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Interdisciplinary approach

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ul. Franciszkańska 3/47
00-233 Warszawa

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Faith and reason in the unity of truth in the thought of st. Thomas Aquinas and John Paul II. On the XXV anniversary of the encyclical Fides et Ratio[1]

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Irena Grochowska[a]

[a] *Irena Grochowska, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6927-6772,*
Faculty of Christian Philosophy. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

Abstract: Both St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John Paul II regarded man's pursuit of truth as his vocation. He encouraged a bold trust in the use of reason in theology and a clear awareness of the limitations of reason. The fact that reason cannot prove faith does not render it powerless; on the contrary, Thomas provides evidence for unwavering confidence in the capacity of the believing reason. The call to seek faith and reason in unity with truth is not easy, as culture has seen deficiencies and errors regarding the truth about man, his faith, and the possibilities of knowledge that reach down to the very foundation. There is a continuous need to rediscover the meaning and purpose of human life and its values, through the belief in the possibility of truth attained through reason and through reasonable faith. Following in the footsteps of Thomas, John Paul II, in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, aims to inspire human love for the embrace of truth, which is not purely a theoretical goal but is essential for guiding one's life. The purpose of this article is to highlight various difficulties and solutions in the search for coherence between faith and reason and briefly signal the necessity of prior knowledge and application of metaphysical and anthropological theology. To achieve this goal, the thoughts of Saint Thomas, whose work constitutes a fundamental part of the Church's teaching, are presented, and for the reinforcement of Thomistic arguments, the content of Pope John Paul II's contemporary encyclical *Fides et Ratio* is utilized, which points to the writings of Thomas as helpful in the maturation of human knowledge toward full human wisdom. Another important message of the article is a better understanding of the issues discussed, which, when reinterpreted and from the abundance of content, appropriately justified, can regain their lost power. The structure of the article facilitates the analysis of the presented issue in the context of understanding integral anthropology.
Keywords: faith, reason, truth, unity, integrity.

1. Contemporary Background of Reflections on the Relationship between Faith and Science

Aquinas taught about the harmony of the unity of faith and reason but was aware of the threats regarding the relationship between faith and natural knowledge and the consequences of erroneous reasoning. Thomas Aquinas is also esteemed as a theologian and apologist of Christianity, seeking a rational connection to revealed truths based on Sacred Scripture. His thoughts on the relationship between faith and reason were acknowledged by St. John Paul II in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio*. Following in the footsteps of Thomas, John Paul II analyzed the connections between faith and reason, faith and science, encouraging people of science to creatively interpret and understand St. Thomas and his apologetic message. John Paul II, promoting creative, diligent scientific work, recognized the two most common anthropological errors, awareness and understanding of which can be helpful in interpreting various philosophical trends related to man and his actions. The first is emphasizing the self-sufficiency and creativity of man even in the realm of truth and goodness, and the second is depriving man of his most human faculties–knowledge of truth and discernment between good and evil (Zdybicka, 1995, p. 192).

1 Article in polish language: Wiara i rozum w jedności prawdy w myśli św. Tomasza z Akwinu i św Jana Pawła II. W XXV rocznicę ogłoszenia encykliki Fides et Ratio, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Groc.pdf

Modern times are characterized by a specific attitude towards science, where empirical approaches and factual scientific evidence are highly valued. This overemphasis on scientific evidence comes at the expense of other ways of knowledge and can lead to errors. There are truths accepted only through testimony that can be questioned scientifically and philosophically, but that doesn't make them less valuable. Debates questioning non-empirical methods influence thinking about the relationship between faith and reason. Religion is attributed to the heart, but it's surprising that the spiritual struggle concerns the mind. The belief that dogmas confine themselves to prejudices, while science leads to higher levels of knowledge, can give rise to numerous questions and objections regarding the conflict between faith and reason, faith and science. Reason is commonly reduced to science, based on experiments, thereby narrowing the concept of truth. Truth is increasingly associated with facts or information scientifically verified. In the minds of many, there is a conviction that an equal sign can be placed between reason and science. Similar opinions pertain to truth, often equated by many with a proposition verified by science. It is therefore worth pausing at Thomas's interpretation of truth, who, like Aristotle, linked truth to the act of cognition and agreement (adequacy), but the conclusions were reversed. For Aristotle, truth resulted from cognition, while for Thomas, cognition is the result of a truth inherent in things (Thomas, 2018, p. 168). According to Aquinas, truth is not a derivative of thought and cognition, but permeates and determines the entirety of being and is given to humans along with things. The being of things precedes the concept of truth, and knowledge is the result of some truth contained in things (Ibid., p. 284-285).[2]

The reduction of reason to science and scientific thinking and the perception of truth as what science says about the world represent a kind of ideology of scientism. Overrating science makes it an inaccurate interpreter in many cases and affects the organization of the world according to an excessive, imposed scheme that leads to rationalization. In such a case, where is the place for Christian faith, which, according to Thomas and John Paul II, should be reasonable? "The rationality of Christian faith fundamentally differs primarily from the rationality inherent in the sciences. While the latter is exclusively theoretical and epistemological in nature, the rationality of faith also encompasses practical aspects. Christian faith does not serve to satisfy human cognitive curiosity; rather, it is a way of being, aimed at attaining eschatological fulfillment" (Krokos, 2009, p. 55).

Continuing in this spirit, attention should be drawn to two fundamental points worth considering. Firstly, science is one thing, scientism is another. Visible trends of recent centuries develop a new understanding of the world, with knowledge supported by evidence. Science continually progresses, bringing benefits and insights into the natural world, but it is essential to remember its limitations. Scientific methods are not meant to understand everything; they answer specific questions in specific fields. Neither individual sciences nor all together can encompass everything. Modern science cannot answer whether God exists or what characteristics He has, what the meaning and purpose of life are because it is tailored to resolve issues in the natural world. Science doesn't provide ultimate moral resolutions; it may assist in constructing weapons but not in deciding when to use them. Many, especially young scientists, lean towards subjectivism as a good solution for the direction of scientific research. The secularization of education causes many researchers to be immersed in scientism without realizing that science is not the proper compass but one of the cognitive forms (Legge, 2016).

Secondly, reason is not identical to science, and truth is not confirmed solely by scientific means. There is a broader and deeper understanding of reason available to humans. According to Thomas, every person has the same nature and the ability to use the

2 St. Thomas writes about truth in the Disputed Questions on Truth: "Truth is found in the human or divine intellect (...) in other things, truth is found by reason of their relation to the intellect (...). Therefore, truth is in the divine intellect in a proper and primary sense, while in the human intellect, though in a proper sense, it is secondary. In things, truth is in an improper and secondary sense, as it exists only in relation to one of those two truths. Thus, the truth in the divine intellect is only one, and from it, numerous truths originate in the human intellect. The truths in things are numerous, just as the being of things" (Thomas Aquinas 2018, p. 51-52).

gift of reason. Man also has access to certain parts of God's light–"Blessed is the man who is exercised in wisdom and who reflects on her ways in his heart, and ponders her secrets" (Sirach 14:20-21) (John Paul II, 1998, [16]).

"Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth." People can learn to contemplate the truth using both "wings" of faith and reason. However, contemporary culture proposes their separation (John Paul II, 1998, [1]). There is a growing belief that one must choose between living as a fervent believer or as an intelligent and enlightened person. Narrowing the thinking about faith to a purely epistemological fact, accepting only what is evident, distorts the perception of reality and impoverishes spiritual life (Giertych 2012, s. 23). In the encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, John Paul II argues that reality analyzed through reason should be perceived and analyzed in a way that faith is not excluded from this process. Faith does not deprive man of autonomy but makes him aware that God reveals and acts in the events studied (Ibid, [16]).

As John Paul II wrote, St. Thomas was distinguished by the courage of truth, freedom of spirit, and intellectual honesty. It is crucial to remember a significant insight emphasized by John Paul II in the encyclical–the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of maturing human knowledge into full wisdom (Ibid, [43]). Despite the intuition emphasizing the wisdom descending from above, he reminded of other complementary forms of wisdom–philosophical wisdom based on the capacities of reason and theological wisdom that uses Revelation to explore the contents of faith to reach the mystery of God Himself (Ibid, [44]). According to John Paul II, the contemporary world and the Church need integral anthropology, which involves synthesizing philosophical truth with the truth of God's Revelation. In the encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, he speaks of man's vocation to seek truth that surpasses human understanding (John Paul II, 1998, [5]). Only the full truth about man can serve as the basis for the harmonious development of human morality (Zdybicka, 1999, p. 191-208).

2. Anthropology of St. Thomas Aquinas

Many theological concepts examining the Trinitarian God question the compatibility of the truth of Holy Scripture with metaphysical knowledge. If we accept this assumption, metaphysical analysis would complicate the theological understanding of God (Levering, 2016, p. 11). Levering, in his analysis of the alleged opposition between biblical and metaphysical ways of reflection, concludes, based on studies of the thought of St. Thomas, that conflict may arise when "theologians cease to recognize contemplation as the legitimate goal of Trinitarian theology. In such a case, metaphysics loses its role in contemplative union with the living God revealed in Holy Scripture" (ibid., p. 13).

For Thomas, anthropology stems from theology (*sacra doctrina*–sacred doctrine)[3] and is rooted in it. Any discourse on Christian faith by Aquinas always leads in the context of anthropological exposition. His anthropology is primarily based on explaining the faculties of the mind. In the discussion of faith and its reasonable acceptance, Thomas tends to refrain from turning only towards one's "self." Before delving into Thomas's specific concept of man, it is worthwhile to mention a few assumptions from metaphysics (philosophy of being) to better understand what and who man is according to Aquinas and what actions result from it. In his teachings on man, Thomas emphasized the importance of metaphysical knowledge. He believed that understanding and accepting the full truth about man is a necessary condition for understanding the existing being and the surrounding reality (John Paul II, 1998, [83]).

Tomas understands that the internal structure of all things is hidden from sensory experience but can be understood and explained through philosophical reflection on reality. According to St. Thomas, every being, regardless of human cognitive efforts, is characterized by the composition of essence and existence. Essence and existence are two aspects or facets of the same object, the same thing. Existence indicates

3 *Sacra D*octrina – according to Thomas, *sacra doctrina* is *scientia*. Thomas understands this term as similar to today's understanding of the concept of science (Thomas Aquinas, 1960, STh I, q.1, a3, corp, s.32).

whether a thing exists or is, while essence pertains to what it is, what something is, and its nature. Furthermore, every real being, both material and immaterial, is characterized by the composition of potency[4] (*potentia*) and actualization (*actus*). Potency and actualization are two constitutive factors of every being, both corporeal and spiritual. In this composition, essence fulfills the role of potency, and existence fulfills the role of actualization. While this reality cannot be experienced directly due to its internal complexity, it is derived from reflection on reality–a profound attempt to understand and explain what truly lies within things (Swieżawski, 1995, p.45). Thomas summarized that existence is the actualization of all actualizations, meaning that existence actualizes potencies, and potencies are actualized through existences. "Everything that is done, fulfilled in each thing is such thanks to existence" (ibid).

Only God is free from such composition; His essence is identical to existence. Everything outside of God is compounded of potency (the essence of a given thing) and the actualization of that potency – existence belonging to a given thing. All bodily and spiritual beings (except for God) are composed of essence and existence, but there is a difference in the composition of spiritual and bodily beings. In spiritual beings (angels), the essence is simple and uncompounded. In bodily beings, the essence is composed of potency (matter) and actualization (form). Thomas accepted such composition to justify the existence of diverse things and to demonstrate the difference between real things and creations of the human mind (Swieżawski, 1995, p. 42-45). Thus, in knowable sensory bodily beings, there is a double complexity[5]. The first is the complexity of essence and existence, and the second, within essence, is the complexity of potency (matter) and actualization (form). Potency requires a brief explanation, as it is a kind of potentiality to be a body (extended thing) that will occupy space, be quantitatively determined, and composed of elements. The concept of matter as potentiality in Thomas's time had nothing to do with matter as a substance or a physical thing. Potency is something that cannot exist on its own and is in potentiality to be an extended thing (e.g., a body). What can actualize potency, give it shape, is referred to in metaphysical language as form. Matter and form are thus the constitutive elements of the essence of material beings, including, of course, humans (Swieżawski, 1995, p. 82-83).

