcan & Petrides, 2015; Frederickson, Petrides & Simmonds, 2012). The above-mentioned findings allow the conclusion that emotional intelligence acts as a protective resource against personal and social maladjustment and one that supports improved learning performance in spite of relatively low levels of cognitive abilities. This interpretation is consistent with the author's own studies which demonstrated that in individuals with low overall EI it was their poor skills that had great significance for the high rates of school failure. It can further be noted that such students have their resources limited on two levels and are thus particularly exposed to failure at school. Such relations were not found in students with higher levels of overall EI. The analyses showed no significant correlations between poor skills and high school failure rates, which could suggest a considerable importance of emotional intelligence as a resource that supports students with poor cognitive skills in coping with school failure and school requirements.

Another personality factor considered hereunder was the fear of failure. It had been assumed that the prevalence of this factor would strengthen the relationship between skills and school failure. However, the conducted analyses did not support this assumption. An overview of the literature on the subject shows that the correlation between the significance of the fear of failure for the relationship between skills and school performance is yet to be investigated, so the presented study findings can shed new light on this concept. So far, this disposition has been analysed in relation to sport achievements (c.f. Conroy, 2001), its significance for the quality of interpersonal relations (Sagar et al., 2011), goal fulfilment (c.f. Haghbin et al., 2012; Rice, Vu, Butler, Marra, Merullo & Banderet, 2009; Reiss, 2009), and its impact on personal adjustment (c.f. Sagar et al., 2011; Wright, Pincus, Conroy & Elliot, 2009). The presented study bridges the gap in the literature on the subject, as it proves that in the group of students with a deep overall fear of failure, skills do not show any significant relationship with school failure.

The last personality factor investigated in this study was hope for success. The conducted analyses supported the assumption that low hope for success impacts on the relationship between skills and school failure. The study showed that in students who were not likely to expect positive outcomes of their actions and who did not have confidence in their competence, their level of skills had profound significance for the quality of their school performance. Low cognitive capacity was found to be associated with high failure rate, and high

level of skills was a strong predictor of limited difficulties at school. These findings suggest that low hopes are correlated with poor skills, thus contributing to the greater rates of school failure than could be expected only on the basis of cognitive capacity. In the same group of students, great cognitive capacity serves protective purposes against excessive rates of school failure. The findings of this study are consistent with the previous analyses found in the literature on the subject. Research by Gilman et al. (2006) proved that students with low hopes are more likely to face difficulties in social and school adjustment, while high hopes protect students against such problems. Other empirical studies have shown that individuals with high hopes are more resistant to stress and use more effective coping strategies than those with deficiencies in this area (Helland & Winston, 2005; Shorey, Snyder, Yang & Lewin, 2003). It is also important to note that the literature on the subject is still lacking studies on the role of hope as a factor that governs the relationship between cognitive skills and school performance. The presented study could provide useful insights into this area.

It could also encourage further research into the issue of factors that govern the relationship between one's skills and school performance. It could be interesting to compare these findings with groups of students from small towns or at earlier stages of education, or with university students. Such comparative studies would show whether the discovered correlations are universal or pertain only to upper-secondary school students.

It is also important to bear in mind that such studies and the possibility of making valid generalisations are subject to certain limitations. The surveys for the purposes of this study had been carried out among the students of general education secondary schools operating in Warsaw, and must not be used as a reference for the population as a whole. It also seems debatable whether these should be generalised to vocational or technical secondary schools. For such generalisations to be possible, it would be advisable to conduct comparative studies in other types of upper-secondary schools located in other cities and towns. Research among younger students, e.g. attending lower-secondary schools, would also constitute an interesting prospect, as it would provide an opportunity to assume a greater role of cognitive skills in determining the effectiveness of school performance. When using the data provided in the analyses included in this study, it is important to mind the terminological pitfalls. This work relies heavily on some ambiguous concepts, such as skill and school failure. For the avoidance of doubt and misunderstanding associated with the colloquial understanding of these terms, please refer to their respective definitions, as used by the author of this study.

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Joanna Chwaszcz
Iwona Niewiadomska

Meaning of resources in social inclusion

Part 1



**Joanna Chwaszcz
Iwona Niewiadomska**

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PART 1

Editors:

Joanna Chwaszcz
Iwona Niewiadomska
e-mail: sekretariat@ipip.info.pl
www.ipip.info.pl

Reviewer:

DANUTA RODE, Associate Professor SWPS

Statistical Editor:

Rafał Bartczuk, PhD

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Mirosław Drozd

Text Editor:

Monika Piech

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Introduction

Social inclusion understood as the process of integrating marginalized and excluded persons with the general population and restoring people at risk of exclusion to the mainstream society, is the opposite of social exclusion, which means exclusion from social life of individuals and groups mismatched to current social, cultural, professional or economic trends.

In a changing world it comes to the numerous and increasingly rapid changes in almost all areas of life. This is related to the development of new technologies, economic and social innovation, combining science and business, economic development and growth in citizens wealth. In parallel, however, also increases the sphere of unemployment, poverty, homelessness and marginalization of individuals and entire groups who are unable to cope with the rapidly changing world. Those at risk of marginalization are: workers with long work experience who can not cope with new technologies replacing human in the workplace, people with a low level of entrepreneurship who were not able to find on the labor market after losing their jobs in state institutions and large companies, or people with disabilities who find it hard to compete in the open labor market. Also young mothers are marginalized, especially single mothers, where employers are afraid of frequent absences from work due to child care. Excluded from social life are people addicted to psychoactive substances, and also increasingly, those who are addicted to activities such as gambling, sex or shopping. New developments also bring new risks to human life and functioning. Excluded are also prisoners leaving the prisons, who often do not have home and work, and they remember the world from a few or several years before. After leaving the prison they sometimes can not use the mobile phone, tickets machine or don't know the power of the Internet. A group of people who are excluded, deprived of their rights and social benefits are homeless. Homeless people usually have lost everything: job, home, family, health, and often a sense of dignity. Currently, new groups of people at risk of exclusion are still identified, based on certain criteria, e.g. the availability and competitiveness in the labor market, wealth, access to certain goods or use of the latest achievements of science.

The scientific literature, mainly sociological and psychological, points to the number of social, economic and psychological conditions of marginalization and social exclusion. The causes of social exclusion seem to be fairly well understood, and on its basis the prevention programs are developed. In terms of social inclusion, which has now become an important task for all European countries, the most important factor for positive change, or successful inclusion of marginalized into professional and cultural mainstream, is a readaptation potential of marginalized people and social capital of the environment of persons at risk of exclusion or excluded.

The efficiency of transfer the marginalized people into the mainstream of social life is determined by hard variables such as possession of work, home or apartment, other ma-

terial goods, social position. In the mental sphere the effectiveness of inclusion is assessed through the growth of: sense of quality of life, coherence, rooting and the level of social adaptation.

The readaptation potential assumes the possession of a certain level of resources, especially a managing resources that will allow the person to run resources gaining, initiate gaining spiral and build the development potential. People with very low resources, especially personal characteristics, activate the processes of resources conservation, leavings of the resources, they are not open to change and development. The aim of the research is therefore to know the level of resources to enable the process of obtaining further resources, the structure of these resources and their correlations with other personal and social variables.

In the publication we present several research projects dealing with relationships between personal and social variables performing a particularly important role in the social inclusion of people at risk of exclusion. The results of the studies contained in this publication contribute to a better understanding of human functioning in a situation of social exclusion, are the inspiration for further research in this area and a base for planning research-based strategies for social inclusion of groups at risk of exclusion.

Chapter 1

Inclusion. Social Theoretical Considerations on Rawls' Theory of Justice

Jochen Ostheimer

ABSTRACT

In his theory of justice, Rawls writes about the just society. For methodological reasons, he excludes certain groups who actually belong to the society, as we know it. Amongst them are persons with severe disabilities. This article argues that this group of persons can and should be included in Rawls' theory. The notion of society as a cooperative community which often is understood in narrow, economic terms is decisive for the development of this argument. More consistent, however, is a broad and cultural interpretation.

Keywords: Justice, Rawls, disability, contractualism, cooperation, society

Introduction

In a sense, John Rawls describes his theory of justice in terms of a story. In a primordial, pre-social situation, people discuss very basic, normative principles, according to which they wish to build a society. If one remains within the context of this narrative, then the question arises, "who is allowed to participate in these negotiations?". Leaving the level of the story, and proceeding to analyse the theory, which includes the concept of the original position, then it may be asked, which groups of persons are to be included in the theory, and which are to be deliberately excluded or inadvertently overlooked? Within the story, what can be considered as participation, and can be analysed from the point of view of a social theory, as a matter of inclusion and exclusion. Which groups of people are present in Rawls' theory of justice, and which are excluded? Furthermore, upon what shall such inclusions and exclusions be based?

The following considerations take a social theoretical point of view, i.e. they reflect Rawls' concept of society. The focus is directed to the social theoretical exclusion of people with disabilities, who were initially overlooked in Rawls' concept of an "ideal theory."

From the point of view of “theory aesthetics” (Nassehi, 2003, pp. 16–17, 82–85), it will be determined, by which internal structural means Rawls’ theoretical model attempts to make this exclusion plausible. In following this analysis, the slight differences between the various books and essays by Rawls shall not be discussed, because these considerations are systematic and not relevant to the historical development of Rawls’ thinking. In the next step, various critical objections are discussed, and in the last step, an own approach to the social theoretical inclusion of people with disabilities is developed.

Creating a Social Contract

In order to form an ethical basis for his principles of justice, Rawls develops a contractual argument. As an intellectual experiment, citizens – or strictly speaking, parties that represent all citizens, but this difference is not relevant – discuss the basic social order, the so-called political conception of justice, being subject to certain conditions, which should guarantee impartiality, and thereby a moral point of view. These terms have come to be included in the notion of the original position.

Decisive in such contractualist arguments, as Rawls points out very clearly, is the refinement of the conditions of the discussion, i.e., of the original position. Both the initial assumptions and the result must match the considered judgment of an average member of modern society. It must be possible to bring this into a reflective equilibrium, and to create a coherent, comprehensive result (Rawls, 1975, pp. 37–39, 628; Nida-Rümelin, 2002, pp. 24–27; Nida-Rümelin, 2006, pp. 89–98). If discrepancies exist, the conditions of the original position may be modified, the principles of justice may be amended, and/or the critical judgment as well as the normative supportive beliefs may be corrected. Correspondingly, it is “not proper to treat the concept of the social contract as an instrument of ultimate cause, but as a clarifying instrument of hermeneutic constructivism” (Kersting, 2000, p. 82; Maus, 2006, p. 85) which in a critical reflection explains the moral foundation of a culture.

Social Theoretical Exclusions

Parties representing all social groups, according to their socioeconomic status, participate in the original deliberation. Rawls cites the example of ordinary workers, without specifying the notion of social groups. In particular, he doesn’t give any criteria concerning what constitutes a social group. Instead, it is crucial for him that all social groups are represented, and that all participate on an equal footing, in the negotiations. All the groups that belong to the society are to be involved in the deliberations. Who then belongs to society, according to Rawls?

Like most contract theorists, Rawls builds upon the concept of the fundamental equality of all citizens. They are equal in terms of their moral capacities, and thus in terms of their status, as moral subjects. They have two moral assets, namely a sense of justice and the ability to formulate, to revise and to follow an idea of what is important in life, that is, a concept of the good. Moreover, they are equal in terms of their abilities. Although the fundamental equality of the members of society is indeed based on experience in general, nevertheless it is an axiomatic establishment. On the whole, it is believed that citizens “have the necessary

assets and skills to be normal and cooperative members of society throughout their lives” (Rawls, 1998, pp. 159, 86–87, 104). The mention of the whole lifetime means that childhood and old age as anthropologically normal phases of human development cannot rationally and reasonably be regarded as grounds for the diminishing of one’s civil status. The same applies to minor illnesses and injuries (Rawls, 1998, p. 87; Rawls, 2003, pp. 264–268). However, Rawls would have had to take into consideration that in light of the costly state of advanced medicine the expenditures for severe illness and in the last phase of life may be significantly higher than for people with disabilities. Rational partners in this discussion would certainly be expected to take this into account.

Although the assumption of equality is fundamental and far-reaching, it is still not comprehensive. In his theory of the just society, Rawls calls for four prior methodical exceptions, to respond to actual power asymmetries, and which Rawls hereinafter treats differently (Rawls, 1998, pp. 87–88; Rawls, 1975, pp. 34–556). First, the society consists of people. Non-human beings, especially animals, or, according to the Gaia concept, biospheres, species, or the earth as a whole (Lovelock, 1982), are excluded from consideration, and are thus beyond the scope of justice. Secondly, the society is closed, in the sense that only by birth one enters, and only by death one exits. Matters of immigration or international relations are not an issue. These aspects are treated later in Rawls’ “The Law of Peoples” (Rawls, 1999). A third exception concerns future generations. Yet, Rawls is able to methodically integrate this group in further considerations with the “principle of just savings” (Rawls, 1975, § 44) as the central concept. Fourthly, and this is the relevant aspect here, he establishes a condition for the status of a citizen, as being dependent upon a minimum level of relevant assets for social cooperation. The mere fact of being human is not enough. This fourth exception applies to people with severe disabilities, people with severe dementia and people who are permanently in a coma. Without clarifying whether these three cases must be treated differently, disability will become the reference point of the following considerations. Examining this exception, it is to be noted that Rawls initially proposes an “ideal theory,” which focuses on the “normal case” (Rawls, 1998, pp. 384, 86–87, 93, 277–278; Rawls, 1975, p. 118; Rawls, 1992a, p. 122) and so certain special difficulties are not taken into consideration. This is methodologically quite understandable. However, Rawls never takes the step toward a “real world” theory. He even himself considers it questionable whether his approach is able to close this gap (Rawls, 1998, p. 88; Rawls, 2003, p. 270). He considers the obligations to people with disabilities as obvious, and due to this, the conception of justice as fairness must be extended accordingly, or possibly supplemented by another concept (Rawls, 2003, p. 270). As a matter of fact, people with disabilities are not part of the ideal concept of society, and they are not involved in discussions and decisions about the normative basic order of the society (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 58).