Metaphysical considerations may seem challenging, but it is worth undertaking them to understand the fundamental foundations of Thomas's concept of man. None of the bodily beings can be pure matter or pure form; rather, they are a composition of these two elements, forming a distinct unity and whole, each being a separate substance. Thomas lists five degrees of perfection for all beings, with humans situated at the highest level. In the real world, all living entities can be divided into two kingdoms: the kingdom of natural beings and the products (Thomas, 1986, p. 13). Apart from this division, there is nothing in the material world. When you look closely, there are not many natural beings; rather, there are creations. The unity that characterizes creations is bestowed by living organisms (from animals to humans), so it does not arise from the nature of things. Thomas emphasizes the existence of natural beings and points out that even the smallest of them, displaying even primitive life, unquestionably has greater value than entire masses of manufactured matter. Similarly, Thomas emphasizes that the manifestation of sensory knowledge surpasses biological organisms that do not exhibit such cognition. Furthermore, even one act of intellectual knowledge and the act of free will that characterize humans are infinitely more valuable than everything that occurs at lower levels. This line of reasoning leads Thomas to the consideration of the supernatural and the order of grace. "One act performed in a state of grace is infinitely more valuable than everything that takes place in the order of nature" (Swieżawski, 1995, p. 87).

4 In every, even the smallest child, there is the potentiality (*potentia*) to develop into an adult, according to Thomas; it is the actual power inherent in things, a real possibility of becoming something that one is not yet. This potentiality actualizes itself in stages (Swieżawski, 1995, p. 43).

5 Tomas of Aquinas, in addition to the compositions of being from matter and form, substance and accident, adds the composition of essence and existence (Swieżawski, 1995, p. 42-43).

Moving on to the explanation of man, it must be emphasized once again that there are only beings composed of matter and form, and matter cannot be actualized without form. There is no bodily being that is pure matter or pure form. All composite beings create some separate unity; however, Thomas emphasizes that true unity is only in God, and all other beings are increasingly less perfect and of varying degrees of perfection, indicating some lack. Yet, all beings reflect the perfection of God[6] (Swieżawski, 1995, p. 84).

After this introduction, it is necessary to emphasize that Thomas's thesis stating the presence of one shaping form in each natural substance has its translation into the concept of man. Therefore, this metaphysical introduction was essential to better understand the Christian understanding of God and the world. In every being (substance), there is one substantial form (actualization) shaping potency (matter). According to Aquinas, "the actualization is determined by what each thing is in each case. Each specific thing is not pure actualization, but actualization of a particular kind" (Sokolowski, 2015, p. 83).

In living beings and, of course, in man, the substantial form is called the soul[7]. "The human soul is a spiritual substance, but being a spiritual substance, it is also the form of the human body" (Thomas, 1998, p. 75). According to Thomas, wherever there is life, there is a soul shaping a specific being[8]. The soul is the principle of life, admittedly diversified at different levels, but it always serves as the form shaping the entire being. The human soul is primarily spiritual and rational. The soul is not a person; the whole human is a person. Thomas presents the human soul, which is the form of the body, as an indestructible intellect. "After the destruction of the body, what makes it a form is not destroyed in the soul, but it only ceases to be in act" (Thomas, 2023, p. 221).

In an existing being, the essence of truth is formally actualized. Therefore, truth gives the being the conformity of things with the intellect, and only from this proportionality results the knowledge of things (Thomas, 2018, p. 285).

3. Faith as a theological and intellectual virtue

Thomas delved deeply into revealed truths, recognizing the complementarity of "philosophical wisdom, based on reason's ability to investigate reality within the limits set by its nature, and theological wisdom, based on revelation, examining the contents of faith and reaching the mystery of God himself" (John Paul II, 1998, [44]). Aquinas emphasizes the necessity of theology (*sacra doctrina*) alongside philosophy. It is crucial for reason to maintain the rationality of faith. The object of faith is God, and a science based on God's revelation leads to the salvation of man. Philosophical inquiry cannot solve the mystery of salvation because the truths necessary for salvation surpass the cognitive abilities of reason, and some, although knowable, require arduous efforts and the adaptation of thinkers' minds to such inquiries[9] (Thomas Aquinas, 1960, STh I, q.1, a.1).

6 Thomas Aquinas enumerates five fundamental types of material beings existing in and around our world. Although these degrees correspond to the contemporary level of physical and natural knowledge, they may still express degrees of perfection among material beings. According to Thomas, these degrees of perfection are: 1. The smallest, invisible, imperceptible particles (*corpora elementaria*). 2. Bodies formed from these smallest elements in the inanimate world. Such beings, inorganic compounds that constitute a self-contained whole and are the basis of their specific properties, Aristotle called substances. 3. The next degrees are living bodies. These are plants. 4. Animals begin where sensory cognition appears (it is worth noting, and Thomas also emphasizes this, that the boundary between the plant and animal worlds is often difficult to establish). 5. The fifth degree of material beings in the living world is humans (Swieżawski, 1995, pp. 84-85).

7 This is an important thesis of Thomas, as it explains that it is not as commonly thought, that the form adds itself to the already shaped substance (Swieżawski, 1995, p. 88).

8 It is worth emphasizing again that the soul is not a substance that descends into the body at some point. Thomas explicitly highlights that the soul constitutes the body (Swieżawski, 1995, p. 89).

9 At this point, one could consider the distinctions between *revelata* and *revelabilia*. Among the revealed truths necessary for salvation, some can be reached through natural reason, but it is beneficial that they have been revealed–these truths Thomas calls *revelabilia* (from *revelare*–to reveal). These are truths, as Thomas confirms, that should be but are not necessarily revealed. On the other hand, *revelata* refers to truths that cannot be reached without revelation, such as the Incarnation, the Holy Trinity, and others (Swieżawski 1995, p.35)..

Faith, as a supernatural gift of God, is simultaneously a conscious and free human act (CCC 179, 180). Thomas connects faith with two gifts of the Holy Spirit–understanding and knowledge. Appealing to faith is an attempt to understand what God says, especially about revealed reality. Faith is the proper understanding of God's revelation. As Thomas claims, it is the first necessary thing for a Christian, a personal form of knowing God. "It is a spiritual place where human ignorance connects with divine knowledge" (Torrell, 2003, p. 21). The truth of Christian faith surpasses the powers of reason, but truths known by natural reason must be in agreement with revealed truths. Thomas argues that any statement derived from the natural abilities of reason that contradicts revealed truth can be considered true. The emergence of contradiction indicates erroneously drawn conclusions (Thomas Aquinas, 2003, ScG I, p. 31). According to Aquinas, "faith is a power of the mind that kindles eternal life in us and makes the intellect assent to what is not obvious" (Thomas Aquinas, 1960, STh II-II, q.4, a.1).

St. Thomas affirms the reasonableness of faith and presents it as an act of reason, which, under the influence of the will and moved by God's grace, adheres to the conviction of God's truth (Thomas Aquinas, 1960, STh II, q.2, a.9). In examining faith, which is based on God's truthfulness as a convincing motive and is a way of understanding Him, Thomas enumerated its elements worth recalling: the object of faith (the object of faith is what we believe; we can distinguish the formal level–trust and the material level–*credo*. Trust in God is the common denominator), the act of faith, and the effectiveness of faith (Thomas Aquinas, 1960, STh II, q.1, a.1, co).

4. Reason and intellect – the cognitive faculties of man

All humans have the desire to know the truth about the world. In the Middle Ages, during Thomas's time, two opposing tendencies related to knowledge and action emerged. The first is the revival of the desire to understand the Gospel, and the second is the realization of the research passion of the human mind (Włodek, 2007, p. 6).

Human faculties are recognizable in the actions of humans. St. Thomas's anthropology largely relies on explaining the actions of man–both cognitive and appetitive.

As a being in a body, capable of quantitative determination and composed of parts, man can transition from images to concepts. This transition occurs through abstraction, by abstracting images from the representations residing in sensory memory. "The active intellect, as Aquinas terms it, is the agent responsible for these transformations, and the potential intellect, according to St. Thomas, generates the concept" (Swieżawski, 1995, p. 142). The active intellect transforms sensory images into concepts. An image is a tool, a product of sensory knowledge taken over by the potential intellect. The illuminating factor, the inner light that acts like everything thanks to God's light, is the tiny light of the active intellect (*parvum lumen*) (Swieżawski, 1995, p. 141). Aquinas believes that both the potential and active intellects are given to man as clean slates (*tabula rasa*) to be utilized.

5. The Unity of Truth in the Harmony of Faith and Reason – Collaboration between Faith and Science

Is faith irrational, or is there tension between faith and reason? Thomas dedicates significant attention to this issue and identifies three fundamental errors in understanding the relationship between faith and reason.

- Skepticism, which claims that faith is inherently irrational and opposes reason, argues that it cannot be proven, and religion has been debunked by science.
- Fideism mirrors skepticism. Fideists agree that faith contradicts reason, asserting that the Bible is the foundation of truth, and science can be disregarded.
- Subjectivism advocates for a personal, internal, subjective approach.

- Thomas Aquinas contends that faith and reason are not in conflict because there exists a fundamental unity of truth derived from the order of reality. There cannot be something true according to faith that is untrue in the order of science. Truth is not purely subjective or personal; it arises from something external to reason and, therefore, from reality. Thomas emphasizes that since God is the source of reality, He is also the supreme source of the light of reason, Revelation, and the light of faith. Both faith and reason originate from God, and since Truth is one, it is certain that faith and reason will never contradict each other because truth cannot contradict truth.

What if something seems contradictory between faith and reason? Thomas responds that in such cases, the reasoning process contains an error or is based on a misunderstanding of truths of faith, leading to the apparent contradiction. Thomas's view on Christian faith emphasizes its rationality and common sense. Similar to everyday experiences accepted as opinions, reports, and thoughts from others, in faith, humans place trust in God, whom they accept as Truth. In Tradition, such evidence is called signs of the Church's credibility, providing a rational guarantee for Christian faith claims, such as the miracles of Christ confirmed by witnesses or the two-thousand-year coherence of Church teachings. Although the mysteries of faith remain hidden, the human mind cannot comprehend them and may not believe in them, the signs of faith confirm their truth. Confirmation of the Divinity of Christ, the presence of the Holy Trinity, cannot be proven by natural reason. Therefore, Thomas emphasizes the role of supernatural light of faith, accepting their truth without hesitation or reservation as God attests to them (Legge, 2016).

It often appears that faith and reason are in conflict, requiring people to learn how these two ways of contemplating truth can cooperate.

Christian theology assumes the compatibility of reason with faith. Reason seeks the unity of truth, as argued by Aristotle, presenting the principle of non-contradiction. Faith involves non-empirical knowledge (Krąpiec, 2023).

Thomas posed a question that also troubled the Fathers of the Church: Can faith be reconciled with reason (philosophical reflection)? According to St. Augustine, faith can be harmonized with philosophy, and religion with reason. However, Thomas sought to complement this statement more fully, arguing that faith and knowledge (science) are different yet complementary fields that cooperate with each other. Thomas clearly differentiated between faith and knowledge, reason and Revelation. However, this distinction does not equate to the mutual contradiction of faith and reason. Reason contributes to direct knowledge of the world using the senses, but Thomas also highlights another type of metaphysical knowledge (beyond experiential) available to rational understanding.

Science allows discovering new possibilities in all aspects of human life. Successes may lead to viewing science as the only valuable method of acquiring knowledge. Scientific methods have proven effective in understanding the material world, but they are not the sole source of knowledge.

Faith and reason remain in harmony, cooperating with each other. Thomas presents this harmony in seven principles, emphasizing the need for integrity in each[10].

- Principle of Consistency – The laws of faith and right reason are logically consistent with each other. True faith frees from errors and misunderstandings. Right reason safeguards the truths of faith from misinterpretations. What right reason knows, free from errors, is truth. Although faith and right reason may seem contradictory at times, deeper and careful investigation in natural sciences can help resolve the apparent conflict. The claim that people can be resurrected is true, provided it

10 Beauty of Righteousness in Thomas Aquinas–Thomas pointed to the model of beauty, which is Christ, as the beauty of justice and truth. The first humans (Adam and Eve) possessed the gift of original righteousness and justice at the moment of creation. A righteous person is one who recognizes the truth, consciously chooses it, and acts accordingly. A righteous person chooses the solution closest to the truth. Jesus, as a human, was free from all errors and mistakes, full of truth, immediately recognizing every truth, both divine and human. Jesus' righteousness also made Him perfectly just. Christ recognized the truth and acted according to it. As the embodiment of truth, Christ did not cater to human errors but openly proclaimed the truth to all (Gałuszka, 2021, p. 284).

is not achieved through their own natural powers. No one asserts that Jesus rose from the dead by natural means. Jesus rose from the dead by the power of God, and this is entirely possible, a belief held by Christians and consistent.

- Principle of Support (Sustaining) – The intellect employing reason can inquire about God and His attributes. Philosophical disciplines provide many robust arguments for the existence of God. Sound historical research, even conducted by agnostics, supports the historical fact of Jesus's existence, His death, and the empty tomb.
- Principle of Defense – Right reason can reject objections raised against things accepted by faith. Arguments against Catholic faith can be counterbalanced by right reason, which can point out weaknesses and inconsistencies in these arguments. A simple example: doubts about the Holy Trinity can be illustrated by the objection that 1+1+1 equals 3. However, the response does not concern mathematical interpretation because for a faithful, right Catholic, it is essential not to confuse categories. What matters more is that the persons of the Holy Trinity are Divine and not created, so they are not subject to mathematical interpretations or limitations.
- Principle of Subsidiarity (servitude) – Right reason is in agreement with what is revealed. Over centuries, humanity has discovered many principles aiding in the understanding of God's Revelation.
- Principle of Correction – Right faith serves to correct errors of reason. Materialism is a clear error. An honest and intelligent philosopher will present solid counterarguments, but when a believer hears this error, faith immediately corrects it. After all, God revealed that there is much more than just the material, and humans possess a spiritual, immortal soul. Faith uncovers this error, while reason slowly and laboriously reaches the truth.
- Principle of Wisdom – Right faith helps see all things in relation to God. When someone believes that God created the world and governs everything according to His Providence, the possibility for contemplation in the light of God opens up.
- Principle of Fulfillment – Right faith provides answers to some questions posed by reason, thanks to Revelation.

6. Message from Thomas Aquinas and John Paul II regarding the relationship between faith and reason, faith and science

Faith consolidates, integrates, and enlightens the heritage of truth acquired by human reason. Thomas Aquinas, an interpreter of the Holy Scripture who practiced theology using philosophy, demonstrated the compatibility between Christian faith and reason. In the era when two cultures clashed, the Greek and the Western Latin, and when it was expected that faith should yield to reason, St. Thomas proved that Christian faith and reason cooperate. What appeared to reason as incompatible with faith was not reason, and what seemed like faith but contradicted true rationality was not faith (Benedict XVI, 2010).

John Paul II considered Thomas's statement about the natural harmony of truth between Christian faith and reason so crucial that he pointed to St. Thomas as a master of thinking and a model for proper theology in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (John Paul II, 1998, [43]). In the encyclical, he calls on people of science and the Church to rationally defend faith, revealing accurate intuitions present in the Holy Scriptures regarding the profound connection between the knowledge of faith and reasoned knowledge (Ibid., [16]).

It is also the Church's task[11] to continually integrate faith and reason, a teaching consistently emphasized by the Church. The Second Vatican

11 Benedict XVI, in one of his sermons, emphatically stated that "the Church is not a self-service store, where everyone chooses what they like, what they consider suitable for our times and acceptable in their own lives. Sacred Scripture is not a supermarket from which you can pick a few items that you like and reject the rest; it is the Revelation of God, through which He points out our way. If we create Christianity according to our own ideas, we lose its essential nature, which determines that it is worth being and enduring in the Church." (Ratzinger, 2015, p. 81).

Council in the Decree on Priestly Training states, "students, following St. Thomas as a master, should learn to penetrate more deeply into the mysteries of salvation, delving into and discerning the connection among them through speculative knowledge" (Decree on Priestly Training, Optatam Totius, 1965 [16]).

The supernatural source of the Church is the belief in the divine origin of the Church and its continuous connection with its founder and invisible head, Christ. The Christian vision of the person provides answers to the most important questions of contemporary humanity: the meaning of life, the origin of man, and the goal towards which he is heading. Therefore, it is essential to deepen the understanding of the nature of reason. Reason can be shaped to be more open to reality and its truth, i.e., to connect reason with wisdom. An intellect open to wisdom, which seeks truth and goodness, leads to love and ultimately to the goal of Salvation. Wisdom consists of understanding the laws of the natural world in the light of ultimate truths and becomes the task of a believing Christian (Decree on Priestly Training, Optatam Totius, 1965 [16]).

For Christian development, it is crucial to connect the challenges of the natural world with morality and customs. The reduction of reason to science described earlier has left many people without moral and spiritual support, without a pursuit of righteousness. If reason limits itself to science and truth to scientifically confirmed facts, then true or rationally verifiable answers regarding God, morality, and the ultimate meaning of life cannot be found (Decree on Priestly Training, Optatam Totius, 1965 [16]).

The issue of the relationship between religious faith and theology and philosophy dates back to ancient Greek philosophy. It is important to note that the discussion on this topic considers the priority of the mystery of faith over exaggerating the role of philosophy and various scientific conclusions. Chrostowski listed several threats to religious faith that may arise in numerous discussions (Chrostowski, 2003, p. 217-220):

- Intellectual manipulation resulting from neglecting the dignity of reason, claiming that it is incapable of knowing the truth.
- Improper use of good philosophy, not just using the bad one, then using it only when philosophy claims the final word, while in faith, reason must acknowledge God as its master. The position of philosophy in relation to faith is relative, meaning there is a need for humility of reason. Faith is not unreasonable, but reason does not exhaust everything that faith is and what it is capable of (Ibid.).

St. Thomas, at a time when it seemed that faith should yield to reason, pointed out that rationalizing faith inevitably leads to its loss. But the loss of faith also leads to its irrationality, for irrational faith is simply inhuman and must be rejected by humans. St. Thomas showed that faith and reason need each other because what seemed reasonable but inconsistent with faith is not reasonable, and what seemed like faith conflicting with true rationality is not faith (Benedict XVI, 2010). Therefore, not *credo, quia absurdum* (I believe because it is absurd), but *credo ut intelligam* (I believe to understand), complemented by *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding), indicates a way of being a believing Christian that corresponds to human nature (Krokos, 2009, p. 55). This balance allows preserving and developing reason and faith with all their possibilities. The intellect is skeptical, while faith tends to expose emotions. Man needs both these aspects because they are important in considering the mutual relations of faith and reason.

Aquinas sought confirmation of the possibility of knowledge within his intellect. The human intellect, as a value given to man, is tasked with transcending "unreasonable matter. However, the human intellect is weak in making judgments and penetrating ideas into intellectual knowledge" (Thomas Aquinas, 2003, ScG I, p.27). Many falsehoods mix with human reasoning. Arrogance, as pointed out by St. Thomas, is one of the causes of error. The arrogant claim that they can examine the world intellectually and present as the truth what seems true to them. "To free the human spirit from this arrogance so that it could humbly seek the truth, God had to give man certain truths that completely surpass his intellect" (Thomas Aquinas, 2003, ScG I, p. 28). The true nature of man

is the beginning of interpretation, but even imperfect human knowledge contributes to the intense joy that envelops the listener. The truth of Christian faith surpasses the powers of reason, but truths known by natural reason must be consistent with revealed truths. Thomas argues that any statement based on the natural abilities of reason that contradicts revealed truth cannot be considered true. The emerging contradiction indicates mistakenly derived conclusions (Thomas Aquinas, 2003, ScG I, p. 31).

This article aims to show the still underestimated and commonly misunderstood legacy of the theologian and philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas, specifically regarding human intellectual faculties (reasoning, intellectual), on which the acceptance and understanding of faith depend. It must be mentioned that Aquinas recognized the undeniable role of the senses in providing stimuli for the entire process of thinking, reasoning, and consequently discerning. G.K. Chesterton did not hesitate to say that "I do not believe that God requires man to develop only that peculiar, lofty, and abstract kind of intellect that you are fortunate to possess; but I believe that there is an intermediate field of phenomena provided by the senses for this purpose, to become the subject of reason, and that in this field reason has the right to rule as the representative of God in man" (Chesterton, 1959, p. 24). Thomas's call to use reason and the power of the senses is a call to shape intellectual and moral virtues, which are the fruit of mature, reasoned faith. Thomas thus reconciled faith with reason, trusting reason, which is so eager to turn to empirical science, but thanks to enlightening grace and God's law of using the truth of reality, it can arrive at the truth about God, man, and the world (Chesterton, 1959, p. 23)

In conclusion, it is worth addressing one more important point in Aquinas's considerations; he wrote about the calling of some to wisdom, about the order of cognition, about the method of cognition, and about those who seek true wisdom. He called such people Christian sages and attributed to them the role of understanding the relationship between faith and reason and teaching the truths they had learned. "Truths available through the natural light of reason and those revealed by the sage revelation constitute the content of Thomas's considerations" presented in the article (Przanowski, 2015, p. 29). Saint John Paul II encouraged following the path indicated by Thomas, thereby recognizing him as an enduring, still relevant authority for today's times.

Abbreviations list:
KKK–Catechism of the Catholic Church;
STh–summa theologica;
ScG–summa contra gentiles

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Being a man of faith in the teaching of Pope Benedict XVI[1]

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Dominika Żukowska-Gardzińska[a]

[a] *Associate Professor Dominika Żukowska-Gardzińska, PhD hab. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9335-7927, Institute of Theological Sciences, The Faculty of Theology, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw*

Abstract: Before Benedict XVI became Pope, he was often referred to as an armoured cardinal. As Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he served the Church as a theologian protecting dogma and orthodoxy. Present in the great wealth of texts and speeches he left behind is his personal, but also the foundation of his own theology, answer to the question of what it means to be a believer. This article is an analysis of the speeches of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger – Benedict XVI, and their guiding idea, namely faith in God, which transforms man and makes him "new" according to the biblical understanding of this concept, determines the method of reading and interpreting the texts. The analytical-critical method used makes it possible to extract the most condensed contents and convictions of the author in relation to his vision of faith. From the selected passages, a model of a Christian emerges, consisting of Joseph Ratzinger's characteristics and predispositions developed and transformed through his personal experience of faith, set on the foundation of the Tradition of the Catholic Church.
Keywords: personalism, faith, Benedict XVI, humanity

Introduction

Before Benedict XVI became Pope, he was often referred to as an armoured cardinal. As prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he served the Church as a theologian protecting dogma and orthodoxy. Present in the great wealth of texts and speeches he left behind is his personal, but also the foundation of his own theology, answer to the question of what it means to be a believer. This article is an analysis of the speeches of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger–Benedict XVI, and their guiding idea, i.e. faith in God, which transforms man, making him "new" according to the biblical understanding of this concept, determines the method of reading and interpreting the texts (Ratzinger, 1999; 2000). The analytical-critical method used makes it possible to extract the most condensed contents and convictions of the author in relation to his vision of faith. From the selected passages, a model of a Christian emerges, consisting of Joseph Ratzinger's characteristics and predispositions developed and transformed through his personal experience of faith, set on the foundation of the Tradition of the Catholic Church.

1. The spiritual foundations of Benedict XVI

On October 2011 Benedict XVI issued an apostolic letter in the form of the motu proprio *Porta fidei*. Its publication was linked to the announcement of the Year of Faith, scheduled to begin on 11 October 2012, the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council (SWII, 1964; 1965). This linking of themes and anniversaries alone says much about the spiritual foundations of this Pope. The General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops was convened by Benedict XVI for October 2012, the theme of which was *The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*. The Pope's personal idea thus gained

1 Article in polish language: Być człowiekiem wierzącym w nauczaniu papieża Benedykta XVI, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Zuko.pdf

space to develop in the reflection of the entire ecclesial community. The pope's initiative was aimed at ensuring that the whole Church renews its awareness of its faith and that the Christian benefits from its fruits in every situation in a real way. For Ratzinger, faith was not something external to the person, but a reality that shapes individual choices and decisions and makes man read the meaning of his existence.

In his classic work, *Introduction to Christianity*, Cardinal Ratzinger concentrated on analysing the words of the Creed from the first *I believe* to the last *amen*. The most important, the most obvious, but at the same time the most difficult aspect of the Christian faith is that it has a personal character. For it is not uncommon to say that even the most declared Christians are able to believe culturally, by virtue of custom and upbringing, rather than from the level of conversion and the experience of encounter. The essential formulation of this deepest level is: I believe in you. Faith understood in this way is an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ and, through him, with the personal God, in the Trinity one.

2. Faith entering into communion with God

The personal character of faith means that what happens during the God – human relationship has real consequences in the other spaces in which man participates: the family, the community of the Church, society. Faith introduces the virtue of love into these relationships. The Cardinal writes that faith even demands a relationship with love. In the search for answers to the questions of what love is, Benedict XVI proposed a three-step path. The first is to understand that God not only loves man, but is love (Benedict XVI, 2022, p. 152).

Implicit in this statement is the conviction that love is not just a term for God. It is not one of His many attributes. It means that He is this reality and that it is not subject to change, to prescription, that it is not defined in terms of *more* or *less*, that it is not divided into increasing and decreasing love. It is permanent, unchanging and all-encompassing. The signs of God's love are visible in the work of creation. However, the first moment of manifestation of this love is the mystery of the incarnation, when God became man. Love becomes embodied. This is, the Pope explains, the meaning and realism of the New Testament (Benedict XVI, 2005, no. 12). The personal acceptance of this truth makes one understand that everyone's life is not useless and of little value (Benedict XVI, 2022, p. 153). The third level is the realisation of how "necessary and urgent it is to bestow the same love on Him" (Benedict XVI, 2022, p. 154). Love is an extraordinary power that gives people the strength to commit themselves courageously and selflessly to justice and peace, the German Pope says (Benedict XVI, 2009, Introduction).