This article argues that the exclusion of people with severe disabilities both from the deliberations in the original position, as well as from the application of the two principles of justice is inconsistent. The criticism of Rawls’ theory is developed within the framework of this theory itself, and not, for example, from the vantage point of a communitarian or a Capability approach.

Critical objections to Rawls' theory

The marginalization of people with disabilities from the theory of justice is widely criticized. Here are presented five approaches which try to justify the consideration of people with disabilities in Rawls' theory of justice. They will be briefly addressed and critiqued. Afterwards, my own line of thought shall be submitted.

A comprehensive and multifaceted critique comes from the pen of Kittay. It addresses both people with disabilities, as dependents, as well as those who care for them as family members, volunteers or professionals, whom she calls "dependency workers". This second aspect, which is however only scarcely convincing, will not be pursued here.

One critical point that Kittay brings forward concerns the Rawlsian theory of the person. Kittay reproaches Rawls for circumventing human vulnerability (Kittay, 1997, p. 222; Kittay, 1999). She is right, in that vulnerability is not an issue for Rawls. But it is covered by the familiar notions of normality, on which Rawls' thoughts are based. If vulnerability, however, is understood as an anthropological statement, it belongs to what Rawls calls a "comprehensive doctrine", and thus cannot serve as a starting point of political philosophy, since any such theory cannot be based on such presuppositions.

Furthermore, Kittay proposes to include the circumstances of justice, which Rawls takes from Hume, namely the aspect of dependence (Kittay, 1997, p. 227; Rawls, 1975, § 22; Barry, 1989, pp. 152–163, 179–183). Certainly, vulnerability cannot be equated with the objective circumstance of scarcity. But for Rawls it is sufficient that such needs call for appropriate means, and that these are in fact at least moderately scarce. Therefore, it is strategically sensible for this theory to omit what is not necessarily required, in accordance with Occam's razor. Furthermore, Kittay demands that the list of basic social goods be expanded, so as to include special care needs. Her intention is sensible. However, she argues on the wrong level of concreteness, and her considerations do not reflect the abstractness of the social goods (Kittay, 1997, pp. 236–237). Income and wealth represent the part taken for the whole all material goods and expressly include health care (Rawls, 1992b, p. 179; Rawls, 2003, p. 265).

Moreover, Kittay brings out that the social bonds which arise from relationships of dependency and care are more basic and stronger than are political and economic relationships, to which Rawls refers. But this finding is not sufficient to support the postulate of another principle of justice which is to socially institutionalize care (Kittay, 1997, pp. 234–235).

On the whole, Kittay brings out some problematic points in Rawls' theory. However, her arguments do not ordinarily take place on the proper level of abstraction. Rawls assumes four levels of normative setting, where the veil of ignorance is lifted gradually: the political conception of justice, the constitution, the legislation and finally the executive actions of the state administration and the jurisdiction (Rawls, 1975, § 31). Most of Kittay's claims belong to the level of ordinary legislation, and not to a political conception of justice.

Another stimulating interpretation comes from Stark. The central point of reference of this analysis is the assumption of full working capacity. Stark proposes to maintain this suggestion in the concept of the original position, while leaving it aside on the level of the constitution (Stark, 2007, p. 138). On this level of concretisation, those who vote on the constitution would determine the highest possible social minimum, which is limited only by the requirements of efficiency, which are laid down in the difference principle. This guaranteed minimum covers the particular needs of people with disabilities. The normative basis for their claims would therefore not be the difference principle, but the guarantee of a social

minimum. Rawls treats such a guarantee of a subsistence level of material assistance only tangentially and unsystematically. It is placed beside the two principles of justice, sometimes it is even prior to them, but it shall not be enshrined in the constitution (Rawls, 1998, pp. 71–72, 258, 330–331; Rawls, 2003, pp. 85, 199–203; Rawls, 1975, pp. 308–311). It thus remains on the whole a foreign body in Rawls' theory, which however, probably could be inserted into it.

According to Rawls, the drafting and adoption of the constitution is the second step of concretisation, after the resolution of the political conception of justice. On this level, the veil of ignorance is lifted a little. Stark's assumption is that the voters for the constitution, in contrast to the parties in the original position, know that people are not always and entirely able to cooperate, therefore it may seem to fit Rawls' methodological guidelines. But the real question is why it can be presumed that the parties in the original position have a false knowledge, namely the adoption of the full working capacity of all citizens. This presumption is not a broadly harmless abstraction, but an idealization which introduces additional presumptions in the argument, without being suitably substantiated (O'Neill, 2006, pp. 34–37). Stark skips this problem. She may and must ignore it, because she accepts as self-evident the concept of society as a cooperative community in a narrow sense (the criticism of this social theoretical conception is undertaken in section 5).

The considerations of Lister, as another critic of Rawls, are not focused on personal or social theory, nor do they suggest corrections to the original position. Instead, Lister proposes a new interpretation of justice. The objective of distributive justice, as Lister envisions it, is the establishment of valuable relationships, in which all parties mutually recognize each other as morally equal. In a second step, he argues that the difference principle shall be restricted by the condition of reciprocity. The commands of distributive justice are limited by the reasonable expectation that all participate in joint cooperation. This requirement, however, is to apply only to those who are capable of cooperating, but are unwilling, but not to the unfit (Lister, 2011, pp. 107–109). This at least leaves open the possibility that even people with strong impairments are covered by the principles of justice.

These considerations imply that Rawls' assumption of the ability to cooperate must be dropped. For it is contradictory to the more fundamental assumption of moral equality. Thus, Lister suggests an ethical embedding of the elements of the theory of rational choice, just as Rawls does in some statements. The starting point of Brighouse's considerations is the assessment that people with severe disabilities are a normal part of any society. Hence, they cannot be treated as exceptions in a theory of justice, as is the case in Rawls' ideal theory (Brighouse, 2001, pp. 538–539). To account for this population adequately, an extension of Rawls' theory is necessary, but to continue to be in accord with the Rawlsian theory, three restrictions must be taken into consideration. The supplementing must be based on the list of basic social goods, recognize the primacy of the principle of freedom and develop a principle limiting the redistribution in favour of the worst-off (Brighouse, 2001, p. 540).

Brighouse sees the two-staged main task in modelling the original position in a manner, in which differences in the distribution of natural talents are respected by the parties and at the same time compensation measures are effectively limited. To solve the first part of the task, Brighouse suggests subdividing the original position in two phases (Brighouse, 2001, pp. 549–558). The first one corresponds to that which is described by Rawls. In the second phase, the parties are aware of the results of the first round of decision, and take into account the fact of disability in a special way. They thus deliberate on additional support for

the disabled members of society. Hence, in contrast to the difference principle, the focus on the relatively best worst social situation is no longer prior, and the reflections are not guided by the maximin rule, but by the criterion of acceptability. This criterion could be determined from the perspective of the key concept of the social bases of self-respect. A second approach is based on the guiding principle of correcting impairments in natural amenities by medical-technical measures. Such options are ever more available, the further the technical and economic development of society has progressed. This will be all the more the case, the more incentives are offered to individuals to be productive, so that by analogy with the fair savings principle, an intrinsic limit is to be put on the promotion of expenditures for disabled people.

The much-touted problem in a Rawlsian society, which Brighouse also widely discusses, is that redistribution will not end. The issue arises when the difference principle is interpreted according to one side only: All resources must be made available to the poorest, in agreement with the principle of the distribution of basic goods to the needy, until another population group threatens to slip to the lowest level. This focus on the benefits for the worst-off must be complemented however, by the perspective of efficiency: Redistribution must not bring long-term harm to economic growth, and thus the social development of prosperity, because this is detrimental to all, and therefore also for the poorest (Kersting, 2000, pp. 106–109). This inherent limit is included in the difference principle. Brighouse ends with this criterion, too. Although he formulates many thought-provoking insights on this path, his road is unnecessarily cumbersome.

Nussbaum presents the most extensive critical review. Her objections and corollaries – and Nussbaum sees a family relationship between Rawls' theory and her approach, in which Rawls' "own concerns are developed, rather than replaced" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 21) – are complex and highly differentiated, so that hereinafter only certain important aspects shall be singled out. Similarly to Kittay, Nussbaum also rightly points out that with regard to the way a society deals with people with disabilities, two aspects have to be addressed. In addition to potential claims by the persons affected, which are discussed in this article, with regard to the de facto social practice, the burden of those people caring for people with disabilities must be considered. This is about the value and appreciation of nursing, primary care and education work (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 144; Krebs, 2002; Ostheimer, 2012). These aspects, however, have their firm place within the scope of the difference principle, and do not provide any special challenge for Rawls' theory.

Nussbaum is right with her socio-psychological assessment, that the way people with disabilities are perceived and treated in society has an impact on how society deals with people who are frail, due to age, illness or accident (Nussbaum, 2010, pp. 146, 185–186). Yet, that their claims are morally similar and have to be considered in the same way in the original position, must be argued for explicitly, since Rawls denies this view. Moreover, Nussbaum's argument is too concrete, it does not belong to the original position. It requires more knowledge about the social contexts and the cultural patterns of normality, than can be assumed about the parties.

Furthermore, Nussbaum criticizes that there is a subliminally objectivist understanding of disability in Rawls' theory, which does not consider that many functional impairments are communally shaped by their social contexts, such as regarding the manner in which buildings are constructed or public transport systems are designed (Nussbaum, 2010, pp. 162–163). This, however, does not constitute a major objection to Rawls, because he

does not draft an ethical theory of disability, and therefore such distinctions do not need to be drawn.

Another important question which Nussbaum raises concerns the relationship between justice and rationality. Contract theories ascribe a minimum of reason to the parties for obvious reasons, since otherwise, as everyday experience shows, they were not able to reach an agreement. In the social contract theory, the status as subject as well as object of justice claims is linked with rationality. Consequently, those who have very limited cognitive abilities are not capable of having an active place in the considerations concerning matters of justice (Nussbaum, 2010, pp. 83–84, 98, 186–187), which is not the case for example in a sufficiency theoretical, a human rights or a capability approach. At this point, there is a discrepancy between Rawls' theoretical assumptions and the "well-considered judgment" of many members of contemporary society which should be in a "reflective equilibrium" (Rawls, 1975, pp. 67–73; Rawls, 1998, pp. 72–76). At this point, further reflection is needed.

On the whole, Nussbaum brings out some important aspects which a theory of a just society must consider in view of persons with a severe disability. As it is the case with Kit-tay's criticism, not all of these aspects are significant for the political conception of justice. This implies that they are not situated on the right level of abstraction. Nussbaum's own considerations, which are based on neo-Aristotelian principles and unfold into her version of a capability approach, are not discussed here, even though they are very exciting, because the critical analysis of Rawls' concept is unfolded within the framework of Rawls' theory itself.

The modern society as a cooperative community

The following ideas try to reshape parts of Rawls' theory. They offer a proposal on how people with disabilities can be integrated in Rawls' concept of society. In doing so, they focus on the understanding of society. The Rawlsian society is the modern Western society, with the characteristics of the rule of law and democracy, the division of labour and industrialization, functional differentiation and pluralism. The societal ideal is the "well-ordered society". It is distinguished by the two features of justice and stability. Rawls' understanding of justice is fundamentally founded in these two principles of justice. The property of stability includes inner social peace, the common idea of citizenship, the collectively shared view that on the whole the society is just, and a relatively high economic productivity which helps to mitigate conflicts in matters concerning distribution and provides a material basis for citizens to pursue their own group, or milieu-specific concepts of life. On the whole, the society is to be thought of as a community of cooperation, as "a self-sufficient system of cooperation for all essential purposes of human life" (Rawls, 1998, p. 417, 81–89). People depend on mutual support for their well-being in many ways. They join together for mutual benefit and establish "a system of cooperation that serves the best interests of its participants" (Rawls, 1975, pp. 20, 105) and is intended to enable each to have a better life.

"Cooperation" is the central key to the interpretation of the concept of society. The understanding of the concept of cooperation is decisive for the conceptual determination of who is regarded as belonging to the society. In the writings of Rawls as well as in comments on him, with a certain simplification, one can find a narrow and a broad idea of cooperation, which are both not further discussed in those texts. In a narrow sense, it comes down

to economic cooperation. The respective benefits are material. Cooperation calls for a fundamental equality of abilities and skills of the partners (Rawls, 1998, p. 157; Ostheimer, 2015, pp. 11–16).

Comprehensively speaking, cooperation is considered to be more than a mere division of labour and market-mediated exchange relationships (Rawls, 1975, pp. 567–574; Hirsch, 2002, p. 13). Therefore, market and price theory are just one example of a cooperation system which is based on a contractualist design (Rawls, 1975, p. 141). The concept of social cooperation, like the related concept of the social good, is a fundamental social theoretical concept in Rawls' theory (Kersting, 2000, p. 72). The society as a whole is a "complex distribution structure" (Kersting, 2000, p. 59), it is a cooperative system in every respect. In this broad sense, rights, freedoms, opportunities, reputation or social positions are social goods which are socially generated and distributed – an idea which is developed more clearly in Walzer (1994) than in Rawls. The same applies to the wide range of culture, such as language, values, lifestyles, world views, philosophical orientations, literature, film, cuisine, etc. They are social goods, because no individual can create them alone. A broad conception of society as a cooperative community designates the factual precondition for the various types of interaction, as well as the normative condition for just cooperation. Only within such a framework inter-individual can barter ever arise, and be judged as morally legitimate. Thus, commutative justice is only a subordinated category, which is limited to a particular sector. The market model is not a comprehensive template for the design of the society, on the whole (Koller, 2004, pp. 62–67).

Inclusion: Being member of the society, participating in the original position and being considered by the difference principle

The ambiguity of the concept of cooperation creates significant difficulties for the interpretation of Rawls' entire theory. When cooperation is interpreted in economic terms, people who are incapable of cooperation are methodically excluded from contractual participation (Rawls, 2003, p. 262), but can be integrated, for example, by a second, subordinated argument, on the basis of solidarity. Therefore, social assistance for this group of people cannot be justified on the basis of arguments of justice, and hence not on the basis of the difference principle, but only in the context of the asymmetric relations of solidarity (Kersting, 2000). For only those can lay claim to social justice, who – to stick to the image – signed the social contract. Of course, it must always be clarified how much the social circumstances affect the lowering of productivity of such people. However, for people with very strong restrictions, the social factor is not significant.

The Veil of Ignorance

In which sense is Rawls' concept of cooperation to be interpreted? Rawls' remarks are not unambiguous. Therefore, the clarification of the notion of cooperation must start with the basic idea of Rawls' theory. An economic understanding of cooperation requires a minimum level of the capacity for work. For it is worthwhile for the fittest to associate only with those who are of similar ability. If this attitude which is based on individual, or one's own

group-based self-interest is made the basis of the contractualist reflection, only existing power relationships are fostered. This is the starting point of Gauthier's theory, according to which the social contract excludes all who lower the average level of welfare (Gauthier, 1986, p. 18; Barry, 1989, p. 163).

Yet, it is a philosophical requirement that the principles agreed on in the original position be "morally right" (Rawls, 1975, p. 142). The result of the decision must not be influenced "by arbitrary contingencies or the social power relations" (Rawls, 1975, p. 142). In order to prevent the exploitation of such morally accidental benefits, the proceedings about the political conception of justice take place behind the "veil of ignorance." The parties in the original position are deprived of essential parts of everyday knowledge. The veil of ignorance, which as an instrument of "epistemological de-individualization" (Kersting, 2000, p. 74; Kymlicka, 1997, p. 76) is part of the repertoire of methods of ethical recognition and justification, conceals three kinds of information: the knowledge of the personal situation and individual preferences, the knowledge of the particular social and living conditions, and the knowledge of the particular ideological beliefs existing in society (Rawls, 1975, p. 160–161; Hinsch, 1997, p. 81; Barry, 1973, p. 10). Hence, the contracting parties do not know the social position of those persons whom they represent, nor can they assess the likelihood with which those persons shall take their position. Likewise, they do not know the dominant social recipes for success, which allow for the advancement of personal and professional success. The concealing of these three kinds of knowledge creates procedural conditions, which are analogous to the formation of morality (Rawls, 1975, pp. 30, 168, 171–173; Höffe, 1987, pp. 48–49; Maus, 2006, p. 77; Hinsch, 1997, pp. 80–81; Dworkin, 1984, pp. 258–259). Every rational bias for one's own benefit is converted into a preference for a generally acceptable arrangement. The drive will remain: Each seeks his own advantage. But the goal is lost in the obscurity of ignorance, so that one's advantage can be sought only in the guarantee that a good minimum position is assured for all. The guidance is based on general principles that are suitable for everyone's pursuit of benefit. Thereby, the procedure guarantees the adoption of a general point of view, and thus, Rawls can maintain the unanimity of the agreement, which functions as the "criterion of practical truth" (Kersting, 1994, p. 270; Rawls, 1975, p. 296).

The question of whether the parties in the original position know of the possibility of disability as an anthropological fact, and whether or not they give it due consideration is decisive for the further argumentation. This should be presumed to be true. For in the original position, the parties know "the general facts about human society [...] which arise from common sense and the generally recognized methods of analysis" as well as "the laws of the psychology of man" or "all the general facts which are important for the setting of principles of justice. With respect to general knowledge, that is, general laws and theories, there are no restrictions" (Rawls, 1975, pp. 160–161).

In contrast, Nussbaum reckons that the general knowledge of the parties in the original position encompasses the awareness of which impairments occur frequently, and are therefore considered as normal and others, which are extraordinary. Therefore, they can exclude people with serious disabilities on the basis of reciprocity, because the expenditures which ensure their equal participation in the society are above average (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 168). Yet, this interpretation underscores the fact that the parties decide according to the maximin rule, rather than weighing the benefits of various options.

The Maximin Rule

The decision to be taken by the parties in the original position is one of the most important commitments of all, because the social institutions determined in this way profoundly affect the living conditions of all members of society. Therefore, the parties seek to reach a high level of security, and this means they make their decision according to the maximin rule (Rawls, 1975, pp. 177–181; Rawls, 2003, pp. 156–157). From amongst all the social orders, they choose the one which offers the relatively best position for the worst-off. This is not only rational, it is moreover an interpretation of impartiality. For a choice which is not able to fulfil every wish, is just, if it is the least undesirable option from the standpoint of those to whom it is least welcome (Nagel, 1994, p. 98).

Under the conditions of Western levels of prosperity, this rule of decision-making guarantees that the worst social position turns out in any case tolerably. This is achieved by two principles of justice. The first ensures the fundamental liberties, which nobody will reasonably jeopardise. By this, the absolute priority of the first principle is at the same time justified. Second, the parties would actually vote for an equal distribution of the material goods. But they refrain from this for reasons of efficiency, and so they choose the difference principle in conjunction with the principle of fair equality of opportunity. Rawls' assumption, that the parties in the original position would vote for securing the fundamental liberties and a minimal subsistence, has a high plausibility. Whether this also applies to the difference principle, however, is no longer true to the same extent.

The empirical studies of Frohlich & Oppenheimer suggest that given a secured social minimum for everybody, people would opt for maximizing the average utility (Frohlich & Oppenheimer, 1992; Ladwig, 2002, p. 104–105). According to Brickman however, the subjects' behaviour is more or less similar to that which is described in Rawls' theory. Though, the motivation remains open; the motive for the vote for the difference principle might be compassion, too (Brickman, 1977). According to the study by Mitchell et al., the test results and Rawls' assumption are broadly consistent with one another, if the subjects deem effort and yield as being coupled together only in a weak manner (Mitchell et al., 1993; Elster, 1995; Rawls, 1975, § 49; Rawls, 2003, pp. 188–203). In all these experiments, however, it is questionable whether they are located on the right level of abstraction, in the sense of Rawls' four-stage scale. Mostly, the decisions of the test subjects concern singular distributions, and not the normative principles for governing the design of social institutions.

Social Theoretical Inclusion

Against the background of these considerations, it can now be clarified to what degree moral and cooperative skills are needed of citizens. Assuming, like Rawls does, that the parties in the original position firstly do not know their later position, secondly, know about the possibility of disability, and thirdly vote according to the maximin rule, so as to minimize risk, then the assertion can be justified that persons with disabilities enjoy the same protection of fundamental rights, and that they are covered by the second principle of justice.

The parties in the original position may methodically exclude disability without self-contradiction only under the condition that they know that they cannot be affected by disabili-

ities. Such knowledge is indeed impossible behind the veil of ignorance, but Rawls adds it as a part of the definition of the person to his concept of the original position: People are able to cooperate to a sufficient degree. Therefore, it remains to be explained whether this obvious counterfactual restriction can be substantiated.

Rawls cites two weak arguments: “The consideration of these difficult cases would prematurely raise questions that could lead us beyond the theory of justice and also distract our moral perception to people who are very different from ourselves, whose fate invokes in us pity and fear” (Rawls, 1975, p. 118; Rawls, 1998, p. 87; Rawls, 2003, p. 262). The fact that these people are very different from “us” would need to be spelled out in detail within an anthropological theory. That people elicit pity and fear (in whom?), is still not a sufficient reason to exclude them from philosophical reflection. It may be a legitimate consideration that the questions come at the wrong time. Yet, the right time never actually comes about in Rawls’ theory.

A third reason stems from the methodological concept of the original position. Rawls varies in this respect between the formulation of a moral point of view and the acceptance of a rational-egoistic perspective, with reference to the theory of rational choice. The latter focuses on individual advantage. Cooperation with partners with weak power is irrational. If this line be traced further, Rawls would need to substantiate, at least according to which criteria the boundary is to be drawn. For the greater the ability to work, without regard to how it should be measured, the higher are the average results the participants can expect. But it is precisely Rawls’ main concern of to conceive of the situation of decision in a way that morally accidental circumstances will be given no consideration or weight. Therefore, they disappear behind the veil of ignorance: “If we start with the basic ideas [that natural endowments, social circumstances and good fortune are morally arbitrary] [...] as the underpinnings of the difference principle, it must seem quite bizarre to claim that people who enjoy less than rude health (mental and physical), and especially those afflicted with a disease that gives rise to ‘unusual and costly medical requirements,’ create peculiar difficulties for a theory of justice. Search conditions are, we might think, the paradigm of this kind of undeserved misfortune, whose translation into actual disadvantage Rawls describes as arbitrary from a moral point of view” (Barry, 1989, p. 244).

For these reasons, a specified minimum level of moral and cooperative capabilities is to be rejected as prerequisite for being taken into consideration in the discussions and decisions in the original position. Furthermore, the concept of society as a cooperative community is to be understood in a broad sense, as indeed Rawls himself explicitly writes in some places. Thus, people who are not able to work can nevertheless appeal to the difference principle and participate in intra-societal exchange. The social care for this group of persons is a statutory duty in a well-ordered society.

The common moral belief can be maintained and is consistent with the basic concept of Rawls’ contractualist theory that people with strong disabilities are entitled to just treatment, and are not to be regarded as mere objects of charity. So, it is not necessary to abandon the contract theoretical concept. It is also not necessary to ascribe to the parties in the original position an altruistic orientation or strong moral convictions. Nor is it necessary to expand the list of basic social goods which are a guideline for the deliberation of the parties in the original position or to replace them with capabilities. It is enough to move away from the narrow concept of cooperation and its implications and to draw realistic people – and

Rawls indeed is a proponent of close ties to realism – and to impute this realistic picture of the person to the parties of the original position.

Conclusion

To claim a just standard of treatment in society requires having participated in resolving the political conception of justice by a delegate. Of course, the original position is only a thought experiment. Transferring these considerations from the imaginary to a factual level, the exclusion of people with severe impairment of their ability to work in the ideal theory means that they are beyond the realm of social justice. Their participation in society is not assured. The salient point of the argument for or against this theoretical exclusion is the understanding of society as a cooperative community. Both narrow and broad interpretations find clues in the texts of Rawls. Here a wide, socio-cultural interpretation was given preference, which leads to quite a few further changes in Rawls' theory of justice. In particular, the strategic rational calculation of advantage of the parties in the original position needs to be modified. The profit of this interpretation lies in greater consistency as well as in the strengthening of the reflective equilibrium.

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Chapter 2

The sense of positive responsibility as a factor that protects against threats

Irena Mudrecka

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on demonstrating that the sense of positive responsibility is one of the personal resources of each individual that protect them from the threats in the contemporary world. In order to address this issue, the author describes the terms such as responsibility, sense of responsibility and sense of positive responsibility. The author goes on to discuss how the sense of positive responsibility develops and suggests recommendations for parents and educators for shaping and reinforcing the sense of responsibility. Finally, the article emphasises the importance of the sense of positive responsibility in taking actions designed to protect values and spread good.

Keywords: responsibility, sense of responsibility, sense of positive responsibility, values, education

Introduction

The theoretical basis for this study is provided by the concept of resilience, which argues that research should focus on the endogenous and exogenous factors that facilitate positive human adaptation to environmental conditions. One should not only focus on human weaknesses, disorders, deviations and suffering but rather on developmental capacities and possibilities that empower the individual to live a good and happy life. In addition to identifying risk factors that threaten the human well-being, it is important that protective factors, such as individual characteristics, situations and external conditions which increase resilience to risk factors or counteract their negative effects be identified at least to the same extent, if not greater (Luthar, 2006). Protective factors are those individual resources and intrinsic or extrinsic capacities that allow the individual to overcome hardships despite unfavourable circumstances and provide even greater resilience to such hardships in

the future. Preventive social measures should therefore focus on these factors to reinforce, support and develop them (Mudrecka, 2013).

This article is to demonstrate that the sense of responsibility, and the sense of positive responsibility in particular, is a personal resource that protects the individual against the threats faced in the contemporary world. It is the sense of responsibility that allows the individual to successfully navigate the ever more complex social environment. Effective individual behaviour is manifested in making such decisions in one's life that bring about as many positive outcomes, and as few negative outcomes (costs) for oneself and for other people, as possible.

In view of the failure of external control mechanisms and the constantly extended personal liberties of the contemporary man, the importance of responsibility continues to grow. The right to freedom is an achievement of modern civilisation, but freedom without responsibility is a misconception of the former. For freedom exercised without responsibility restricts the freedom of others, violates their inalienable rights, does harm to oneself and others, and, consequently, forms pathological behaviour. Therefore, children and teenagers, who are becoming part of society, should be prepared to take up social roles by being brought up in the spirit of responsibility. Indeed, the constantly changing reality requires that one march to a different drummer, make bold and innovative responses to novel situations, and develop one's own problem-solving approach – without the sense of responsibility, each decision in one's life carries an element of risk. Therefore, adults, i.e. parents and educators, need to support the development of the sense of responsibility in children, so that they acquire the skill of anticipating the consequences of their own actions, and to recognise the need of having a reflective attitude towards themselves and others, to analyse recurring situations, draw conclusions, learn from their mistakes, while containing their consequences (Mudrecka, 2010).

Responsibility versus the sense of responsibility

Informally speaking, the notion of responsibility is well-established and seems to cause no misunderstanding. In practice, the majority of people understand responsibility as the fulfilment of one's duties and is associated with a positive state that qualifies one as a mature person of worth. Responsibility is desired and respected, while the opposite is true for the lack thereof, which is considered to deserve reproach and punishment.

Responsibility is an ontological category, since "it describes the structure of human existence and its location within the world" (Filek, 1996, p. 15). People are responsible even when they behave in an irresponsible manner or when they are unaware of their being responsible. The sense of responsibility, on the other hand, has a different meaning – it is an act towards emotional and volitional responsibility, similarly to the awareness of responsibility, the assumption of responsibility and the attribution of responsibility to somebody. The awareness of responsibility gives rise to the sense of responsibility, which, in turn, is a condition for assuming responsibility (Filek, 1996, pp. 10–11).