Thus, authentic faith, based precisely on a personal encounter with Love, leads to a witness given in faith. The Pope sees here the need to accentuate the personalistic feature of faith (Burgos, 2010; Gacka, 2014). He is concerned with reviving it as a personal encounter in Jesus Christ with God, who embraces man with his faithfulness, unfailing closeness and love. Authentic faith does not enclose man in the space of his private affairs. It should not be considered a private matter of the believer. The believer comes to a mature faith in the community of the Church. He needs the community in order to properly develop a personal relationship with God, because it is itself founded on participation in the life of others (Wojtyla, 1979, appendix), never in egotistical closure to the world (Ratzinger, 2018, p. 89). The "we" of the believer is not an add-on, but the content of the personal relationship with God. Therefore, the essence of faith includes service to and coexistence with others. This key truth that faith is personal thus has social implications. Pope Benedict XVI, however, had to remind us that Christians too often act in conviction, mistakenly assuming that those belonging to the Church already have a personal relationship with God built up, and instead of caring about this, they strive for the social, cultural and political consequences of faith. Meanwhile, the renewal of the Church, and of the reality around it, takes place through the witness of personal faith. This is no different. The idea that man is a person shapes the whole vision of the world (Ratzinger, 2018, p. 99). Even more so, faith in the resurrection changes the optics of functioning.

"The faith that works through love" (Galatians 5:6) *becomes a new criterion of thought and action that transforms the whole of human life* (cf. Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:20-29; 2 Corinthians 5:17) (Benedict XVI, 2011, no. 6). The profession of faith cannot therefore be a recitation of words. It is not the acceptance of a religious theory. I believe, Ratzinger writes could be translated as I give myself over. Faith is grounded in the turning of the whole person towards the person of God, thus in an act of conversion (Ratzinger, 2018, p. 86). The task of the believer is to recognise the signs of the times in the present. It is a commitment belonging to each of us to become living signs of the presence of the Risen One in the world (Benedict XVI, 2011, no. 15).

The personalist model of faith also presupposes that it can be deepened and that it will grow when it begins to be lived as an experience of love and grace. It is then strengthened, perpetuated. It begins to have an impact through practical consequences in life's decisions and choices (Benedict XVI, 2011, no. 7). For this reason, faith cannot be considered a private matter. It becomes an act of freedom, and this in turn also means taking social responsibility for what one believes. For this reason, Benedict XVI emphasised that the profession of faith is both a personal and a communal act (Benedict XVI, 2011, no. 10).

In order to get to what is essential and fundamental in faith, the Pope proposed to return in reflection to the original version of the apostolic symbol based on the two-sidedness of question and answer: *Do you believe? I believe*. The dialogical form of this version reveals much more precisely the essence of the relationship that is born and that existentially transforms man (Ratzinger, 2018, p. 88). It leads to a transformation of attitudes, including, above all, a change of attitude towards human existence. What happens when I become a Christian. When I take on the name of Christ? (Ratzinger, 2018, p. 88). Cardinal Ratzinger answers by stating that *He* [Christ] *is the model of man and the measure of humanity* (Ratzinger, 2018). And this measure of humanity defines the way and obliges.

The act of faith, however, is not a situation of a single decision, but a process. In addition, especially in modern times, where the field of what is certain and right is narrowing, faith is faced with a series of questions. Pope Benedict XVI, as a man of religion but also as a scientist and researcher, believed that the Church not only can, but should, show the relationship between science and faith. There can be no conflict on this plane, because both realities, striving for truth (Benedict XVI, 2011, no. 12). The Christian is aware that the cooperation of science and faith will be fruitful and developing only if faith is an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. The realisation of this Creed truly. Catholicism must therefore be a personal encounter and experience of the person, and not merely an attitude of abiding and mindlessly celebrating rituals, cultural patterns, family or national traditions.

3. Reference to St Thomas Aquinas

In explaining the meaning of the word I believe, the Cardinal referred to the formulation proposed by St Thomas Aquinas. In his *Introduction to Christianity*, he considered it crucial to understand the content of what is said in relation to God. The three levels of trust are formulated in the concepts: I believe that there is a God, I believe in God and I believe in God (Thomas Aquinas, 1975, 2-2, q.11, a; Salij, 2021, 78-83).

The first level is expressed in the confession *I believe that there is a God*. This notion includes the conviction that it is not just a matter of knowing that there is an absolute. It is the beginning of a personal encounter with the person of God, a turning towards the Living God, an inner confidence that not only can we experience him, but that he himself can communicate with man and give signs of his presence. The second level, *I believe God*, determines the direction of the personal turn towards God and the human commitment. In this dimension, faith is revealed as the realisation of works of love on a daily basis and in this way the making present of the love experienced is realised.

The third level *I believe in God*, an expression that is uttered in the Creed, is a turn towards faith shaped by love. It is only this level that opens up and initiates an authentic knowledge of God. It transforms the relationship from the position of observer to the role of active participant in the encounter (Thomas Aquinas, 1975, 2-2, q.11, a.).

Jesus, by giving his life for man, made faith extend to the level of topics such as the meaning of life and its value. Pope Benedict XVI believed that the attitude of the believer is that it is in his space that man encounters answers about the meaning of existence. The Pope warned not to treat faith as one of the elements that make up the order and order of life such as the space of family, work and leisure. True faith permeates all these realities, because if it is true it includes an encounter with the person of God (finding some You) who bestows the promise of an indestructible love, total, boundless.

In faith, trust and love are fused into one. Faith is, in other words, the awareness of God's love. And since this love does not cease, the whole of life should be seen as a response to love and as a time shaped by it. The specific attitude that arises from trust, these questions of doubt we should ask not only for the sake of honesty of thought and the responsibility of reason, but of the law of love, which wants persons to know each other. What we have here is a classic personalist relationship, two-sided and not one-sided.

Joseph Ratzinger subordinates all considerations to the question: Is it really you God? Faith, therefore, implies neither a mindless nor a rational certainty. These are natural doubts that are posed from the level of love and from the level of the personalistic encounter with the person. It presents an attitude of looking at faith as the beginning of knowing God. To believe is to explore, to extend one's cognition in order to come closer to the perfect view of God, towards God's reality. Therefore, believes the Cardinal, the true believer does not remain at the level of *I believe there is a God* or *I believe God*. Trust and love elevate him to the level of *I believe in God*, I believe in the person of God (Benedict XVI, 2011, no. 6).

Through faith, this new life shapes the whole of human existence, based on the radical newness of the resurrection. To the extent that man voluntarily shows readiness, his thoughts, feelings, mentality and behaviour are slowly purified and transformed, in a process that is never fully completed in this life.

Therefore, in point 2 of *Porta fidei*, he made a diagnosis of the contemporary situation and set out the necessary directions for the spiritual and intellectual development of Christians. He noted that it is all too often the case today that Christians are more concerned with the social, cultural and political consequences of their commitment, thinking that faith is still the self-evident premise of communal life. In fact, this premise has not only ceased to be self-evident, but is often even denied. For this reason, the question of faith has wrongly been allowed to be treated as a private matter (Benedict XVI, 2011, no. 10). A social contract or agreement or tolerance of religious issues as part of social diversity is far too little. The contemporary role that Benedict XVI gave Christians in the world, as it were, their task, is that of a public witness of faith that reveals all the richness that lies at the level of I *believe in God*. Man at this level of faith possesses the strength capable of acting effectively for justice, because he lives with the certainty of his encounter with God and the experience of his presence.

In parallel, Cardinal Ratzinger formulated a well-founded concern that societies are not composed exclusively of believers, but more often of communities that are growing in number and that do not consider either the presence of transcendence in their lives or the norms of natural law. They are left, as he wrote, with only *the rules of the road* of human behaviour, which can be projected and justified from the point of view of their use value. And since, increasingly, people with such convictions dominate a group, a community, they also determine the social order, the norms and rules between people. The danger, as the Pope saw it, is situations and choices in which so-called use-value, what a person needs at a given moment or rather thinks he needs, limits the social order.

4. The two dimensions of humility

As a proposal and at the same time a perspective for breaking out of the useful and seemingly practical life, Benedict XVI proposes to return to the questions relating to humility: Can God stoop so far above man? To lower himself to man? Can man go through life without marvelling at the fact that God can do such great things to man, and is it possible not to thank God because of this? (Benedict XVI, 2006). If, writes Benedict XVI, we accept and acknowledge

that Christ is not God, we ourselves close off the path of encounter. The faith of Christians, the faith of the Pope, is the certainty that God cannot fail to interact with man (Ratzinger, 1985, 1999). If I believe in God, I know that He comes among people constantly. He is a contemporary God, not a historical God.

So to believe today, according to the Pope, is to trust in meaning, it means to conceive of our existence as a response to the Word of the Logos that keeps everything going. To remain at the level of faith that what we do not see is more real than what we do see. Thus, if faith permeates all choices and decisions, the Christian must never consider that what he believes is a private matter. It also requires social responsibility for what one believes.

Conclusion

For this reason, concludes the Pope, the profession of faith is both a personal and a communal act. The theology that he himself practised, but also taught, is close to the life experiences and needs of man. It flows from experiencing God's love, which manifests itself in a life of awareness and commitment to witness to it (Benedict XVI, 2005). This also justifies Ratzinger's interest and participation in discussions about the social order, the role of the Church and the laity in the functioning of the state, so-called political communitarianism (Ratzinger, 2010). This was also shown in the Habermas – Ratzinger discussion, in which non-believers and believers discussed the place and role of religion in social and cultural space and in science (after: Teinert, 2006). In this context, it is also important to draw a line between natural and supernatural faith, which our author differentiates and which should be reflected in social consciousness. Knowing, trusting and being able to verify what one believes is a common feature of both (Ratzinger, 2006, 79-82, 101-105). In contrast, the difference arises at the point of knowledge, the source of which is different for both. In the space of natural faith, knowledge arises through a process of learning. In supernatural faith, on the other hand, this source is the encounter with the person of God.

Thus, in order to realise the postulate of perfect faith, in order to truly be a believer, it is necessary to bear in mind these three aspects discussed here, which start from openness to the encounter with the person, and rise to the level of *I believe in God*. In parallel, only a faith shaped by love allows a person to authentically know and become more mature.

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The concept of faith from Benedict to Francis: 10 years after *Lumen Fidei*[1]

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Matteo Campagnaro[a] ✉

[a] *Rev. Matteo Campagnaro, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0531-2471, The Catholic Academy in Warsaw*
✉ *Corresponding author: matteo@mkw.pl*

Abstract: This article, referring to the tenth anniversary of the publication of the encyclical Lumen Fidei in 2013, the first encyclical of Pope Francis, which he wrote to complement the work of Benedict XVI, will want to show, on the one hand, the hermeneutical continuity between the two pontificates, with regard to faith and its transmission, on the other and methodological differentiation in relation to the concept of faith between the German and the Argentinian pope. Analyzing Lumen Fidei, the article shows the exemplary unity of intentions of both Popes who, despite coming from different theological and existential experiences, find themselves in this document and propose a unifying message that includes, on the one hand, a clear analysis of the act of faith to demonstrate its rationality and necessity, to be fully "human" clearly inspired by Ratzinger, and on the other hand, the practicality of faith and its impact on today's areas of life and society with a decidedly more Bergoglian inspiration. The theological genius of Benedict, one of the greatest theologians who ascended the papal throne, and the pastoral charisma of Francis, the first Latin American Jesuit and Pope, remain an inexhaustible source of inspiration for all believers.
Keywords: Benedict XVI, Francis, Lumen Fidei, faith.

Introduction

Faith in God as an act of reason (The Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC 155) was at the centre of the theological reflection of Pope Benedict XVI, even during his time as a professor in Tübingen, later during his service to the Church as the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and subsequently as Pope. Attempting to synthesize Ratzinger's concepts of faith is thus a laborious endeavour, far beyond the scope of this article's possibilities. As a result, referring to the tenth anniversary of the encyclical Lumen Fidei (hereafter LF), the first encyclical of Pope Francis, in which he supplemented the work of Benedict XVI by "adding some reflections to the text" (LF 7), this article aims to demonstrate, on the one hand, the hermeneutical continuity between the two pontificates, concerning faith and its transmission, and on the other, the methodological differences regarding the concept of faith between the Popes of German and Argentine origin.

The common thread connecting both theological approaches and ensuring the aforementioned hermeneutical continuity, as will be shown, is the magisterium of the Second Vatican Council, which "revealed the radiance of faith in the human experience, thus journeying through the paths of contemporary humanity. In this way, it became clear that faith enriches human existence in all its dimensions" (LF 6).