Responsibility, is defined as a necessity, moral or legal obligation to answer for one's actions and face their consequences, and the obligation to compensate for the loss or damage inflicted on another person. The sense of responsibility, on the other hand, is about being aware of one's obligations and responsibilities. In other words, the sense of responsibility is

one's ability to recognise the consequences of one's own actions and to assume responsibility for these consequences. The sense of responsibility is inextricably linked to the possibility and ability to make independent decisions, while being aware of one's power to decide one's faith, and moral development, which is generally based on experiencing moral sentiments in the event of non-compliance with social standards. The sense of responsibility for one's own behaviour, internalised moral standards, a well-developed sense of the duty to hold onto moral values, are all important determinants of a mature personality.

Adam Węgrzecki (1995, pp. 19–25) argues that responsibility is most evident in interactions between people. To a large extent, it is up to the interacting people to build up the relationship between them, depending on how one person responds to the other, and also their words, gestures, requests and actions. What is necessary here is to accept the uniqueness of the other party and to recognise what is crucial for them. Respect for the values of another person, their protection and positive reactions in the event of these values' being threatened not only determine the responsibility of an individual, but also create the atmosphere of trust within the interaction. Interactions are always personal and unique in nature, as is one individual creative towards another. Responsibility brings interacting people together but also delineates the scope of creativity.

Krystyna Ostrowska defines the sense of responsibility as "the state of intellectual and emotional readiness for analysing one's actions against their potential moral, mental, social and physical consequences for both the individual concerned and their environment" (Ostrowska, 1998, p. 14). Therefore, the sense of responsibility is conditional on the actual acknowledgement of one's reality, knowledge of oneself and others, and in particular the knowledge of values, social standards and scope of one's duties. The individual must also be emotionally involved in their interpersonal relations, show general kindness towards other people and actively seek to manage their relationships with their environment.

Dietrich Von Hildebrand categorises the sense of responsibility as one of the fundamental moral attitudes beside reverence, faithfulness, veracity and goodness. He argues that the sense of responsibility is moral awakedness, or the ability to grasp moral values that can develop only in a morally conscious man. "Only the man with this consciousness of responsibility can justly appreciate the impact of the demands of the world of values (...). He possesses that awakedness toward the world of values which places his life under its sword of justice" (Hildebrand, 1982, p. 29). Hildebrand distinguishes between a responsible and irresponsible man on the basis of their respective answers to the question of whether they can clearly recognise and understand values and their connection to the situation. The deeper grasp of the situation in terms of its values, and the demands presented by these values, determine the ability of providing an adequate response to these values. A truly responsible person is reserved in their assessment of their cognitive capacity and tends to compare their views with those of the individuals they consider morally superior, i.e. ones they look up to (Hildebrand, 1982, pp. 28–35).

The sense of responsibility reflects the individual's view of their own responsibility, which shows that it is a concept that is relative to one's experiences, thoughts and beliefs. Consequently, the sense of responsibility determines the way an individual experiences responsibility for themselves, the degree of thoughtfulness put into making decisions in different situations, the effort put into constant self-improvement, and the drive for self-development. It is an inner readiness to protect the values the individual considers their own or under their care. To this end, the individual is ready to sacrifice other things, such as

time, energy, or pleasures, because they know that otherwise they will experience some mental discomfort and unpleasant emotional tension associated with the pangs of conscience and the sense of guilt or shame. However, in order for the sense of responsibility to manifest itself, the individual must first acknowledge these values and internalise them. Values can only be recognised as one's own when social norms are learned and internalised. Therefore, the sense of responsibility can be considered to have its source in emotional, cognitive and social/moral development. These development areas are inter-dependent and it is difficult to approach them separately (Mudrecka, 2010).

The sense of positive responsibility as a factor that prevents negative outcomes

On the basis of his overview of standpoints on the issue of responsibility taken by various philosophers over the last century, Jacek Filek (1996, p. 12) established that there were two primary approaches to responsibility. The first approach, developed earlier, defines responsibility in hindsight as one's responsibility for any harm done and implies the need to hold the individual accountable for their wrongdoings. This is known as negative responsibility. The second approach, which continues to attract more and more followers, is associated with thinking ahead and advocates the need for pursuing what is good. This is defined as positive responsibility.

Deliberations about positive responsibility were first made by Georg Picht (1981, pp. 231–262), who argued that the notion had Christian origins. He regarded responsibility as an eschatological concept, but postulated that its understanding be extended towards universal responsibility. The underlying claim, that is the point of departure for understanding responsibility, is that responsibility has dual nature, i.e. the individual can either be responsible for something or somebody, or before somebody, e.g. a customer, who is the source of responsibility. This is legal and moral responsibility, but Picht argues that there is more to this understanding of responsibility. He goes on to advocate the limitlessness of human responsibility for history as a whole. He defines history as all processes in time and events for which humans are responsible, as compared to neutral environmental processes that are beyond human control. Humans are responsible before themselves, their conscience and their mind, but also “vis-a-vis history”. We are accountable for our actions and their consequences, or, in other words, for the past, the present and the future. Picht defines this universal human responsibility as accountability for the development of science and technology, and the condition of the natural environment, which is the basis for human existence. “Human responsibility goes as far as human capacity” (Picht, p. 251). And it seems that human capacity is limitless, or at least humans can be considered as continuously redefining what is possible for them, and responsibility should follow these changes. A responsible individual is one who is competent, but in addition to this specific responsibility there is also potential responsibility, under which each intelligent human is responsible for recognising their future tasks and constantly extending their competence.

Consequently, the sense of positive responsibility is conducive to thinking about the future, which, in turn, expands the individual's temporal perspective. The sense of positive responsibility helps recognise values, since it forces the individual to make conscious choices and to ask themselves questions about what is the most important in life.

This, in turn, makes people realise that the purpose of life is to go beyond one's individual needs and selfish goals – it shows that humanity is about being involved in the world as a whole and actively changing it to make it better and more human-friendly, which requires creative effort. The individual is then no longer a leaf on the wind but the maker of his own destiny, they go beyond being a mere product of some random external forces. Their choices are not motivated solely by the fear of punishment and the avoidance of negative consequences, but rather their commitment to doing good. The sense of responsibility understood this way is the source of self-discipline, conscious self-control, and human dignity, and the acknowledgement of the importance of each individual act. It is a framework made up of many skills and cognitive characteristics. Let me now list and describe those I consider the most relevant.

Since responsibility is inseparably linked to freedom, the way people understand and exercise freedom also determines their sense of responsibility. As a result of the economic and mental dependence on their parents, children and teenagers do not experience freedom in its mature form. They are on their way to freedom – one they will achieve by learning and developing their independence in respect of thinking and acting. Independence is manifested in the courage to be oneself (bravery) and to become a unique individual, which facilitates the search of different forms of expression for one's personality through the development of creativity. Bravery is associated with overcoming one's fears and anxieties, which restrict one's capacity to explore the external world. Healthy development is possible when children's need for safety is satisfied, as only then can they discover the world and participate in it on an independent basis. This creates a virtuous cycle, as it becomes easier for them to overcome fears, their sense of safety is heightened and independence and creativity improve. Independence is generally the ability to go beyond the accepted rules and standards of behaviour, to find solutions to novel problems, undertake attempts to avoid following the beaten track in favour of one's own, distinct solutions.

It is crucial for the development of the sense of positive responsibility to acknowledge one's power over one's destiny. On the basis of their own, unique experiences, individuals learn that they can influence the world around them. This realisation is associated with the locus of control. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that their actions are effective, which spurs them to action, contributes to improved functioning and conditions the sense of responsibility for the consequences of those actions. People with an external locus of control, on the other hand, believe they have no influence over their destiny and that the outcomes of their actions are the by-products of their luck, coincidence and fate, i.e. external factors that are beyond their control. These people are more likely to develop neurosis, have depressive mood and attempt suicides, while also maintaining greater interpersonal distance and avoiding interactions with other people. This belief about having no influence over the outcomes of one's actions leads to reduced motivation to changes one's behaviour. When such individuals fail to comply with a standard, they usually absolve themselves and lay the blame for their behaviour on their environment or unfavourable situation.

The ability that is essential for self-control is the one to postpone the fulfilment of one's needs. Unfortunately, it is common knowledge that some children, teenagers and even adults are characterised by the so-called "short-term perspective", which predisposes them to seeking immediate fulfilment of their needs. Education should, therefore, aim to "lengthen" this perspective and to teach how to successfully postpone the fulfilment of

one's needs. More primitive types of satisfaction must be processed into more complex ones, that are more valuable in moral terms, and the achievement of these goals must be gradually extended in time. The ability to postpone reactions gives the individual the time to analyse and reflect on the situation.

It is also vital for the development of one's sense of responsibility to be able to predict, or anticipate, the consequences of one's own actions. Teenagers can already think in terms of concepts, so they should not have problems with recognising cause-and-effect relationships and, based on their experiences, drawing conclusions regarding the potential consequences of their intended actions. This type of imagination allows the individual to anticipate potential punishment, which provides an opportunity to modify their plans. Through the appropriate assessment of one's own skills, capacities and competences, the individual can accept only such tasks that are not beyond their current capabilities and guarantee success. Otherwise, individuals expose themselves to negative consequences of their actions, even though sometimes their intentions are good.

Initially, I had assumed that the most important part of the sense of responsibility was to be aware of the consequences of one's actions. However, the study I conducted showed that the cognitive element of the sense of responsibility (the awareness of responsibility) is not as powerful as the emotional and volitional ones. In fact, the study established that juvenile delinquents were no different from teenagers without any criminal record when it comes to their awareness of responsibility. In view of this, the awareness of the consequences of one's actions is not sufficient a condition for the development of the sense of responsibility that would provide an effective tool for self-control to empower the individual to refrain from behaviour that is inconsistent with social standards (Mudrecka, 2010).

Reinforcing the sense of positive responsibility

Nathaniel Branden argues that the sense of happiness and satisfaction with one's life is facilitated by and conditional upon accepting responsibility in one's everyday life. "The abandonment of personal accountability makes self-esteem, as well as decent and benevolent social relationships, impossible. (...) If we are to have a world that works, we need a culture of accountability" (Branden, 1999, p. 13). Branden further claims that responsibility is key to success in any area of life (family, work) and is the source of joy and inner strength that empowers us to create ourselves, our identity and autonomy. Responsibility needs to be rooted in reality rather than in fantasy, so the primary condition for responsibility is to achieve such a level of consciousness that allows the differentiation between facts and wishes, hopes, fears and illusions. Therefore, Branden believes that independent thinking is the most important act of responsibility.

He goes on to explain that the lack of responsibility is usually the result of abandoning one's independent judgement and feelings, and accepting as reality what other people expect from us (in our subjective view), and also accepting the opinions of other people (generally those held in high esteem), rather than one's own. Our self-esteem is then completely dependent on other people and leads to the obsessive need for social acceptance. Branden refers to this state as "social metaphysics", and defines it as "the psychological syndrome that characterises an individual who holds the consciousnesses of other men, not objective reality, as his ultimate psycho-epistemological frame-of-reference" (Branden, p. 66). Such

thinking leads to conformism, neurosis, manipulation of others, violence and lust for power. When we relinquish ourselves and renounce our self, we disclaim responsibility and we are free to do evil.

Branden argues that a person cannot be unambiguously assessed as responsible or irresponsible, because life comprises so many aspects that they can act differently in each of them, i.e. in some responsibly while in others irresponsibly. A responsible life is about being responsible for the degree of consciousness one brings into their actions, as well as for their choices, decisions and acts, the satisfaction of their desires, the beliefs and values they adhere to in life, the way they manage their free time, choose their friends and acquaintances, and treat other people, for what they do with their feelings and emotions, and their own happiness, well-being and life in general (Branden, p. 88).

On the basis of his long practice as a psychotherapist, Branden has developed a therapeutic programme, which not only helps to learn responsibility but also builds self-esteem and allows people to find their purpose in life. This therapy is based on the efforts of patients themselves, who need to confront the reality that surrounds them, to understand themselves, their needs and beliefs, and to acknowledge that they always have a choice. Branden believes that young people are the most likely to learn responsibility, firstly, from adults, who set an example with their behaviour, and secondly, from parents and teachers, who expect responsible behaviour from them (Branden, 1999, pp. 181–182). Responsibility is always individual, and vice versa, without responsibility there can be no individualism. Individualism is not about doing whatever one likes, but about demanding respect for one's rights, provided that this does not affect the rights of other people. Therefore, individualism means having such interactions with other people that are based on the exchange of material and spiritual values. To exploit other people by treating them as a means to one's ends is the opposite of individualism. When someone refuses to acknowledge the rights of other people, they are in no position to demand that their rights be respected (Branden, 1999, pp. 202–203).

In order for children to be able to learn responsibility, they need to have the chance to behave responsibly, so they need to be provided with the opportunities to make independent decisions and experiencing their consequences themselves. This can be achieved by gradually lowering the degree of control, which informs the child, in a non-verbal way, that parents trust them and believe that the child can handle difficulties in life. As a result, the child develops confidence that they need, can and are able to solve their problems independently. Such experiences improve self-esteem and develop the sense of self-efficacy, which are prerequisite for success in adult life. Their knowledge of their skills and capabilities is broadened, which allows them to make appropriate choices and set achievable goals in life.

Foster W. Cline and Jim Fay (2011) emphasise that mistakes made by children are perfect opportunities for them to learn responsibility. Smart upbringing is all about allowing children to make mistakes, provided that these do not pose a risk to their safety. These authors claim that overprotective and excessively critical parents make it impossible for children to learn responsibility. Therefore, it is important to trust that children will solve their problems themselves, while focusing on their fortes, talents, virtues and skills. The sense of responsibility has its roots in positive self-esteem, which encourages children to believe that they will manage, both here and now, and in the future, thus solidifying their confidence and optimistic outlook on life.

Upbringing in the spirit of responsibility requires that children be provided with conditions conducive to the development of self-awareness, independent thinking, “healthy” individualism, self-control and self-esteem, i.e. the conditions that are usually recognised as crucial for the development of responsibility. It is far too common a view to see parents, or even teachers, try to raise children in a disciplined, punishment-based manner, which renders them thoughtlessly following the orders of their “superiors” and passively submissive. This type of upbringing is referred to as raising for submissiveness and obedience. Doliński argues that submissiveness leads directly to pinning responsibility on people in charge, or managers, who are higher in the social or professional hierarchy (Doliński, 2000, pp. 188–189).

In principle, parents want to raise “well-behaved children”, but if they understand this objective as raising obedient and well-disciplined children who are submissive to people in authority, they often make many mistakes, which make it impossible for children to develop the sense of responsibility. This is, in particular, characteristic of parents, who believe that the mere fact of being a father or a mother gives them unquestionable authority, as a result of which they demand respect from their children, regardless of how they themselves behave. If they achieve their goal, their children are weak-willed, servile, passive, and dependent on others, have no opinions of their own and unable to live their own lives, which prevents them from feeling responsible for themselves and their future. If, however, parents meet with some resistance on the part of the child, they resort to more and more severe punishment, which can cause children to rebel, might teach them violence and produce a sense of being done wrong, which hampers the experience of moral feelings. When children show their dissatisfaction, think “differently”, express their emotions “unconventionally”, are “too” independent in their behaviour, have their own, unique opinions and articulate them openly, they are considered by their parents as defiant, which annoys them even more and escalates negative reactions, including the withdrawal of love as a “punishment”, which often leads to the emotional bonds between the child and parents being broken. The consequences of this educational “drill” are very serious, since the opposite of submissiveness, i.e. independence, leads to the child’s becoming completely resistant to environmental pressure, refusing to accept any people in authority and limits, including their refusal to accept responsibility for themselves, advocating freedom without limits as their ultimate value. In such a situation, children’s growth is at a risk, as it is subject to deviant, or even pathological, phenomena.

Responsibility has a well-established position in moral education. A number of authors have emphasised the role of educators in the achievement of moral maturity by their students. On the basis of the systemic concept of humans, Wiesław W. Szczęsny (2001) argues that the overriding objective of moral upbringing is the pursuit of inner harmony and, at the same time, of harmony with other people and one’s environment. This harmony is conditional on the decisions people make in specific situations. Educational practices are focused on developing complex cognitive and evaluative structures, which is where inner acceptance of a specific system of values takes place, and which guides one’s behaviour through decision-making. Szczęsny suggests that, by shaping their students’ systems of moral values, educators can, and should, refer to the values included in human rights, which are the foundation of human interaction. In addition to this basic moral education, students should also be provided with opportunities to discuss such issues as truthfulness, earning of trust (faithfulness and trustworthiness), kindness (good will, doing no harm to

other people, respecting private property, charity), tolerance, decency (gratitude, responsibility). In fact, Szczęsny recognises responsibility as a precondition for decency. Moral education should advocate only such measures that provide peaceful solutions to social conflicts. Szczęsny goes on to formulate guidelines for increasing the autonomy of students, as it is necessary for them to experience their freedom responsibly (Szczęsny, p. 142). Szczęsny further argues that the notion of homeostasis, which underlies the systemic concept, is closely associated with social responsibility, i.e. the responsibility of all people for the world and its future. In other words, he refers to contemporary globalism and universalism, which, in turn, delineates other responsibilities faced by the moral education of the younger generation.

Family, where the basic socialisation processes take place, needs to be involved in developing the sense of responsibility among young people. In addition to creating appropriate existential conditions, it is vital to satisfy the essential mental needs of children. These are necessary, but not sufficient conditions. Krystyna Ostrowska argues that the successful development of a mature personality within the family environment requires i.a. “[...] systematic measures designed to make children independent during their adolescence. This involves children having their areas of activity constantly extended to provide them with opportunities to test their abilities, skills, and competences, and assume responsibility for the consequences of their actions” (Ostrowska, 2009, p. 23). Therefore, it is crucial to provide children with doable tasks, which allow them to not only learn different skills, but also experience what success is and see that active problem solving can give them satisfaction and a sense of a job well done, while also providing them with a sense of responsibility for the outcomes of their actions. The effectiveness of the task method applied is, to a large extent, dependent on whether the requirements we impose on children are reasonable in view of the circumstances. This is where families must be supported by educational institutions. Schools must provide conditions conducive to learning some basic rules of social life and constructive methods for solving interpersonal conflicts. It is important to engage young people in the social life of the school, or even local community, as it provides a practical opportunity for taking responsibility for oneself and for others.

Conclusions

To conclude, let me refer to the work of Kazimierz Obuchowski, whose life shows that a man can overcome all adversity even under the most difficult conditions. The development of the sense of responsibility is indispensable for achieving autonomy, which Obuchowski defines as a specific type of human independence vis-a-vis the world as a whole, which allows people to achieve their goals, which are set as a response to previous or anticipated events and manifest their aspirations in life (Obuchowski, 1985, pp. 75–98). Therefore, it is crucial to consider independence among teenagers not as an end in itself, but rather as a means to achieving such goals in life that provide a sense of purpose and meaning in their life. It is about achieving mental freedom, associated by Obuchowski with intent and always linked with responsibility and respect for the freedom of other people. By mentally distancing themselves from everything that can be objectified (even their own fears, pain, feelings of inferiority, or traumatic experiences), an intentional individual regains control over themselves and their environment (Obuchowski, 2000). The objective set by

Obuchowski for the development of personality is difficult to achieve but it is important to aim at changing one's way of thinking and assessing the reality, which prepares the ground for learning from one's experiences, drawing conclusions and adjusting one's responses to stimuli, and also constructively seeking purpose in life and mental distancing to achieve mental freedom. Indeed, by striving for changing oneself towards being good and loving other people (Obuchowski also claims that responsibility is the function of love considered globally), makes one more noble and protects them from pathologies.

Consequently, the sense of responsibility is an important asset that protects the individual against various threats, risky behaviour, and participation in the activities that can become harmful, even if only in the long term. However, the importance of the sense of responsibility is observed to be even greater in the domain of actions aimed at spreading good, as it drives self-improvement to improve one's own mental well-being, and, indirectly, also that of other people.

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Chapter 3

Sustainable development policy as a strategy for combating social exclusion, based on the example of unemployment

Łukasz Marczak, Stanisław Fel

ABSTRACT

The sustainable development policy as a strategy for combating unemployment is oriented towards socio-economic development, taking into consideration an ecology-based paradigm. It is aimed at achieving full employment by developing a competitive, efficient, innovative and knowledge-based market economy. This objective is to be attained through investing in the intellectual potential and education of employees, giving rise to shared values and culture. These will, in turn, result in lifestyles that embrace the supreme value of human life and the high value of natural environment.

Keywords: sustainable development, unemployment, Catholic social science

The potential of the socio-ethical principle systems is used to solve social problems that carry the risk of injustice of various kinds, leading to social exclusion. This article features an outline of the sustainable development strategy, the purpose of which is to combat social exclusion, as presented from the angle of the Catholic social science. Unemployment, as one of the factors triggering social exclusion, has been selected as the focus of this study. The potential of the underlying socio-ethical principles constitutes the starting point to the discussion. The sustainable development policy will be presented on the basis of the common good approach, as an extension of the sustainable development strategy of Poland, consistent with the long-term development plans of the European Union. The proposed sustainable development policy is the outcome of applying the method involving investigation, assessment and action.

Common good policy

The principle of the common good is one of the fundamental principles of the Catholic social science, the implementation of which requires a critical role to be played by the State. Any

community needs a certain order to jointly define and pursue its interests that entail developing shared values (Sutor, 1994). The structural framework of the society is developed by the State which is in charge, *inter alia*, of making use of the institutional capacities to ensure equal development opportunities to all individuals. Personal development is one of the primary objectives of every individual, which cannot be fulfilled without a set of shared values that cover all aspects of the social life (Piwowarski, 1993). They allow individuals to achieve their own level of excellence through attaining personal objectives. Personal development of individuals fosters the establishing and strengthening of the common good. The economy is one of the State policy areas where this becomes clearly visible.

The principal values of the society and the State are integrated with the socio-ethical principles, the implementation of which determines the solving of social injustice problems. According to Piwowarski, the common good principle is one of the underlying socio-ethical values, complementary to the principle of subsidiarity (Piwowarski, 1964). These two principles are the core of the socio-economic life as each individual contributes to the common good of the society, while at the same time being able to benefit from the State's assistance when encountering difficulties with attaining his/her personal objectives (Chwaszcz, Niewiadomska, Fel, Wiechetek & Palacz-Chrisidis, 2015). The social mechanism which involves both giving and taking is beneficial to individuals in the economic area, as they may count on the support of other communities and the State, especially when the labour market conditions are not conducive to an integral human development. The complementarity of the common good and subsidiarity principles is supplemented by the solidarity principle that secures the development of the common good and human beings through cooperation of individuals and social groups in various spheres of the socio-economic life (Piwowarski, 1993).

The common good can be realised to the largest extent in a democratic system, in which the society empowerment is reflected in the civic society and market economy areas. These conditions bring forth social activities that should, above all, follow a bottom-up approach to tackling socio-economic issues. Considering the problematic matters, policies based on the relevant socio-ethical principles are indispensable in all sectors of the State.

Sustainable development principle

In the context of the emerging social issues, new socio-economic principles are established (Piwowarski, 1993). As regards the ecology issue, Markus Vogt, a social ethicist from Munich, formulated an ethical proposal for the contemporary society architecture, based on the comprehensive principle of sustainable development. Although it refers mainly to environmental protection, Vogt argues that it is not limited to the ecological dimension but is closely harmonised with political actions in the socio-economic area to comply with the general social justice standard (Vogt, 1999). The principle in question generally entails:

- protecting human dignity by mutual integration, complementation and updating of the classic socio-economic principles,
- networking (establishing mutual interdependence) in the social, economic and ecological areas,

- ensuring social justice, not only in the intragenerational dimension, but especially in the intergenerational one, by offering bright development prospects to future generations (Vogt, 2009).

The sustainable development principle, once implemented, gives rise to the mechanisms of balancing the social, economic and ecological areas, with a view to creating the conditions conducive to human development in a healthy environment. Participatory democracy provides the most favourable socio-political background for the application of the principle in question (Vogt, 2008). Its ultimate objective is to protect the human right to live in an unpolluted environment.

The principle of sustainable development can be confronted with the system of principles developed by Piwowarski. In the light of the discussion on the need to recognise the new principle developed by Vogt as one of the classic socio-ethical principles, the viewpoint presented by Bernard Sutor is worth noting. He advocates that, given the progressing environment deterioration, the sustainable development principle is an extension of the common good principle, rather than the underlying principle equal to the three classical socio-ethical principles (Sutor, 2012). Sutor's opinion seems justified for two reasons. Firstly, Vogt views the common good as an organising principle and, similarly to Alois Baumgartner and Wilhelm Korff, assigns it to static society models (Vogt, 2009). Secondly, in the handbook of economic ethics dated 1999, Vogt puts sustainable development on a par with the principles of personalism, solidarity and subsidiarity, making no reference to the common good principle (Vogt, 1999; Sutor, 2012). Therefore, it seems that the sustainable development principle accurately complements the common good principle. At the same time, through a network-based integration with the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, it constitutes a specific and comprehensive principle that serves as a response to the problems of current and future generations.

An outline of the sustainable development idea was presented by Oswald von Nell-Breuning, who advocated the connection between the forward-looking economy and the need to make a rational use of natural resources. As the father of the currently popular sustainable development concept, he believed that this idea should be realised through society-rooted economic policies, entailing such actions to be taken by the State and other public law entities which would set activity areas for independent business entities, while also laying down the general framework requirements. Management tools compliant with the market mechanism, along with balanced economic and social policies, are thus the essence of sustainable development (Fel, 2007).

It is the State's duty to establish the economic policy strategy that would empower individuals in the society through employment. This is how social exclusion can be combated. Measures aimed at balancing the economic and social dimensions also serve the purpose of shaping lifestyles, based on which any activities resulting in environment deterioration are limited through validation of moral values. In the process of shaping the lifestyles which promote human life and environmental protection, the sustainable development principle becomes a tool of social justice in the intergenerational dimension.

Having acknowledged the connection between the common good policy and the sustainable development principle, the issue of unemployment, the spatial diversification of which increases the risk of social exclusion in some regions of Poland, will now be discussed.

Unemployment as a determinant of social exclusion

Most scholars view social exclusion as a dynamic, multi-dimensional and relation-oriented process that deprives an individual or social group of certain resources indispensable for participating in the social, economic and political life (Czapiński, 2014). Diversified forms of exclusion occur simultaneously and tend to accumulate in some areas. Social exclusion is said to proceed in stages. It usually begins with weakening bonds with the labour market and ends with withdrawing from the society (Arendt, 2009). In this respect, a strong position of an employee in the labour market is significant both for his/her personal development and for the economic growth. Unemployment, reflecting the wastage of human capital, is not socially accepted and puts a considerable burden on the State budget (Mazurek, 2001). For this reason, creating new jobs remains one of the major objectives of the national policies. Given the continuing emigration of Poles, this goal has not been accomplished yet.

Although the dynamic growth in unemployment, which had progressed in Poland since 2009, slowed down in recent years, the shortage of jobs has remained a serious problem. This study analyses this problem in the context of its diversification in terms of three indicators, i.e. the proportion of people aged up to 25, the proportion of people with no occupational experience, and the proportion of the long-term unemployed in the total number of registered unemployed people at the end of 2013 (*Territorial diversification of unemployment in Poland in 2013, 2014*). These indicators, concerning various voivodeships and districts, clearly point to the spatial diversification of unemployment in Poland. The highest risk of long-term unemployment and unemployment among persons aged up to 25 is faced by the residents of the eastern regions of Poland and the areas located at considerable distances from large urban agglomerations. A difficult situation in the labour market is still a disturbing issue, and so is its spatial diversification persisting despite falling unemployment. This diversification exerts a significant impact on economic development, which, in turn, translates into the degree of human capital development (*Territorial diversification of unemployment in Poland in 2013, 2014*).