In this interpretation of the conciliar magisterium, Pope Francis aligns himself in full harmony with his predecessor, and he doesn't hesitate to present the considerations of his encyclical as the fruit of a "four-hand" collaboration, born from a distinctively perceived and deep intellectual and spiritual harmony (Forte, 2013).

On the other hand, the methodological difference in relation to the concept of faith, or rather a shift in the emphasis of understanding faith, can be observed

1 Article in polish language: Pojęcie wiary od Benedykta do Franciszka: 10 lat po Lumen Fidei, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Matt.pdf

in the transition from Ratzinger's more academic and deductive reflection to Francis' remarkably pastoral and inductive understanding. Francis highlights the concreteness of faith, its practical impact on the lives of the faithful. It is evident that his pastoral thinking stems from Latin American, particularly Argentine, post-conciliar theological efforts, referred to as the "theology of the people."

This article will strive to demonstrate that both these levels are present in the theological and pastoral thought of both Popes, showing, on the one hand, the continuity of their magisterium and, on the other, the methodological difference between the two Popes. It will undertake a synthesis of both Benedict's (Part One) and Francis' (Part Two) magisterium regarding faith. Subsequently, the third part will be focused on LF as an "ideal encounter" of these two thoughts, outlining a synthesis that reveals the doctrinal and pastoral potential of two distinct yet complementary ecclesiastical experiences.

1. The Notion of Faith in the Thought of Benedict XVI

On October 17, 2011, with the apostolic letter "Porta Fidei" (hereinafter PF), Pope Benedict XVI announced the Year of Faith (from October 11, 2012, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, until November 24, 2013) "to show all the faithful the strength and beauty of faith" (PF 4). It is significant that his pontificate came to an end during the Year of Faith, thereby concluding a journey that, from the earliest years of his studies, focused on the need for a "renewed education in faith, which certainly involves knowledge of its truths and salvific events, but which above all arises from a true encounter with God in Jesus Christ, from loving Him, from trusting in Him, so that one engages in it with one's whole life" (Benedict, 2012).

While not delving into all aspects of Ratzinger's teachings on faith, we will analyse two significant aspects that characterize his intellectual effort in analysing the concept of faith: firstly, moving away from the neo-Scholastic theological framework towards a more Augustinian and existential approach; and secondly, the strong emphasis on demonstrating the rationality of faith in Christ, its adequacy to reality.

In Ratzinger's theological formation, the thought of St. Augustine plays a central and decisive role. Benedict XVI himself, speaking about St. Augustine, stated: "I have a personal attachment and gratitude to the figure to which I feel very close due to the role it played in my life as a theologian, priest, and pastor" (Benedict XVI, 2008). This concept was reiterated several times by Pope Ratzinger on various occasions during his pontificate: in the last of the five catecheses dedicated to him, between January and February 2008, in a series of general audiences focusing on Church Fathers; by the tomb of St. Augustine in Pavia in April of the same year; and earlier to the students of the Roman Major Seminary on February 17, 2007.

This spiritual and intellectual bond began in the 1950s when Ratzinger, then a young deacon, accepted Prof. Gottlieb Söhngen's invitation to write his doctoral thesis on the ecclesiology of St Augustine. The title of the dissertation was: "The People and the House of God in St Augustine's teaching on the Church" (Panaro, 2014, p. 106). His interest in the Church Fathers, which deepened when he wrote his dissertation on Augustine, had its origin in his studies at the University of Munich, where the young Ratzinger had the opportunity to study the theology of the Church Fathers and to deepen his knowledge of Scripture and the liturgy. Following the new theological current represented by many of his professors, which consisted of a move away from neo-Scholastic schematism and a return to the sources of the Church Fathers, Ratzinger thus learned to open himself up to a serious and critical dialogue with the Tradition of the Church in order to respond appropriately to the challenges of modern man. The supervisor of his thesis, the aforementioned Prof. Söhngen, had a decisive influence on the young theologian: from him Ratzinger borrowed this particular sensitivity to the innovative theological trends which, both in France and Germany, pointed to a return to patristic and liturgical sources in order to overcome the rigid neo-scholastic schematism that prevailed during the modern period (Panaro, 2014, p. 103).

The new approach to understanding the apostolic Tradition, as represented by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s and 1970s, stems from his studies on the Church Fathers, particularly Augustine. As Ratzinger himself recalls, "Faith was here an inner vision and became, through the thought of the Fathers, once again a reality" (Ratzinger, 2005, p. 72).

As Benedict XVI mentioned during a meeting with seminarians in Rome, "For me, the most fascinating aspect was the greatness of St. Augustine's humanity. He could not identify directly with the Church from the beginning, as he was a catechumen, but he had to wrestle spiritually to find the way to the Word of God, to life with God, until the great 'Yes' he pronounced to his Church... This is why his very personal theology convinced me, mainly through his preaching. This is important because Augustine, at the beginning, wanted to live purely contemplatively, to write further books on philosophy... but the Lord did not want that. He made him a priest and bishop, and so the rest of his life, his works, developed primarily in dialogue with very simple people. He always had to, on the one hand, personally find the meaning of the Holy Scripture, and on the other hand, consider the possibilities of these people, their life context, and arrive at a Christianity that was realistic and at the same time very profound" (Benedict XVI, 2007).

This challenging internal journey that Bishop Augustine embarked upon–to believe and understand, and simultaneously understand and believe, allowing faith and reason to engage in dialogue–is what captivated Ratzinger. This dialogue Ratzinger maintained and developed throughout his life (Campisi, 2023). The Augustinian thought, as expressed in the work *Soliloqui*, concerning the relationship between faith and reason can in fact be summed up by two Latin formulas: *credo ut intelligam–intelligo ut credam* (I believe in order to understand, I understand in order to believe). In this way, Augustine wants to show that in order to understand, in order to have a correct philosophical discourse, the light of faith is necessary. Likewise, in order to believe, philosophical reasoning is necessary, the use of reason is indispensable. This concept is reiterated in n. 33 LF, in a text which, even if it remains only a conjecture of the author, seems clearly influenced by Ratzinger: "In the life of St Augustine we find a significant example of this path in which the search for reason, with its desire for truth and clarity, was integrated into the horizon of faith, through which it gained a new understanding" (LF 33).

This passion, which characterised Ratzinger since the beginning of his academic career to demonstrate the rationality of faith, thus comes from his encounter with the thought of St Augustine. And it is the second aspect of Ratzinger's thought that will now be analysed.

Ratzinger is convinced that today, to effectively bring the Gospel to contemporary people, it is necessary to expand the concept of reason and make use of it. This encouragement was succinctly expressed by Pope Benedict XVI in his memorable lecture at the University of Regensburg (Benedict XVI, 2006). According to the Pope, reason and faith must find themselves "united in a new way," overcoming "the self-imposed limitation of reason to what is verifiable by experiment," and re-opening its "full range" before it. Today, it iss absolutely necessary to present faith as an essential aid in the process of expanding reason. In fact, it reminds science that if the certainty of knowledge neglects what is "human," namely the mystery of man formed by soul and body, it risks moving away from the rationality it represents. "A Christian is convinced," as Ratzinger reminds us, "that his faith not only opens up new dimensions of knowledge, but that it primarily helps reason to be itself... A believer himself, whose reason has been helped by faith, must give himself to reason and to what is rational: in the face of reason that is dormant or ailing, it is his duty towards the whole human community " (Ratzinger, Pera, 2004, p. 118).

Ratzinger repeats this concept in his work "Introduction to Christianity," where he states that "in early Christianity, the choice was made in a completely different way: Christian faith took a stand against the gods of various religions, in favour of the God of the philosophers, that is, against a myth sanctified by custom and in favour of the truth of being" (Ratzinger, 1994, p. 131). This means that at its origins, Christianity, enlightened by the paschal event, chose *logos* over all forms of *mythos*, accomplishing a "definitive demythologization of the world and religion" (Ratzinger, 1994, p. 127).

In conclusion, it can be said that for Ratzinger, the God revealed to us by Jesus Christ is the truth about man, the most rational way of being human. Either faith in Jesus Christ is connected to daily life and has a tangible impact on experience, or it remains merely a religious system like many others, a myth. This was the constant thought that drove the young Bavarian priest to search for a methodology of conveying faith that would demonstrate its rationality and existential influence. Precisely because Christian Revelation is true, the obedience to the message of faith is not, according to Ratzinger, "a passive acceptance of information that is, moreover, unknown, but the awakening of our buried memory and the unveiling of the powers of understanding which wait within us for the light of truth" (Ratzinger, 2005, p. 33). So, for Ratzinger, faith is necessary for reason and vice versa; indeed, faith is the light of reason (*lumen fidei*). In fact, reason is not stifled by faith, "but rather released from the sterile cycle within what cannot be understood and led back to the path" (Ratzinger, 2005, p. 33). As Francis and Benedict XVI write in "Lumen Fidei" (LF), "The recovery of the light, which is an inherent characteristic of faith, becomes urgentbecause when its flame goes out, all other lights eventually lose their brightness. The light of faith has a special nature, as it is capable of illuminating the entire life of a person. However, for this light to be so powerful, it cannot come from ourselves; it must come from a more primal source, ultimately originating from God" (LF 4).

2. Pastoral Approach to the Concept of Faith in Francis's Understanding

Let us now delve into Bergoglio's thinking regarding the concept of faith. As stated in the introduction to this article, in content it does not differ substantially from Ratzinger's; it simply emphasizes different aspects. This distinct emphasis undoubtedly stems from the different origins of the two Popes, which include not only geographical but also theological differences. In the late 1980s, Gustavo Gutierrez wrote in the preface to the revised edition of "Liberation Theology," corrected after the intervention of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, then led by Cardinal Ratzinger, that while European theological efforts in the last century focused on demonstrating the existence of God and the rationality of faith in Him in the face of a society gradually moving away from Christian truth, for Latin American theology, "the great pastoral question – and therefore theological – is how to tell the poor, to whom conditions of life expressing a denial of love are imposed, that God loves them" (Gutierrez, 2012, p. 33).

In reality, as stated by Kasper, due to Pope Benedict's origin and formation, he "represents, in a well-outlined manner, the best European tradition. He starts from the faith of the Church, seeks to intellectually and spiritually open it up for understanding, and then translates the doctrine of faith into practice in accordance with the traditional relationship between theory and praxis" (Kasper, 2015, p. 20). On the other hand, Pope Francis is theologically a son of the theology of the people, an Argentine reinterpretation of liberation theology, particularly developed since the CELAM conference in Puebla, Mexico, in 1979. Additionally, he is guided by kerygmatic theology, as suggested by Kasper. His Jesuit origins are discernible in this approach. Saint Ignatius of Loyola "does not begin with doctrine, but with the concrete situation; naturally, he does not merely want to adapt to it, but rather, in line with the assumptions of Ignatian spiritual exercises, seeks to judge according to the rules of discernment of spirits. With the help of such spiritual discernment, he arrives at concrete practical decisions" (Kasper, 2015, p. 21).

As mentioned, one cannot imagine Pope Francis's thought detached from the theology of the people. This theological system, according to Juan Carlos Scannone's classification, represents a stream of liberation theology (Scannone, 1983, pp. 406-415) and can be labelled as an Argentine type of this theology, which has taken its own path, developing its specific profile (Kasper, 2015, p. 29). I addressed this stream in a previous study, to which I refer in this part of the article (Campagnaro, 2020). The main representatives of this stream are Lucio Gera, Rafael Tello, and the already mentioned Juan Carlos Scannone. Argentine popular theology de-

rives from the work of the Bishops' Commission for Pastoral Care (COEPAL), established during the post-conciliar period (1966) by the Argentine Bishops' Conference to create a national pastoral plan in line with the spirit of Vatican II. According to Scannone, this Commission included various bishops, theologians, pastors, including Gera and Tello, both professors at the Theological Faculty in Buenos Aires (Scannone, 2017, p. 18). COEPAL was largely responsible for the Argentine bishops' declaration in San Miguel (1969), which applied the conclusions from Medellin to the specific situation in Argentina. In this declaration, when speaking about popular pastoral care, the people were no longer seen as objects but as subjects of pastoral action: subjects whose *sensus fidei* emphasizes the fruits brought about by God in the specific history of the people, who had already accepted the Gospel in their poverty and expressed their own "mysticism" through the inculturation of faith.