Unemployment in the social, economic and ecological areas networking

Studies into social exclusion reveal strong correlations between the economic, social and ecological areas. Unemployment, especially the long-term one, leads to consumption exclusion, which, in turn, results in the failure to satisfy human needs and the emergence of poverty areas, characterised with the learned helplessness syndrome. The characteristic features of those areas include occupational passivity, which triggers both unwillingness to look for a job outside one's immediate place of residence and a low level of social activity. Limited access to education, coupled with inability to take part in qualification-raising courses, increases the risk of both unemployment and social exclusion. This not only has a negative effect on economic development and social participation, but also leads to the shaping of such lifestyles that do not take an adequate account of the values of human life and environment.

A higher risk of social exclusion in the eastern regions of Poland, and in the areas located at considerable distances from large urban agglomerations, gives rise to unequal chanc-

es of satisfying human needs. In the long run, it inhibits human capital development in those areas, as compared to the other regions in Poland.

Sustainable development policy

In view of the spatial diversification of the unemployment rate in Poland, the final part of the article deals with the political strategy of the State, oriented towards developing new tools for social inclusion, with the aim to provide equal employment opportunities throughout Poland.

So far, the policy of combating unemployment has mainly covered the socio-economic area, whereas a policy of sustainable development requires that the interests of future generations, which are hard to define, be taken into account in the context of socio-economic growth. Today they are mainly presented on the basis of an ecology-based paradigm, which finds confirmation in *The sustainable development strategy of Poland until 2025*. This political action programme focuses on raising qualifications to prevent unemployment and reflects the priorities of *Europe 2020*, a long-term strategy based on:

- creating knowledge and innovation-based economy,
- aiming at sustainable development assuming economic transformation towards reducing CO₂ emissions, and
- establishing a development model fostering economic, social and territorial cohesion through high employment (*Europe 2020*, 2010).

As regards the Catholic social science, the ecological paradigm is understood especially as the protection of human life and the human right to live in a clean environment (*Centesimus annus*, 1991). In view of this, the prevention of unemployment should also take into account the shaping of lifestyles that would adequately consider the values of human life and environment in which we live and work. In consequence of the crisis of moral values and environmental degradation, the need to promote ecological consciousness has become common (Mariański, 1992).

Prior to presenting the most important components of the sustainable development policy, it seems useful to outline the socio-historical context. For many years, the socialist system in Poland limited not only the social and economic empowerment, but also undermined the system of moral values shared by the society, by deforming the concept of a human being (Spieker, 1994). The reconstruction of the civic society by altering the mentality of functioning in the labour market, especially in the areas where unemployment rates are the highest, appears to be the current political priority of Poland. The national long-term policy should foster moral attitudes, behaviour patterns and positive values, such as self-reliance, diligence, courage and team work skills (Spieker, 1994). Prior to the systemic transformation in 1989, the monopoly of the Communist government precluded free business activities. Not until the collapse of communism and the introduction of a democratic system did the society become empowered and able to explore the most favourable conditions that let business entities enjoy an adequate share in the benefits provided by their activities.

This context gives rise to long-term measures taken within the framework of the sustainable development policy, aimed at altering the mentality behind finding one's own place in the labour market through lifelong learning. The Ministry of Economy advocates that raising one's occupational qualifications is still rather uncommon in Poland. In 2011–2013,

only 4.5% of occupationally-inactive people treated the lack of qualifications required by employers as a subjective reason for being unemployed. In the reference period, only 9.6% of people aged 25 or more undertook any activities aimed at raising their professional qualifications or gaining other skills (*Poland 2014. Economic condition report*, 2014).

An adequate educational process, together with gaining and developing professional qualifications, appear fundamental to the sustainable development policy aimed at providing equal employment opportunities. Adapting educational policies to the labour market requirements, and undertaking measures aimed at preventing the factors that trigger labour market exclusion, is therefore an essential mechanism of the policy in question. To this end, the Labour Department has developed, *inter alia*, a forecasting tool for monitoring low- and high-demand occupations, and district labour offices have offered an array of supporting instruments to actively combat unemployment (*Poland 2014. Economic condition report*, 2014). The National Training Fund, set up in May 2014, is designed to help working individuals re-qualify or expand their knowledge and skills. In 2014–2015, special focus has been put on the lifelong learning opportunities for people above the age of 45. This is intended to mitigate the consequences of ill-adjusted qualifications and competencies of the unemployed by concluding tripartite training agreements between district governors, employers and training institutions. In addition, unemployed people aged up to 30 have been granted access to a training voucher system (*Act amending the Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions, and certain other Acts, of 14 March 2014*, *Journal of Laws 2014*).

The sustainable development policy cannot be implemented exclusively by a subsidy-based system as it does not inspire either individuals or social groups to remain active. The assistance of the State should focus, in particular, on providing opportunities for pursuing, and supporting various activities by individuals (*The sustainable development strategy of Poland until 2025*, 1999). It should help the unemployed find their own place in the labour market and keep it. Such socio-economic life conditions are optimal for reconstructing the Polish civic society and strengthening the national economy. A stable labour market and an innovative, knowledge-based economy should constitute the sustainable development policy objectives to be attained by the State. Investments in the educational process, innovations leading to industrial restructuring, and improved workflow, based on new management models, are crucial to the economic growth and stability of Poland.

Educational institutions are capable of efficiently implementing the objective related to disseminating the core values and altering the ways of thinking in a coherent socio-economic system. Reflected both in the political sphere and in the social teaching of the Church, ecological issues, that are gaining in importance, require not only that adequate programmes be developed, but also that incentives be provided to effect their implementation mechanisms. It appears important to introduce new, environmentally friendly technologies, but investments in human capital are even more crucial. When building ecological consciousness, a labour market-oriented educational process should continually stress that at the core of work is the individual and any green measures should only be taken for his/her sake (Mazurek, 2001).

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Chapter 4

The distribution of resources and the subjective quality of life in patients covered by a replacement therapy programme

Aleksandra Sadowska, Iwona Niewiadomska, Agnieszka Palacz-Chrisidis

ABSTRACT

This article explores relations between the distribution of resources and the subjective quality of life in patients covered by a replacement therapy programme.

In order to identify the relations, the article uses such research methods as the Conservation of Resources-Evaluation Questionnaire (COR-E) by S. Hobfoll, an abbreviated version of the Quality of Life assessment survey (WHOQOL-BREF), the Purpose in Life Test (PIL), the Maudsley Addiction Profile (MAP), and a survey developed by the author. The conducted study confirmed significant relationships between gains in personal resources and a deep sense of the quality of life. A strong relationship was also identified between feeling a high level of purpose in life and having a deep sense of the quality of life. Finally, it was established that persons who experience losses in their physical and mental health are characterised by having a low sense of the quality of life.

Keywords: resources, quality of life, subjective quality of life, replacement therapy

Theoretical background

The literature shows that the term “quality of life” first appeared in the United States after World War II and referred solely to the material well-being (Bańka, 1994, p. 19). Now the quality of life “is generally considered as a relation between the individual and the environment, human aspirations and abilities and ambient limitations” (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz, 2010, p. 103). The literature documents many attempts to define the quality of life from the points of view of various scientific disciplines, such as the medical sciences, psychology, pedagogy, and sociology. The quality of life is considered as a dynamic concept, as it undergoes transformations corresponding to those taking place within the indi-

vidual and his/her environment, as well as the relationship between these (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz, 2010, p. 103).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines the quality of life as “‘individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns”. The WHO describes the quality of life on the basis of physical health, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and one’s relationship to salient features of one’s environment (WHO, 1997, p. 1). The WHO considers the quality of life as a multifaceted concept. It relates to somatic health, mental functioning, level of independence, operation within the society and the environment, and one’s beliefs and convictions. This concept is used as a reference for new models. The theoretical model of the quality of life, created at the University of Washington in Seattle, refers to the WHO definition of the quality of life. This model assumes a specific nature of development and identifies certain areas of the quality of life that are relevant for this stage in life. These areas include self-awareness, social relations, one’s environment and general life satisfaction (Oleś, 2014, p. 36).

In Hobfoll’s view, resources are things that people value. These include objects, conditions, personality traits and energy, which are valued for their, direct or indirect, importance for survival, or which are used to obtain material resources necessary for survival. The main idea behind Hobfoll’s Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory is that people seek to obtain, maintain, retain and protect what is important and valuable to them. Using this main idea, its author formulated two main rules and several implications. The fundamental rule is that any loss of resources is much more prominent than any gain in the same. In other words, given the same degree of loss and gain, the impact of the loss will be much stronger. The second rule states that people need to invest their resources in order not to lose them, and to compensate for any losses and obtain new resources. In the COR Theory, resources are the main characteristic that governs the experience of stress. Resource expenditure can involve their direct investment or risk. It can take place directly or by substitution. Resource investment can support compensation for loss or provide security against possible loss, or it can help to obtain the same or other resources (Hobfoll, 2006, pp. 70–103).

Replacement therapy programmes are based on the damage mitigation policy (Habrata, Steinbarth-Chmielewska & Baran-Furga, 2013, p. 44). Addiction inflicts damage across all areas of the affected individual’s life. Damage reduction is a humanistic and pragmatic approach designed to contain any individual and social damage connected with the use of intoxicants. This pragmatic approach emphasises that the elimination of loss caused as a result of drug use is easier to achieve than abstinence. The humanistic approach stresses the respect for human rights and the dignity of people covered by such programmes. Damage reduction focuses on the losses suffered through the use of psychoactive drugs (Sobeyko, 2008, p. 120). Replacement therapy for opiate addicts involves the administration of opioid receptor antagonists whose effects on receptors are similar to those produced by opiates but which have much more beneficial pharmacological and pharmaceutical properties, i.e. long-lasting effects that allow the substance to be used once a day, oral administration, and chemical and biological purity (Habrata, 2008, p. 14). When substitutes are used without any specific therapy termination date, this is referred to as replacement therapy in its strict sense. Sometimes, long-lasting replacement therapy results in a long-term gradual dose reduction, and, in rare cases, in coming off the drug completely. Replacement therapy

is based on the administration of drugs that are antagonist (e.g. methadone) or partially antagonist (buprenorphine preparations) in relation to opioid receptors (Habratt et al., 2013, pp. 45–46).

The objective of this study was to identify the relations between:

- perceiving gains in personal resources and having a keen sense of the quality of life in persons covered by replacement therapy programmes,
- feeling a high level of purpose in life and having a deep sense of the quality of life in persons undergoing replacement therapy,
- experiencing losses in physical health and having a low sense of the quality of life in methadone programme participants,
- feeling a spiral of loss in one's mental functioning and having a low sense of the quality of life in patients covered by methadone therapy.

Methodology

This study uses four questionnaire-based research methods and an own survey. In order to test the variable, i.e. the distribution of resources, the study uses the Conservation of Resources-Evaluation Questionnaire (COR-E) developed by S. Hobfoll on the basis of the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR). It is a tool used to measure resource management. The Questionnaire comprises a list of seventy four resources. Subjects assess each of these against three aspects, i.e. the individual significance of the resources, their loss over the last six months, and their gain over the past six months. These seventy four resources include four major groups, i.e. material resources (11), personal resources (21), condition resources (25) and energy resources (17). Subjects provide their answers using a five-point scale. This method shows satisfactory psychometric performance. Its internal consistency is higher than 0.7. Both the scale as a whole, and its subscales, are characterised by high coherence (Bartczuk, 2010, pp. 59–60).

The abbreviated version of the Quality of Life assessment survey was used to determine the personal evaluation of one's quality of life. The survey includes twenty six questions, and answers are provided using a five-point scale. Subjects assess their functioning over the past four weeks (Kalinowski, Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 30). This tool evaluates the overall quality of life by showing the subjects' attitudes towards a number of aspects of their lives, grouped into four areas, i.e. somatic health, mental functioning, social functioning, and the environment (Chwaszcz, Niewiadomska, Fel, Wiechetek & Palacz-Chrisidis, 2015, p. 195). This method includes two variables, namely satisfaction with one's health and satisfaction with one's life, which are analysed separately. This questionnaire is a reliable instrument, with Cronbach's α coefficient for measurements ranging from 0.54 to 0.91, and for the scale as a whole 0.92 (healthy individuals) and 0.95 (sick individuals) (Kalinowski et al., 2010, p. 30).

In addition, the study investigates how keen is the sense of the purpose in life in its subjects. To do so, it uses the Purpose in Life Test, as designed by J.C. Crumbaugh and L.T. Maholick, who attempted to capture the sense of purpose in life, or lack thereof, in quantitative terms. This method comprises three parts, marked A, B and C. Part A includes twenty statements, which are assessed by subjects using a seven-point scale. Part B includes thirteen open-ended sentences that are to be completed by subjects. Part C encourages

open answers to questions regarding one's goals, ambitions and desires in life. Only part A is subject to quantitative interpretation. Other parts undergo qualitative assessment. Its Spearman-Brown reliability index is 0.90. It is important to note that the norms provided for the Purpose in Life Test are general, i.e. these are not differentiated in terms of age and social environment. Moreover, the scale is not standardised in Poland (Popielski, 1987, pp. 242–247).

In order to determine the frequency of psychoactive drug use and emotional, mental and physical symptom experience, the study uses the Maudsley Addiction Profile (MAP). It is an interview used to monitor the outcomes of patient treatment. It can identify problems that occur in the domains such as the type of the psychoactive substances used, health risk behaviour, psychical and psychological health, and personal/social functioning, where relationship conflicts, employment, and crime are measured (Hornowska, 2006, pp. 9–11). For the purposes of this study, only the part concerning the frequency of drug use was employed. The subjects were asked to specify, using a five-point scale (1-never, 5-very often), how often they used the following substances: alcohol, heroin, methadone, cocaine (crack), amphetamine, ecstasy, cannabis, sedatives/hypnotics, hallucinogens, or other substances outside the list. The study also used the part concerning one's health status, where the subjects also used the five-point scale to describe the frequency of problems with their physical and mental health. The MAP questionnaire shows satisfactory psychometric performance. It is a reliable tool for collecting patient data (with its correlation ratio ranging from 0.68 to 0.98). The MAP is also an accurate method for gathering information on the frequency of psychoactive drug use and any co-existing personal and social consequences (Hornowska, 2006, pp. 12–13).

This socio-demographic data was collected using a survey developed as a structured interview which includes 14 questions on socio-demographics data, social status, professional status, financial and economic situation, history of psychoactive drug use, and participation in substitution programmes. The data obtained on the basis of the survey were used to characterise the group and to determine the psycho-social resources of the sample population.

The study included 31 patients (32.3% women and 67.7% men) covered by a replacement therapy programme run by the Addiction Treatment Centre, Independent Healthcare Facility (OLU SZOZ) in Lublin. The average age of the subjects was just about 42 years. The highest percentage of subjects were persons with middle (35.5%) or primary (29%) education. A considerable majority of the subjects lived in towns with 20.000 – 100.000 residents. As many as 58.1% respondents were single. The highest percentage were pensioners (54.8%). In terms of their residential situation, the highest percentage of the sample population lived with their parents (32.3%). As many as 22.6% lived with their own families. Out of 31 subjects, 16 evaluated their financial situation as average, 14 as bad, and one person did not provide any answer. The average time of participation in a replacement therapy in the sample group was nearly 9 years (8.94). The average period of using psychoactive drugs, counting from the initiation, was 21 years. The averaged dose of the substitute used in the sample group was 87.40 mg (the smallest dose was 30 mg, and the biggest equalled 130 mg). Nearly all subjects (93.5%) had their substitution drug dose maintained constant. When asked about their plans to withdraw from treatment, a substantial majority of respondents said they did not want to discontinue replacement therapy (61.3%). The study also identified the variety of treatment forms and combinations, as undertaken

by the subjects. All subjects underwent detoxification treatment at least once in their life. As well as having undergone detoxification in hospital, seven subjects had participated in outpatient therapy. Four subjects underwent treatment that combined short-term hospital therapy, outpatient therapy and detoxification. The sample population generally used methadone due to their participation in a replacement therapy. The second most popular drugs were sedatives/hypnotics. The patients also reported frequent use of alcohol and cannabis. Other, non-listed substances, included suboxone and mephedrone. In order to describe the sample group better, the study used the syndromes identified in the Questionnaire for diagnosing the psycho-physical condition of people undergoing readaptation. The questionnaire was based on Part II of the MAP method developed by J. Mardsen, G. Gossop, D. Steward and D. Best.

Study findings

The data in Table 1. shows that replacement therapy programme patients are most likely to experience depression syndromes, which include the sense of hopelessness towards the future, the sense of low self-esteem, the sense of solitude, lack of interest in anything, the experience of persistent sadness, unwillingness to engage in any activity and problems with concentration. The second most popular syndrome in methadone treatment recipients were physical issues, such as muscle, chest, joint and bone pain, numbing/tingling sensations, difficulty breathing, chills/cold or heat flushes and nausea. The study shows that the surveyed population was the least likely to experience psychotic symptoms such as hearing strange noises, deliberate self-harm, illusions and visions, suicidal thoughts and attempts, and the sense of being followed or observed.

In order to test the first hypothesis, the relationship between the perceived gains in personal resources and subjective quality of life was subject to statistical analysis.

Table 1 *Correlations between the perceived gains in personal resources and subjective quality of life*

WHOQOL-BREF	Conservation of Resources-Evaluation Questionnaire	
	Personal resources (gain)	
	Spearman's rho	$p \leq$
Physical health	.636**	.000
Psychological domain	.536**	.002
Social relations	.448*	.011
Environment	.428*	.016
Satisfaction with one's health	.319	.080
Satisfaction with one's life	.311	.089

WHOQOL-BREF – an abbreviated version of the Quality of Life assessment survey

$p \leq$ – significance (two-tailed)

** – correlation significant at 0.01 (two-tailed)

* – correlation significant at 0.05 (two-tailed)

Considering the data shown in the Table 1., the first hypothesis, which assumed that perceiving gains in personal resources significantly correlated with keen sense of the quality of life in persons covered by replacement therapy programmes, was partially confirmed. The relationship established on the basis of the study supports the thesis that gains perceived by replacement therapy patients in their personal resources translate into a high quality of life in terms of their physical and mental health, and social interactions and environment. Perceived gains in personal resources mean that an individual can experience gains in the areas such as their sense of success in life, sense of being proud of themselves, the achievement of their objectives, hope, sense of having influence over their future success, not settling into routine, sense of optimism and humour, sense of having control over their life, the ability of good communication, etc. Persons who experience gains in personal resources are likely to function better in their everyday lives. In fact, they are characterised by greater energy and mobility. They are able to assess their sleep, rest, and ability to work better (the physical health subscale). They can experience greater satisfaction with the way they look and with the image of their bodies. They are likely to function better in cognitive (thinking, learning, memory, attention) and emotional terms (experiencing positive emotions, sense of self-worth; the mental functioning subscale). They can establish and maintain satisfactory relationships with other people and experience stronger support (the social relations subscale). They might also tend to have a deeper sense of physical and mental safety and function better in their environment (the environment subscale).

In order to confirm the second hypothesis concerning the relationship between feeling a high level of purpose in life and having a deep sense of the quality of life, the variables were correlated using Spearman's rho.

Table 2 *Correlation between the sense of purpose in life and the sense of the quality of life*

<i>WHOQOL-BREF</i>	<i>Overall PIL result</i>	
	<i>Spearman's rho</i>	<i>p ≤</i>
Physical health	.769**	.000
Psychological domain	.532**	.002
Social relations	.617**	.000
Environment	.496**	.005
Satisfaction with one's health	.444*	.012
Satisfaction with one's life	.469**	.008

WHOQOL-BREF – an abbreviated version of the Quality of Life assessment survey

PIL – Purpose in Life Test

p ≤ – significance (two-tailed)

** – correlation significant at 0.01 (two-tailed)

* – correlation significant at 0.05 (two-tailed)

The findings presented in Table 2. allow the conclusion that the second hypothesis was confirmed in full. This suggests that persons who experience a high level of the sense of purpose in life, or, in other words, see their life as exciting, interesting, satisfactory and valuable, experience a deep sense of the quality of life in the domain of physical and men-

tal health, interpersonal relations, their environment, and satisfaction with their life and health. Persons who experience a high level of purpose in life tend to perceive themselves as full of life and enthusiastic. Generally, they have very clear goals and desires, and when they reflect on their lives, they usually find an explanation for their existence. They also see themselves as responsible people, who control, and are in charge of, their own life. Persons who experience a deep sense of purpose in life are likely to function better in their everyday lives. They are characterised by greater energy, and willingness and ability to work. They tend to experience pain, suffering and discomfort less frequently (the psychological health subscale). Persons who experience a deep sense of purpose in life can be more likely to function better in the psychical domain. They can have a better image of their own body and appearance. In addition, they tend to experience positive emotions towards themselves and others (the mental domain subscale) and take satisfaction from interactions with other people, and to receive support (social relations) more frequently. Persons who experience a deep sense of purpose in life can be more likely to function better in the mental and physical domains. They also tend to be more capable of obtaining information and acquiring skills (the environment subscale). They have a tendency to feel happy with their health and life.

The third hypothesis, which assumed that losses in physical health coexisted with low sense of the quality of life in methadone therapy programme participants, was tested by calculating Spearman's rho between the "physical issues" syndrome, identified on the basis of MAP items, and Quality of Life questionnaire subscales.

Table 3 Correlation between the "physical issues" syndrome and WHOQOL-BREF subscales

WHOQOL-BREF	The "physical issues" syndrome	
	Spearman's rho	<i>p</i> ≤
Social relations	-.454*	.012
Environment	-.260	.165
Satisfaction with one's health	-.432*	.017
Satisfaction with one's life	-.440*	.015

WHOQOL-BREF – an abbreviated version of the Quality of Life assessment survey

p ≤ – significance (two-tailed)

** – correlation significant at 0.05 (two-tailed)

Data shown in Table 3. indicate that the third hypothesis was confirmed in part. The statistical analysis corroborated the relation between the losses in physical health and the low sense of the quality of life. This hypothesis argued that persons who suffered losses in their physical health were those who experienced muscle, chest, joint, bone and stomach pain, numbing/tingling sensations, difficulty breathing, chills/cold or heat flushes and nausea. The presented information supports the thesis that persons who suffered losses in their psychological health can have difficulty in establishing and maintaining satisfactory interpersonal relations, receiving social support and engaging in sexual activity (the social relations subscale). Loss in physical health can also influence satisfaction with their health

and life. This hypothesis was subject to additional analyses to identify physical difficulties most often faced by replacement therapy programme patients. It was established that such patients usually experience fatigue, sleep disorders, shivers or heat or cold flushes. The rarest experiences among the subjects was numbing/convulsions and the loss of consciousness.

In order to verify the hypothesis that patients undergoing methadone therapy, feeling a spiral of loss in their mental functioning, also had a low sense of the quality of life, the variables were correlated and Spearman's rho was calculated. For findings, please see Table 4.

Table 4 *Correlations between the depression and psychotic syndromes, and the sense of the quality of life*

WHOQOL-BREF	MAP syndromes			
	Depression syndrome		Psychotic symptoms	
	Spearman's rho	$p \leq$	Spearman's rho	$p \leq$
Social relations	-.425*	.017	-.515*	.003
Environment	-.360*	.047	-.208	.262
Satisfaction with one's health	-.349	.055	-.206	.266
Satisfaction with one's life	-.404*	.024	-.509**	.003

The assessment of the above data shows that the hypothesis was partially confirmed. There are statistically significant relationships between the depression syndrome experience and social relations, the environment and satisfaction with life, and between psychotic symptoms and social relations and satisfaction with life. In this study, depression syndrome means the experience of hopelessness towards the future, the sense of low self-esteem, the sense of solitude, lack of interest in anything, the experience of persistent sadness, unwillingness to engage in any activity and problems with concentration. Psychotic symptoms involve hearing strange noises, deliberate self-harm, illusions and visions, suicidal thoughts and attempts, and the sense of being followed or observed. The above-mentioned data shows that persons who experience depression syndromes tend to have difficulty in establishing social relations, receiving support and functioning in the sexual domain (the social relations subscale). Such persons can experience physical and mental risks in their environment (the environment subscale) and can have a tendency to feel unhappy with their lives. Those who experience psychotic symptoms can also have a tendency for poor functioning in the area of social relations and for feeling unhappy about their lives.

Summary

The obtained findings can close knowledge gaps in the literature on the subject. They can also serve as the basis for further exploration of the quality of life in the studies on chronic addiction or for relating the level of satisfaction with life to the process of treat-

ment. This study can be useful in high- and low-threshold therapies. It can also constitute the basis for developing individual and effective approaches to treatment and the involvement of patients in the therapy. Finally, the study can contribute to the wider application of replacement therapy in Poland, since, although its effectiveness is well documented, it continues to be less popular than outpatient or hospital-based treatment options.

The analyses and their findings regarding the distribution of resources in relation to the sense of the quality of life can be considered as a starting point for subsequent, more advanced research on a larger scale.

Nevertheless, the findings provide the basis for the following conclusions:

1. Patients, who experience gains in personal resources, can function better in the domain of their physical and mental health, social relations and their environment.
2. Persons covered by replacement therapy programmes, who experience a deep sense of purpose in life, tend to assess their quality of life and all its dimensions higher.
3. Methadone patients, who experience losses in their physical health, tend to struggle to cope in the domain of social relations. Moreover, they can experience lower satisfaction with their life and health.
4. Persons, who take part in replacement therapy and feel the spiral of loss in their mental functioning, can have difficulties in social interactions and in their environment. They can also have a tendency to feel less satisfied with their lives.

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Chapter 5

Distribution of resources and subjective quality of life among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery

Maria Klimek, Iwona Niewiadomska, Agnieszka Palacz-Chrisidis

ABSTRACT

World Health Organisation defines the quality of life as the “individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person’s physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment” (Chodkiewicz, 2012, p. 79). Resources can be defined as “those entities that either are centrally valued in their own right (e.g., self-esteem, close attachments, health, and inner peace) or act as a means to obtain centrally valued ends (e.g., money, social support, and credit)” (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 307). Resources are these things that individuals value, and include “objects, conditions, personal characteristics, and energies that are either themselves valued for survival, directly or indirectly, or that serve as a means of achieving these resources” (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 70).

Keywords: quality of life, distribution of resources, addiction, early stages of recovery

Theoretical background

World Health Organisation defines the quality of life as the “individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person’s physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment” (Chodkiewicz, 2012, p. 79). Resources can be defined as “those entities that either

are centrally valued in their own right (e.g., self-esteem, close attachments, health, and inner peace) or act as a means to obtain centrally valued ends (e.g., money, social support, and credit)” (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 307). Resources are these things that individuals value, and include “objects, conditions, personal characteristics, and energies that are either themselves valued for survival, directly or indirectly, or that serve as a means of achieving these resources” (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 70).

Methodology

The main objective of this study was to determine the relation between the distribution of resources and the perceived quality of life in drug addicts in early stages of recovery. The study was conducted between February and March 2015 in Kielce, Chęciny and Otwock, in hostels for persons who have completed psychoactive drug addiction therapy. The subjects were aged between 18 and 54. The study covered 40 persons, including 37 men and 3 women. Therefore, in order to make the group more uniform, the analysis covered only data related to male subjects.

Based on the examination of the literature on the subject and the findings on the subjective quality of life and the distribution of different resources in drug addicts, the following research question was formulated:

What is the relationship between the distribution of resources and the subjective quality of life among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery?