What distinguishes the theology of the people from other streams of liberation theology? First and foremost, in contrast to the other streams examined above, it does not start from the analysis of socio-political and economic conditions or social contrasts; it initiates its theological reflection from a historical analysis of the people's culture, united by a common ethos (Kasper, 2015, p. 29). In the theology of the people the subject of understanding faith as acting love is God incarnated in specific peoples. This theological line particularly values the religiosity of the people and the religious dimension of liberating praxis. As Gera states, "The Church should promote liberation originating from faith [...]. Its task is to give the process of people's liberation a foundation that is religious and faith-based; faith and religion, by their nature, more profoundly penetrate human conscience and provide deeper and more lasting stability to the people's will for self-determination" (Gera, 2015, p. 106). The central point that sets it apart from classical liberation theology lies in its understanding of the reality of the people and its different stance toward Marxist analysis. In fact, it primarily conceives the people from a collective-communal, historical-cultural perspective – that is, unified by a shared culture, memory, way of life, and destiny – and from an ethical-political perspective, manifesting as an organic community that is socially, politically, and historically self-defined. The theology of the people holds that categories derived from Latin American history and culture (people, anti-people, cultural syncretism) are more suitable than Marxist categories (class-based) for interpreting the continent's reality. For this stream, the people are a communal subject of specific history (the history of individual Latin American countries) and culture understood as a way of life (Campagnaro, 2020, p. 93).

In his understanding of faith, Bergoglio emphasizes the pastoral and practical influence it brings to the life of the people. Already from his first address on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica on March 13, 2013, one could sense the novelty that this bishop, who came "from the end of the world," was bringing to the Church: a novelty that was precisely the fruit of the theology of the people, this theological-practical reflection born in Argentina at the end of the 1960s, and which now burst forth with great force in the universal Church. "And now we set out in a new journey: Bishop and people" (Francis, 2013), said the Holy Father, wishing, for the first time in the history of the Church, to ask for the blessing of the people. This symbolic gesture, which surprised many, reflects Bergoglio's theological recognition of the "faithful people of God," who bring with them a specific way of understanding the Church, that is, the recognition of the "sense of faith" of the people and the role of the laity in it. This ecclesiological concept, already developed by the Second Vatican Council, which speaks in the Constitution Lumen Gentium (hereinafter: LG) about the Church as the messianic People of God (LG 9–12), was received with reservations by European theology, which suspected it to be a one-sidedly sociological, political, and bottom-up concept (Kasper, 2015, p. 58). In Argentina, the reception of this conciliar ecclesiology was quite different; it evolved in the Argentine form of liberation theology, namely the theology of the people. It is not a new Church, but rather a new way of perceiving the Church that brings along a new ecclesial way of life. As Kasper emphasizes, for Pope Francis, the Church is something more than just an organic and hierarchical institution; it is primarily

the "people of God on the way to God, a pilgrim and evangelizer, who goes beyond every necessary institutional expression" (Kasper, 2015, p. 59).

The contribution that the theology of the people brings to the universal experience of the Church through Pope Francis is precisely the renewed proposal of the conciliar ecclesiology of LG, enriched by the specific experience of the Latin American people. In Evangelii Gaudium (hereinafter: EG), Francis speaks precisely about the evangelizing power of popular piety with a clear reference to Evangelii Nuntiandi by Paul VI[2] (hereinafter: EN), which is exactly what the Final Document of the Medellin Conference (hereinafter: DM) in 1968 called "popular religiosity." Above all, we rediscover today the evangelizing potential of popular piety, which is often underestimated, especially by the European theology directed primarily at elite Christianity. In EG 122, Francis confirms the evangelizing role of peoples in whom the Gospel has already been inculturated, including the peoples of Latin America. This means that every person conveys faith: "When the Gospel has been inculturated in a people, the cultural process involves also the transmission of faith, always in new ways. Hence the importance of evangelization understood as inculturation" (EG 122). Inspired by the Final Documents of the conferences in Puebla (hereinafter: DP) and Aparecida (hereinafter: DA), Francis clearly states that "the people continue to evangelize themselves" (EG 122). It is precisely in this sense that "popular piety" is "an authentic expression of the spontaneous missionary activity of the People of God. It involves a reality in constant development, in which the Holy Spirit is the protagonist" (EG 122). In paragraphs 124–126 of EG, Pope Francis directly refers to DA, which spoke of "popular spirituality" (DA 263) and "popular mysticism" (DA 262). According to Francis, popular piety is not, as is often regarded by the European theological tradition, an expression of intellectual poverty incapable of imparting important content for the process of evangelization. On the contrary, it conveys the content of faith "more through symbols than through reason as a tool, and in the act of faith, it emphasizes *credere in Deum* more than *credere Deum*" (EG 124).

Another important contribution of this new emphasis on popular piety is the rescue of Catholic theology, as well as its pastoral care, from the danger that Pope Francis calls the heresy of gnosticism. Gnostics, as Francis recalls, claimed "that there were two kinds of faith: a primitive faith, the faith of simple people, imperfect and remaining on the level of the body of Christ and the contemplation of His mysteries; and another kind of faith, deeper and perfect, true faith reserved for a narrow circle of initiates, which, thanks to intellect, elevated itself above the body of Jesus toward the mysteries of the unknown Divinity" (LF 47). Francis acknowledged that this concept of faith "still has its allure and its adherents in our time." Quoting the words of St. Irenaeus, he reminded that "faith is one, because it touches the concrete fact of the Incarnation, never detaching itself from the body and history of Christ, since God wanted to fully reveal Himself in them" (LF 47). This sensitivity to popular piety was also taken up in the recent post-synodal exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (hereinafter: QA) under number 78, where it is reminded that in this region of Latin America, some characteristics of Catholicism "are currently

2 This is how Pope Paul VI writes in paragraph 48 of EN: "In those regions where the Church has been deeply rooted for many centuries, as well as where it is just beginning to take root, unique customs sometimes arise among the people, through which they express their search for and faith in God. These habits, long considered not clean enough and sometimes even with disgust, are now almost everywhere seen by contemporary people as a new way of inquiry and understanding. The bishops themselves, during the recent Synod, endeavored to understand their significance clearly, guided by pastoral realism and keen insight. It must be admitted that popular religiosity is confined within certain narrow boundaries. Often, it is susceptible to the influence of many false forms of religiosity and even verges on superstition; frequently, it remains at the lowest level of religious worship that does not lead to a proper act of faith; it can also incline towards creating sects and factions, which threatens the very unity of the Church. However, if properly directed, especially through appropriate evangelization methods, it also abounds in much good. For it carries within itself a hunger for God that only simple and poor in spirit people can feel; it gives people the power to sacrifice themselves and offer their lives heroically for the sake of faith. It awakens an acute sense of understanding the ineffable attributes of God: fatherhood, providence, constant and benevolent love. It generates in the inner person such virtues that are rarely encountered to the same extent elsewhere: patience, awareness of bearing the cross in daily life, self-denial, kindness towards others, respect. Due to these attributes, we might rather call it popular piety or the religion of the people, rather than religiosity."

a reality that people have made their own." Even if there is a danger in this religiosity that it may turn into magic or superstition, "one must be able to recognize the seed that grows amid confusion, because in popular piety, one can grasp the way in which the received faith has been incarnated in culture and is still being transmitted."

From the above, it follows that the value of the theology of the people primarily concerns the level of method, rather than content. The theology of the people, strongly situating the method of the hermeneutical circle between orthopraxy and orthodoxy, proposes an important and effective methodological key, faithful to the teaching of the Council expressed in *Gaudium et Spes*.

3. Lumen Fidei: Continuity of Two Pontificates

After briefly outlining the theological aspects that both Popes emphasized in their academic and pastoral service, let us now proceed to a brief analysis of the encyclical *Lumen Fidei* (LF), which strongly expresses the continuity between the two pontificates and offers clear and profound magisterium on the topic of faith to every believer.

In response to the question of whether the encyclical is more reflective of Ratzinger or Bergoglio, Cardinal Marc Ouellet provided an exhaustive answer, stating: "There is much of Benedict in it, and everything of Francis" (Rodari, 2013). Indeed, Pope Francis acknowledges: "I wish to add these reflections on faith to what Benedict XVI has written in his encyclicals on love and hope. He has almost finished working on the first draft of the encyclical on faith. I am profoundly grateful to him for this and, in the spirit of Christ's brotherhood, I take over his precious work, adding some reflections to the text."(LF 7).

The encyclical is divided into four chapters, which will now be briefly analysed,[3] preceded by an introduction (LG 1-7) that explains its purpose and illustrates the motivations behind the document: firstly, to recover the character of the light proper to faith, capable of illuminating the entirety of human existence (LF 3), to help distinguish between good and evil, especially in an era like the present, where belief is seen as the opposite of seeking, and faith is regarded as an illusion, a leap into emptiness that restricts human freedom. Secondly, in the context of the Year of Faith, the encyclical revisits the teachings of the Second Vatican Council: "The Year of Faith, writes the Pope, began on the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. This coincidence helps us see that *Vaticanum II* was a Council about faith. because it called us to make the primacy of God in Jesus Christ the centre of our personal and church life" (LF 5).

Faith is not predetermined; it is a gift from God that needs to be nurtured and strengthened.[4] "He who believes, sees" (LF 1), writes the Pope, as the light of faith comes from God and can illuminate the entirety of human existence. It stems from the past, from the memory of Jesus' life, but it also comes from the future, opening up great horizons.

One of the important elements that somehow summarizes the document is the affirmation that faith is primarily a history that is narrated and conveyed within the community. This affirmation accompanies the development of the entire encyclical and is a key point summarizing its message (Morosini, 2014, p. 13). In this perspective, the first chapter (LF 8-22), titled "We have believed in love" (1 Jn 4:16), which primarily refers to the figure of Abraham, is fundamentally significant. The narrated history constitutes the primum of faith logically and chronologically because faith is transmitted within the community that tells this story, the story it believed in and in which it recognizes the cause of its reality as a community. On the other hand, God's action, which gives us faith, is the ontological primum, as only He can enable us, through the action of the Spirit, to believe in Him (Morosini, 2014, p. 14). The first chapter lays the biblical foundations for the theme of faith, precisely depicting the journey of faith from Abraham through Israel to reach the fullness of rev-

3 Papa Francesco. Ecco l'enciclica "Lumen fidei" «La fede illumina l'esistenza», (2013), *Avvenire*. 5 lipca. https://www.avvenire.it/papa/pagine/enciclica-papa-francesco-lumen-fidei (access: 5.06.2023).

4 Ibidem.

elation, which is Christ. It concludes by emphasizing that "believing existence becomes ecclesial existence" (LG 22), as faith is professed within the body of the Church, a "specific communion of believers" (LG 22). Christians are "one," without losing their individuality; in serving others, each person gains their essence. Therefore, "faith is not a private matter, an individualistic concept, a subjective opinion" (LG 22), but it emerges from listening and is destined to be expressed and proclaimed.

In the second chapter (LF 23-36), "If you do not believe, you will not understand" (Is 7:9), the Pope highlights the close connection between faith and the trustworthy truth – the truth of God's faithful presence in history. "Faith without truth does not save it remains a beautiful fairy tale, a projection of our desires for happiness" (LF 24), writes the Pope. Today, in the face of the "crisis of truth in which we live" (LF 25), it is more necessary than ever to remind of this connection, as contemporary culture tends to embrace only the truths of technology – what humanity can construct and measure through science – or individual truths that matter solely to the individual and not in service to the common good. Suspicion is directed towards the "great truth, a truth capable of explaining the meaning of personal and social life" (LF 25), as it is mistakenly associated with the truths demanded by the totalitarianisms of the twentieth century.

However, this leads to the "great oblivion of the modern world" (LF 25), which, driven by relativism and a fear of fanaticism, forgets to inquire about truth, the origin of everything, and the question of God. At this point, the Pope initiates a broad reflection on the dialogue between faith and reason, where Benedict XVI's influence is evident, as well as on the concept of truth in today's world, which often reduces it to "subjective authenticity"(LF 34)., because the universal truth is feared, it is identified with the intransigent imposition of totalitarianisms If, however, the truth is the truth of love, it does not impose itself violently, it does not destroy the individual. Therefore, faith is not uncompromising, a believer is not arrogant. On the contrary, truth makes one humble and leads to respect for others and coexistence. It follows that faith leads to dialogue in all domains: in science, by awakening critical thinking and expanding the horizons of reason, inviting one to look with admiration at Creation; in interreligious dialogue, where Christianity offers its own contribution; in dialogue with non-believers, who continue to seek and "try to act as if God exists", because "God is luminous and can be found also by those who seek him with sincere heart" Theology is participating in self-discovery through God; thus, it must serve the faith of Christians, and the Church's Magisterium is not a constraint on theological freedom but rather its constitutive element, ensuring contact with the original source, the Word of Christ.[5] Chapter Three (n. 37-49) is titled: "I handed on to you what I also received" (1 Cor 15:3). The entire chapter focuses on the significance of evangelization: those who have opened themselves to the love of God cannot keep this gift to themselves, writes the Pope. The light of Jesus shines on the faces of Christians and spreads in this way, transmitted like a flame ignited by another flame, passed from generation to generation through an unbroken chain of witnesses of faith. This leads to a connection between faith and memory, as the love of God unites all times in unity and makes us contemporaneous with Jesus. Furthermore, it becomes "impossible to believe alone" (LF 39) since faith is not an "individual option" (LF 39) but opens the "I" to the "we" and always takes place "within the communion of the Church." Consequently, "those who believe are never alone" (LF 39), as they discover that their "self" extends and generates new relationships that enrich life. However, there is a "particular means" (LF 40) through which faith can be transmitted: the sacraments, through which "embodied memory" is conveyed. In the second part of the third chapter, the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are analysed in this sense.