This research question, in turn, served as the basis for the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: Addicts in early stages of recovery show a significant positive relationship between gains in resources and high subjective quality of life.
- Hypothesis 2: Resource loss experienced by drug addicts in early stages of recovery shows significant positive correlation with poor subjective quality of life.
- Hypothesis 3: Substantial resource gains show significant positive relationship with high subjective quality of life in terms of somatic health in addicts.
- Hypothesis 4: Addicts in early stages of recovery show a significant positive relationship between gains in resources and high intensity of social interactions.
- Hypothesis 5: Resource loss experienced by addicts in early stages of recovery shows significant positive correlation with poor satisfaction with their health.
- Hypothesis 6: Addicts in early stages of recovery show a significant positive relationship between gains in resources and high quality of life in terms of environmental adjustment.

In order to address the research question and to test the aforementioned hypotheses, the study employed selected questionnaires.

COR-E Questionnaire by S. Hobfoll

The Conservation of Resources-Evaluation (COR-E) questionnaire is based, as the name suggests, on the Conservation of Resources theory, as developed by Steven Hobfoll. This tool is used to measure how 74 types of resources are managed (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 28).

The questionnaire identifies four main types of resources, namely:

- material resources (11),
- personal resources (21),
- condition resources (25), and
- energy resources (17) (Dudek, Koniarek & Szymczak, 2007, p. 322).

WHOQOL-Bref

The Quality of Life-Bref questionnaire (WHOQOL-Bref) was developed by the World Health Organisation on the basis of WHOQOL-100 (Basińska, 2005, p. 23). This study used the abbreviated version of the questionnaire that includes 26 questions. A separate analysis was carried out for 2 variables, including the satisfaction with one's life and the satisfaction with one's health. Answers are related to the last four weeks (Kalinowski et al., 2010, p. 30).

This method facilitates the assessment of the quality of life profile against four areas. These include the following:

- mental functioning
- physical health
- social relationships
- living environment (Kalinowski et al., 2010, p. 30).

MAP

The Maudsley Addiction Profile (MAP) was developed by J. Mardstena, G. Grossopa, D. Stewarda, D. Besta (Hornowska, 2006, p. 9).

This method makes it possible to evaluate individual functioning in the following dimensions:

- psychoactive drug use
- life-threatening behaviour
- physical and mental health
- individual and social functioning (Kalinowski et al., 2010, pp. 32–33; Hornowska, 2006, p. 9).

Items included in this tool determine the frequency of individual psychoactive drug use. In addition, MAP identifies the frequency of physical, emotional and psychological symptoms associated with the addiction.

On the basis of factor analysis and judge assessment, and in reference to part II of MAP, the study established three dimensions to determine the types of disorders that can appear in the group of people at risk of social exclusion, i.e.:

- physical problems,
- depressive syndrome, and
- psychotic symptoms (Chwaszcz, Niewiadomska, Fel, Wiechetek & Palacz-Chrisidis, 2015, pp. 191–193).

Personal data

Personal data for the qualitative analysis of the study was collected in a survey. The survey included 14 questions regarding the following:

- socio-demographic data – gender, age, education, marital status, and residence before the stay in the addiction treatment facility;
- family of origin – is it a two-parent or one-parent family, and if one-parent – which parent is it?
- drug addiction information – drug use initiation age, types of psychoactive drugs used, treatment commencement date, number of treatment attempts, forms of received treatment, period of treatment, time from the completion of the most recent treatment, and the length of stay in a hostel for addicts.

The statistical analysis of the collected data was made on the basis of the SPSS software. The findings obtained through computer analysis facilitated the verification of the formulated hypotheses. In order to establish correlations, and to identify the relations between the variables, the study used Spearman's rho. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient made it possible to determine the non-parametric relation between the tested variables in small groups (Francuz, Mackiewicz, 2005, p. 514).

Study findings

Relations between resource gains and the subjective quality of life among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery

Table 5 *Correlations between resource gains and the subjective quality of life in the examined group [N = 37]*

<i>Resource type</i>	<i>Life satisfaction</i>	
Resources (gains)	rho	0.221
	p-value	0.189
Material resources (gains)	rho	0.031
	p-value	0.854
Personal resources (gains)	rho	0.164
	p-value	0.333
Energy resources (gains)	rho	0.291
	p-value	0.080
Condition resources (gains)	rho	0.214
	p-value	0.203

rho – Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
p-value – significance level (two-tailed)

There is no significant relationship ($\rho = 0.221$; $p = 0.189$) between the experienced resource gains and the high subjective quality of life in the tested group (see Table 5.). Hypothesis 1 was not confirmed, which suggests the lack of relationship between the experienced gains and the high subjective quality of life in addicts in early stages of recovery. These findings can be due to the subjects' failure to understand the instructions, their overall fatigue, large number of questionnaires or the tested group being too small.

Relations between resource losses and the subjective quality of life among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery

Table 6 *Correlations between resource losses and the subjective quality of life in the examined group [N = 37]*

<i>Resource type</i>	<i>Life satisfaction</i>	
Resources (losses)	rho	0.024
	p-value	0.887
Material resources (losses)	rho	-0.199
	p-value	0.237
Personal resources (losses)	rho	0.138
	p-value	0.417
Energy resources (losses)	rho	-0.085
	p-value	0.618
Condition resources (losses)	rho	-0.060
	p-value	0.723

rho – Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
p-value – significance level (two-tailed)

The findings for this hypothesis show that there is no significant correlation ($\rho = 0.024$; $p = 0.887$) between the experienced resource losses and the low subjective quality of life in the tested group (see Table 6.). Hypothesis 2 was not supported, so no significant relationship can be confirmed between the experienced resource losses and the low subjective quality of life in addicts in early stages of recovery. This lack of relation can be the result of the subjects' failure to understand the instructions, their fatigue, large number of questionnaires or the tested group being too small.

Relations between resource gains and the subjective quality of life in terms of somatic health among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery

Table 7 *Correlations between resource gains and the subjective quality of life in terms of somatic health in the examined group [N = 37]*

<i>Resource type</i>	<i>Physical health</i>	
Resources (gains)	rho	0.452**
	p-value	0.005
Material resources (gains)	rho	0.150
	p-value	0.376
Personal resources (gains)	rho	0.447**
	p-value	0.006
Energy resources (gains)	rho	0.439**
	p-value	0.007
Condition resources (gains)	rho	0.424**
	p-value	0.009

** correlation significant at 0.01 (** p < 0.001)
rho – Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
p-value – significance level (two-tailed)

There are statistically significant relations between the experienced resource gains and the high subjective quality of life in terms of physical health (rho = 0.452; p = 0.005). There are positive correlations between gains experienced in personal resources (rho = 0.447; p = 0.006), energy resources (rho = 0.439; p = 0.007) and condition resources (rho = 0.424; p = 0.009) and the high subjective quality of life in terms of somatic health in the sample group (see Table 7). The strength of the established correlations between the variables is moderate.

The subjects who have experienced gains in different skills, abilities, personality traits (personal resources) tend to perceive high quality of life in relation to their own health. They are more likely to feel energetic, eager to engage in everyday activities and work, and less likely to experience different aches and pains or somatic ailments. Knowledge acquisition and financial profit (energy resources) are also related with decreased physical discomfort, being more energetic and less tired. Finding a job or enjoying improved health (condition resource gains) are connected with the individual being more inclined to take new actions with energy and feeling less tired or affected by physical ailments.

Relations between resource gains and the intensity of social interactions among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery

Table 8 *Correlations between resource gains and the intensity of social interactions in the examined group [N = 37]*

<i>Resource type</i>	<i>Social relationships</i>	
Resources (gains)	rho	0.339*
	p-value	0.033
Material resources (gains)	rho	0.125
	p-value	0.441
Personal resources (gains)	rho	0.406**
	p-value	0.009
Energy resources (gains)	rho	0.299
	p-value	0.061
Condition resources (gains)	rho	0.364*
	p-value	0.021

* correlation significant at 0.05

** correlation significant at 0.01

rho – Spearman's rank correlation coefficient

p-value – significance level (two-tailed)

There are positive relations between resource gains and the intensity of social interactions ($\rho = 0.339$; $p = 0.033$) among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery. Significant relations are also found in personal resources ($\rho = 0.406$; $p = 0.009$), where the strength of correlation is moderate, and in condition resources ($\rho = 0.364$; $p = 0.021$), where the strength of the relations between the tested variables can be considered low (see Table 8.).

Addicts who experienced gains in personal resources, i.e. in various skills, abilities or personality traits (such as self-efficacy, hope, social skills and professional qualifications) have a greater tendency for seeking interactions with other people, establishing new relationships and providing or seeking social support. Gains in condition resources, such as finding permanent employment or enjoying an improvement in one's health, are also associated with the greater intensity of social interactions in addicts in early stages of recovery. These individuals are more likely to build relationships with other people and seek or provide social support.

Relations between resource losses and satisfaction with their health among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery

Table 9 *Correlations between resource losses and satisfaction with one's health in the examined group [N = 37]*

<i>Resource type</i>	<i>Satisfaction with one's health</i>	
Resources (losses)	rho	-0.349*
	p-value	0.027
Material resources (losses)	rho	-0.19
	p-value	0.241
Personal resources (losses)	rho	-0.322*
	p-value	0.043
Energy resources (losses)	rho	-0.412**
	p-value	0.008
Condition resources (losses)	rho	-0.312
	p-value	0.05

* correlation significant at 0.05

** correlation significant at 0.01

rho – Spearman's rank correlation coefficient

p-value – significance level (two-tailed)

There are statistically significant relations between experiencing resource losses and feeling satisfied with one's health ($\rho = -0.349$; $p = 0.027$). This correlation is negative, which means that the greater the experienced resource loss, the lower the satisfaction with their health among drug addicts in early stages of recovery. The experience of losses in personal resources shows significant relations with low satisfaction with their health in addicts ($\rho = -0.322$; $p = 0.043$). The strength of this relation is poor. Losses experienced in energy resources also show significant correlation with low satisfaction with one's health ($\rho = -0.412$; $p = 0.008$), while the strength of this relation is moderate (see Table 9).

Subjects who have experienced losses in their skills or personality traits, such as optimism, sense of self-efficacy, leadership skills or social skills (personal resources), see their health in a negative light. Addicts who have lost the energy resources they consider important, such as money, knowledge and creditworthiness, have greater tendency to perceive their health in negative terms and, consequently, to be greatly dissatisfied with it.

Table 10 *Correlations between somatic and mental symptoms and satisfaction with one's health in the examined group [N = 37]*

<i>Symptoms</i>		<i>Satisfaction with one's health</i>
Somatic symptoms	rho	-0.063
	p-value	0.710
Mental symptoms	rho	0.065
	p-value	0.704

rho – Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
p-value – significance level (two-tailed)

The presence of somatic and mental symptoms is understood as the experience of resource loss in the life of the subject. Based on the findings presented above, it can be concluded that there are no statistically significant relations between somatic symptoms and satisfaction with one's health (rho = -0.063; p = 0.710), nor are there between mental symptoms and satisfaction with one's health (rho = 0.065; p = 0.704) in the sample group (see Table 10.).

Table 11 *Correlations between the dimensions determining disorder types and satisfaction with one's health in the examined group [N = 37]*

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Satisfaction with one's health</i>	
Physical problems	rho	-0.195
	p-value	0.248
Depressive syndrome	rho	0.033
	p-value	0.848
Psychotic symptoms	rho	0.022
	p-value	0.896

rho – Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
p-value – significance level (two-tailed)

The analysis of the above-mentioned findings did not show any significant relations between satisfaction with one's health and physical problems (rho = -0.195; p = 0.248), depressive symptoms (rho = 0.033; p = 0.848) or psychotic symptoms (rho = 0.022; p = 0.896), which are considered as resource losses in drug addicts in early stages of recovery (see Table 11.).

***Relations between resource gains and environmental adjustment
among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery***

Table 12 *Correlations between resource gains and the quality of life in terms of environmental factors in the examined group [N = 37]*

<i>Resource type</i>	<i>Environment</i>	
Resources (gains)	rho	0.460**
	p-value	0.004
Material resources (gains)	rho	0.284
	p-value	0.088
Personal resources (gains)	rho	0.360*
	p-value	0.029
Energy resources (gains)	rho	0.398*
	p-value	0.015
Condition resources (gains)	rho	0.398*
	p-value	0.015

* correlation significant at 0.05
rho – Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient
p-value – significance level (two-tailed)

There are positive relations between resource gains and good adjustment to environmental conditions (rho = 0.460; p = 0.004) among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery. The strength of this relation is moderate. Positive relations were found in personal resources (rho = 0.360; p = 0.029), energy resources (rho = 0.398; p = 0.015) and condition resources (rho = 0.398; p = 0.015). The strength of these correlations is poor (see Table 12.).

Addicts who have acquired new abilities, skills or personality traits, have a tendency to see their everyday environment in positive terms and to feel well-adjusted to it. The experience of gains in resources, such as money or knowledge, is associated with the inclination for assessing health care, financial resources, physical environment, and one’s ability to acquire new skills and obtain new information, in positive terms. Individuals who have experienced some improvement in their health or have found a job (condition resources), have a greater tendency to consider their environment as safe, one that makes them feel free and provides opportunities for obtaining information; they are also more happy with their health care and financial standing.

Summary

The findings suggest that the distribution of resources shows a significant relation with the subjective quality of life among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery. Even though no significant correlation was established for the first two hypotheses, the subsequent hypotheses supported the existence of a relations between the tested variables. The distribution of resources plays a significant role in developing the subjective quality of

life in the sample group. In early stages of recovery, individuals experience both gains and losses in their resources. A high number of gains in various resources (personal, energy, condition) shows a significant relation with the high subjective quality of life in terms of one's somatic health, social relationships, and environmental adjustment. In turn, resource loss shows a significant relation with low satisfaction with their health among drug addicts in the early stages of recovery.

Nevertheless, these findings must be interpreted with care given the relatively low number of subjects. The employed methods can be used in further studies conducted with a greater number of subjects. The phenomena described in this paper need further exploration.

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