Chapter Four (n. 50-60) is titled: "God prepares a city for them" (Heb. 11:16). This chapter explains the relationship between faith and the common good, which leads to the creation of a place where humanity

5 Papa Francesco. Ecco l'enciclica "Lumen fidei" «La fede illumina l'esistenza», (2013), *Avvenire*. 5 lipca. https://www.avvenire.it/papa/pagine/enciclica-papa-francesco-lumen-fidei (access: 5.06.2023)..

can dwell together. This is the most social and Bergoglian part of the encyclical: faith, born from the love of God, strengthens bonds among people and serves justice, law, and peace in a tangible manner. As a result, faith does not distance itself from the world and is not alien to the concrete engagement of contemporary individuals. On the contrary, without the trusting love of God, unity among people would rely solely on utility, interest, or fear. Faith, however, captures the ultimate foundation of human relationships, their ultimate purpose in God, and dedicates them to the service of the common good. Faith "is a good for all, it is common good" (LF 51); it does not merely contribute to building an afterlife, but assists in constructing societies that move towards a future full of hope.

The encyclical then addresses areas illuminated by faith: first and foremost, the family based on marriage, understood as the enduring union of a man and a woman. Then, the youth: here the Pope mentions the World Youth Days, during which young people demonstrate "the joy of faith" (LF 51) and a commitment to living it resolutely and generously. Another area is nature: faith helps us respect it, "to find models of development that are not based on utility or profit alone, but consider creation as a gift" (LF 55); it teaches us to recognize just forms of governance where authority stems from God and serves the common good; it provides us with the capacity for forgiveness, which leads to the resolution of conflicts. Another area illuminated by faith is the realm of suffering and death: Christians understand that suffering cannot be eliminated, but it can acquire meaning, becoming a trust in the hands of a God who never abandons us, thus being a "stage of growth in faith" (LF 56). To those who suffer, God does not provide exhaustive explanations, but offers His presence, accompanying them and illuminating darkness with light. In this sense, faith is intertwined with hope.

In conclusion, the Pope invites us to contemplate Mary as a "perfect icon" (LF 58) of faith, because, as the Mother of Jesus, she conceived "faith and joy" (LF 58). The Pope directs his prayer to her, asking for her assistance in human faith, reminding us that those who believe are never alone and teaching us to see through the eyes of Jesus.[6]

Conclusion

This concise excursus through LF shows us the exemplary unity of intentions between both Popes, who despite their differing theological and existential backgrounds, as demonstrated, find themselves in this document and propose a unifying message. On the one hand, it includes a clear analysis of the act of faith to demonstrate its rationality and necessity to be fully man, embodying Ratzinger's distinct inspiration. On the other hand, it delves into the practicality of faith and its impact on contemporary areas of life and society, aligning more with Bergoglio's influence. LF does not fully encompass Pope Francis's pastoral program yet, which he expressed in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (further: EG) published in 2013. What we find here is a definitely ambitious programme based on the pastoral and missionary conversion of the Church and the need to go to not only the geographical but also the existential peripheries of today's world. In this programme, as Kasper reminds us, "the differences are clear–differences not in faith, but certainly in style, methodological approach and the emphases distributed" (Kasper, 2015, p. 20). In EG, Francis offered the entire treasure of Latin American pastoral theology, making it available to the universal Church. The Gospel is presented anew as "joy that fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus" (EG 1), an aesthetic encounter that spurs us towards conversion and mission. Thus, it is better to have a "Church bruised, hurting, and dirty because it has been out on the streets" than a Church imprisoned by itself. Let us not fear, EG reminds us, to be "concerned about the lack of friendship with Christ in so many of our brothers and sisters" (EG 49).

6 Papa Francesco. Ecco l'enciclica "Lumen fidei" «La fede illumina l'esistenza», (2013), *Avvenire*. 5 lipca. https://www.avvenire.it/papa/pagine/enciclica-papa-francesco-lumen-fidei (access: 5.06.2023)..

Moreover, the Latin American ecclesiastical perspective enriches our European experience of Christianity, reminding us that the Church is itself and fully fulfils its mission when it is "poor and for the poor, boldly condemning the current unfair economic system at its roots" (EG 59). As John Paul II stated, the Church "cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice" (EG 183). Lastly, Francis reminds us that in relation to the world, a Christian always provides reasons for their hope, but not as an adversary pointing fingers and condemning (EG 271). For Francis, a pastor from a humble Church, rich in authentic religiosity, "it remains clear that Jesus Christ does not want us as rulers who look down upon others, but as men and women who are brothers and sisters of the people." This, the Pope reiterates, "is not an opinion of the Pope or a pastoral option among others; these are indications of the Word of God so clear, direct, and obvious that they do not require interpretations that would diminish their power to ask questions" (EG 271). Let us live them *sine glossa*, without commentary, Francis advises. In this way, we will experience the missionary joy of sharing life with people faithful to God, trying to ignite the fire in the heart of the world (EG 271).

Benedict and Francis are a gift of the Spirit to the Church of the last two decades. Through them, we have been able to draw from the richness of European theology and the freshness of the evangelical impulse of the Latin American Church. I believe that it is essential to resume the dialogue between these two Church experiences, now as "sisters, one older and one younger" (Alessandri, 1981, p. 131), no longer as mother and daughter. The Latin American Church, after the Second Vatican Council and the CELAM conferences in Medellin in 1968 and Puebla in 1979, underwent, using Methol Ferré's terminology, a transformation from a "receptive" Church to a "protagonist" Church (Methol Ferré, Metalli, 2006, p. 68). This became increasingly evident with the CELAM conference in Aparecida in 2007 and especially with the election of Pope Francis as the successor of Peter. This article aims to be a voice in this academic dialogue, which is always searching for new ways to communicate faith to today's people. The theological genius of Benedict, one of the greatest theologians to ascend the papal throne, and the pastoral charisma of Francis, the first Jesuit Pope from Latin America, remain an inexhaustible source of inspiration for all believers.

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The Gothic temple, its heritage and the architectural presence of the altar in the second half of the 20th century[1]

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Mirosław Bogdan[a]

[a] *Associate Professor Mirosław Bogdan, PhD hab., Arch, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6078-6576, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Faculty of Architecture and Building Engineering, Opole University of Technology*

Abstract: The article defines the role played by the architecture of a Gothic temple in the aspect of the synthesis of the cultural and liturgical image when it concerns the form of the cathedral's facade, its floor plan culminated with the eastern choir and metaphysics where the light processed by stained glass in contact with the frame (stone skeleton) structure brings a symbiotic, symbolic image. The above-mentioned synthesis was interpreted specifically after the Council of Trent (1545-1563) by the demolition of the rood screens closing the Gothic choir in front of the nave of the lay faithful. The liturgical renewal with a visually open choir introduced the main altar at its culmination, obligatorily connected to the tabernacle, and additionally elevated by a retable. The article describes the interior of the Gothic choir after the Council of Trent, liturgically up to date with the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Then, it describes the renewed image of the Gothic choir after another, modern, liturgical renewal. By specifying a new presence of the altar and tabernacle after the Second Vatican Council in the church (currently defined as the domus ecclesiae), the article elucidates the validity of the architecture of the Gothic interior when it exists in accordance with the post-conciliar regulations and serves the purpose of building the community of faith.
Keywords: façade, Gothic choir, rood screen (choir screen), council, altar, tabernacle, architecture

Introduction

An architect designing a church creates both internal and external space of the building, proper for its liturgical function. The construction is designed as a place of prayer for the Church community, yet, at the same time, a symbolic house for invisible God, our Creator, is delineated. The space and symbolism of the Gothic temple, where the synthesis of light and structure provides significant answers, express particularly well God's presence. The form of the Gothic temple was accepted both by medieval liturgical experience and later by other liturgical forms. This fact is proven by the transformations taking place after the Council of Trent (1545-1563). They were caused by the introduction of an obligation to implement the liturgical renewal of the existing architectural interiors other than Gothic ones.

The Council of Trent by dismantling rood screens (choir screens), which divided the Gothic choir from the main nave, turned away from a medieval organizational concept of a smaller church encased within a larger church. The renewal after the Council of Trent introduced a new culture of architectural interpretation of the Gothic interior, however, the respect for it is now as valid as it was before the liturgical renewal of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) as well as after it, in further years of the 20th century.

Approval of the temples with the chancel (presbytery) opening onto the nave zone, in accordance with the after-Trent celebration in the Latin language, was in place up to the times of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). It was not until the 20th century, 100 years after the First Vatican Council (1869-1870), that the next Council proposed the renewal of liturgical celebration. Preserving the concept of the chancel open towards the lay faithful, the post-conciliar

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renewal introduced a new liturgical position of the celebrant, namely facing the people, and the celebration of the Holy Mass in a native language.

The definition of a church building provided by Vatican II, specifying it more as 'domus ecclesiae' – the house of religious community rather than 'Domus Dei' – the House of God, has a great importance to architectural designers who observe the liturgical renewal of the Gothic church. It is a departure from the concept of monumental architecture of the church building towards an object which is a lived-in and lively place (Bandelier, 1999, p. 125-126).

While presenting the research methodology in this article, it is necessary to mention monographs connected with the architectural analysis of the Gothic church interior. It is a book by Felix F. Schwarz (*Symbolique des cathédrales – Visages de la Vierge*, Paris 2003), Jean-Marie Guillouët (*Églises, abbayes et cathédrales*, Luçon 2016) as well as two books by Xavier Barral and Altet (*Rende-vous avec l'art gothique*, Milan 2009) and (*Histoire de l'art*, Paris 2023). As far as the liturgical analysis of the Gothic interior is concerned, one should enumerate a book by Guillaume Durand de Mende (*Manuel pour comprendre la signification symbolique des cathédrales et des églises*, Fuveau 1996). A liturgical problem of the transformability of the Gothic choir after the Council of Trent has been discussed in a book by Bernard Chedozeau (*Chœur clos, chœur ouvert*, Paris 1998). A similar problem, however, more from an architectural perspective, is presented in a book by Louis Bouyer (*Architecture et liturgie*, Paris 1991).

The liturgical rules of the interior arrangement of a pre-council church in the 20th century are described by Jan Danilewicz (*Kościół i jego wnętrze w świetle przepisów prawno-liturgicznych*, Kielce 1948). Documents concerning post-conciliar arrangement of the interior are presented by Jan Miazek – an editor, in the monograph (*To czyńcie na moją pamiątkę*, Eucharystia w dokumentach Kościoła, Warszawa). Other documents that deserve our attention are *Ogólne Wprowadzenie do Mszału Rzymskiego,* published in 1970 and 1983 and a renewed *Kodeks Prawa Kanonicznego* published in 1983. The teachings of John Paul II included in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (Encyclical on Eucharist by John Paul II, Katowice 2003) refer to the aspect of beauty of both liturgy and objects serving this purpose.

The author of this article has discussed the undertaken problem in several monographs published by the publishing house Wydawnictwo Naukowe Śląsk in Katowice. They include, among other positions: *Architektura historycznej formy kościoła a ołtarz współczesny – Architecture de la forme historique de l'église et l'autel contemporain* (2003), *Architektura chóru gotyckiego i przestrzeń sakralna – Architecture du chœur gothique et l'espace sacré* (2008), *Actualité de la fonction de l'architecture du temple gothique – Aktualność funkcji świątyni gotyckiej* (2016), *„Dzieło Opata z Saint-Denis a architektura gotycka południowej Polski. Mistyka/Cystersi/ołtarz – L'œuvre de l'abbé de Saint-Denis et l'architecture au sud de la Pologne. La mystique/les cisterciens/l'autel* (2023).

The present article takes into consideration the fact that Gothic interiors with their vaults and glazing supported by the stone skeleton structure are in principle higher and more structural than Renaissance, Baroque and Neoclassical interiors. Transparent individuality of Gothic structures makes it possible to define the Gothic temple as an object naturally serving the purpose of the function of sacrum. A characteristic feature is the length of the eastern Gothic choir culminated with the sanctuary, which is often incomparable to short presbyteries built after the

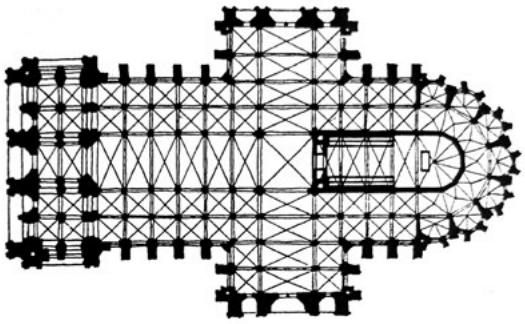

Fig. 1. Cologne (Germany). Cathedral of the Most Holy Virgin Mary and Saint Peter, Gothic choir (1248-1322), the main body of the cathedral was periodically constructed after damage (1347) to the 19th century. Gothic choir separated from the remaining space of the interior, invoking the image of the church functioning within another larger church. Drawing by Mirosław Bogdan.

Gothic period. It invokes a Gothic-related concept of organizing the church as one space enclosed within the second larger space. This concept is contradictory to Gothic structuralism of the stone skeleton and has not been approved since the period of the Council of Trent up to the present times.

The article describes architectural, mystical and liturgical beauty of the Gothic temple. It refers to the layout of the interior culminated in the east with the choir, ambulatory and radiating chapels. The paper conducts an analysis of the symbolism of the interior taking into consideration the light entering it through Gothic stained-glass windows. Prior to the description of the Gothic choir after the liturgical renewal of the Second Vatican Council, the article presents the presence of the altar in the Gothic choir in the period preceding the renewal. It is a choir from the early second half of the 20th century, which is still valid as far as regulations introduced by the Council of Trent are concerned. According to these regulations, the main altar topped with the tabernacle functioned as the altar of the Most Holy Sacrament, constituting a liturgical centre – visible to everybody present in the sacred space. That function ceased to exist in the post-conciliar period, where a second altar (altar table) took place in the chancel and was located on the main axis before the historic altar and took over the role of a liturgical centre. All that happened obviously in compliance with the liturgical law, which also decided about the image and validity of the Gothic choir after Vatican II in the 20th century.

1. Façade and stained-glass window versus choir architecture with the exposition of the main altar

Generally, façade in the French Gothic is organized as an introduction to the layout of the building's interior. It plays a crucial role in the symbolism of churches. It becomes a privileged place, through which the faithful discover and penetrate the object. More often than not, it is oriented with its façade facing the west and the setting sun (Guillouët, 2016, p. 73-74). Its elevation refers to the number of storeys and naves in the church. In particular, the presence of the main nave is highlighted by a special elevation of the architectural object axially leading to the end of the church, which serves the purpose of the individualization of the rood screen (choir screen), and after its removal – the individualization of the main altar and the Eucharistic Elevation.

The presence of the portal solves this issue in a characteristic way and creates a clear image of the Gothic cathedral. The presence of the portal is in principle obligatory on the Gothic façade. The west façade which was constructed in Saint-Denis before 1140 constitutes the first implementation of the Gothic portal. Apart from the central function of the tympanum, the Gothic portal has characteristic jamb columns and colonnettes with jamb figures (Chartres). The figures being integrated through columns on the Gothic façade replace statues located in the glyphs from the Romanesque epoch (Barral and Altet, 2023, p. 46). There is also Gothic rib vault with an archivolt and wimperg.

When the great façade portal is flanked by portals corresponding to side aisles, the whole composition strives upwards, not losing the visible structural solidity of the interior's stone skeleton. Thanks to a harmonious compatibility of the façade lines, light enters the interior through colourful, static stained-glass windows and creates a spatial image. In this way, a symbolic connection is formed between the earth and heaven (Bogdan, 2023, p. 32). The reality of stone sculpture and stained-glass windows forms a visual 'organization', a synthetic composition preserving the cohesion of the whole masterpiece.

Thanks to it, nothing on the façade is accidental, each element is a visual consequence and result of the organic architectural structure of the entire object. The walls of the Gothic object never compromise its architectural skeleton, on the contrary, they highlight it. In fact, the walls 'disappear' and only buttresses are visible giving an impression of lightness. Matter is transformed into spiritual substance. On the one hand, all this forms a protective cloak for the faithful, on the other hand, it creates a veil concealing the mystery of God (Schwarz, 2003, p. 77-78).

In this way, a medieval conviction of the constant presence of the supernatural world influencing human actions came into being. It was possible due to the

theory of gradation, which defines beings as organized by their gradation (Latin *gradus* – grades) – from matter, through body-and-soul beings to purely spiritual beings. This concept was used in art by revealing transcendent beauty, based on brightness and harmony, which was attained by means defined nowadays as artistic. That purpose was served by the Gothic temple, as it was perceived as the harbinger and image of God's Kingdom, whereas the reference to the Apocalypse of St. John conveyed the need for the perfect reality expressed in a symbolic way (Sadoch, 2018, p. 198).

It is presented by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (pseudo-Denys), who in the Middle Ages initiated the idea of hierarchical life of the universe and of rising towards the sources. It refers to the manuscript *The Celestial Hierarchy*. The author of this work and other mystical and theological writings, who had been converted by St Paul and later became a martyr and patron saint of France, was a great inspiration for Abbot Suger (Latin Sugerius) – the builder of the first Gothic choir in the history of architecture (Dahl, 1987, p. 51). To Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, light was of divine origin, it had its source in God and was good in itself. He writes that Good is praised under the name of light because it is revealed through this model image. He also states that material lights denote the spreading of immaterial light, whose image they are (Dahl, 1987, p. 52).

No doubt, a great mystery of light coming from God is concealed in the Gothic rose window. As a large, round stained-glass window conveying the artistic impression of brightness and harmony, it is located above the central portal of the west façade. This feature is present in all large Gothic cathedrals, where sculpture follows the evolution parallel to the one in architecture and the cathedral façade becomes the fundamental site of the sculpture implementation. We mean here the façade with two twin towers with buttresses, which contribute to the image of verticality of the building. A longitudinal gallery and often the storey of the great rose window organize its central zone (Barral and Altet, 2009, p. 31).The rose window, which belongs to this space, may be treated by the faithful as a sign of the concealed presence of the main altar and its sanctuary in the church interior.

The great rose window shows first of all Holy Mary's Glory, it reveals the theology of Mary the Mother of Christ. It depicts episodes from her life, her Jewish genealogy and her glory in heaven. The rose window in the cathedral of Chartres presents Mary the Mother of God with a Holy Infant in its central part, whereas the circumferential petals show the figures of kings and prophets who foretold the coming of Jesus. All these are accompanied by the petals which depict also angels in adoration (McNamara, 2017, p. 184).

Taking into consideration the Eucharistic aspect, the circular composition of the stained-glass rose window (this symbolic west sun) lets in sunrays, which are axially directed from the west to the east towards the altar. It is even more emphasized when the great rose window is located at the altitude of the chancel windows. The layout of the chancel, being an oblong space of the Eucharistic centre and the culmination of the main nave, is emphasized by the sacrificial table, which constitutes the centre of the sanctuary. In the east Gothic choir, in France, this place is preceded by the space reserved for the clergy.

External Gothic walls feature larger stained-glass windows than the ones in Romanesque walls. The natural lighting coming through stained-glass windows engulfs material objects, which become real only when they participate in the luminous power of light. It happens when we treat a pure form of light in a substantial way (light as a creative energy of the Neoplatonic type). It concerns the light introduced into a non-transparent object and the light which spreads by means of transparent space leading to the transformation of the afore-mentioned object. In this way, a picture of transparent and translucent architecture is built. The purpose is to achieve the state when none of the elements exist in the darkness but are subjected to the efficiency of the work of light (Bogdan, 2023, p. 101). Gothic Architecture serves this purpose. By means of a structure open to sunrays, it becomes symbolically transformed thanks to a new form and composition of the window glazing. In particular, it refers to the windows containing tracery, as opposed to mere openings in the walls existing still in the Gothic period in cathedrals in Chartres and Soissons (Willesme, 1982, p. 20).

Together with stained-glass windows, which are aligned with ribs supporting the vaults, the Gothic choir creates space for the Eucharist – unheard of since the Romanesque architecture. The transformation occurs thanks to the light which bursts into the interior through windows made from colourful transparent glass, like 'God's Writing' which drives back the wind and rain. In a symbolic way, they bar all harmful things from entering the building and hurting the congregated faithful.

While the windows let real sunlight in (the light from the One who is God), 'God's Writing' enlightens all those who dwell in his bosom. Taking into account the mystical interpretation, which is broader and superior to the literal meaning, the windows had to be wider on the inside. And the other way round, their form meant that they had to be narrower on the outside, which represented five senses of the body. It was done so they would not attract the vanities of the world. The broadening of the windows towards the interior made it possible for the spiritual gifts to be poured in abundance. Grating placed before the windows showed prophets and unknown doctors of the Church Militant. Sometimes, in order to present two Great Commandments of Love, two identical columns were placed on both sides of the windows. It also symbolized the apostles, who had been sent in pairs to spread Gospel to other nations (Durand de Mende, 1996, p. 38-39).

Whereas the broadening of the stained-glass windows towards the interior finds its place in the apse zone of the choir, the Gothic positioning of the Eucharistic table at the eastern termination of the apse even more emphasizes its privileged architectural position. It takes place in the sanctuary, a characteristic culmination of the chancel – organized in such a way so as to focus the sole attention on the altar itself. The space highlighted by vertical lines contributes to that fact (McNamara, 2017, p. 102). The light introduced into this space defines it in a mystic and symbolic way, whereas the rood screen (choir screen) obscures similar work of sunrays. In this way, windows with tracery located in accordance with the rhythm of the rib vault neutralize the historic significance of the external wall and create walls being 'see-through' partitions, reinforced by flying buttresses. On the other hand, the rood screen veiling the sanctuary along with the clergy in the choir manifests its non-transparency.

In this way, the church zone around the altar of liturgical celebrations was defined with the reference to the Holy of Holies place in Solomon's Temple. The Gothic chancel (presbytery) was also perceived as a microcosm of the heaven separated from the rest of the church by means of a barrier or rail (McNamara, 2017, p. 102). When such a barrier had a form of the rood screen (choir screen), the lay congregation in the Gothic epoch were not visually admitted to the celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, only to the preaching of the Word of God delivered from above, i.e. from the platform of the rood screen immersed in the light of sunrays transformed by stained-glass windows.

This is the legacy of the Carolingian epoch, when the choir had a form of an extension, usually a square one, of the main nave, at the chevet of the church, with or without the presence of the transept. However, there is another, a more historical, explanation of the meaning of the choir. The name originates from the word chorea (dance) or corona (crown). It means that the clergy used to stand in a crown-like fashion around the altar and chant psalms. There were two choirs of singers who signified angels and spirits of the just. They praised God with mutual will and jointly encouraged each other to do good. Therefore the word 'choir' denotes everything that is implied by the word harmony, or rather concord (concordia), which results from love. In other words, in accordance with the thought which defines the participation in God's good, those who do not have love cannot sing in a proper way (Durand de Mende, 1996, p. 35).

When a single cleric sings, it is called 'monodia' in Greek and 'tycinium' in Latin. When two clerics sing, the name 'bicinium' defines this type of singing. Finally, when there are many singers their unanimous melody is called 'chorus' – the choir (Durand de Mende, 1996, p. 35-36).

From an architectural perspective, the two above-mentioned choirs in the Middle Ages take a form of two sets of stalls rows, positioned opposite each other, flanking on both sides the main axis of the temple, usually in the choir before the sanctuary. They could also exist as an independent zone in the

main nave. Through the creation of such a characteristic system, the choir of the clergy determined the relation with the chancel (presbytery), where the presence of the main altar constitutes its eastern culmination. In the process of moving the zone of the clergy choir closer to the sanctuary, i.e. the area of stalls up to the culmination of the main altar, the whole system finds its place in the apsidal end of the church, creating thus the eastern choir. To show respect for the altar, the choir stalls were always separated from the sanctuary with a barrier (Chedozeau, 1998, p. 25). The Gothic choir is higher and often longer than the Romanesque choir, and thanks to the presence of the rood screen (choir screen) creates an image of a church built within another church.

2. The Choir functioning as a closed space in the Gothic epoch

The rood screen (choir screen) is also associated with the term 'pulpitum', which was built at the choir's end bordering with the main nave and completed the choir's composition in the Gothic period. It refers to an element of the chancel arch covered in metal, placed on pillars or columns, whose beam was used for holding the crucifix (rood), statues of the Holy Virgin and St. John as well as reliquaries. The rood screen being an intersecting wall carried a gallery, which served the purpose of reading the Gospel or singing, and similar to the chancel arch was decorated with the crucifix. Rood screens (choir screens) were usually linked by means of two 'arms' of lateral barriers of the choir (Brutails, 1997, p. 130).

According to some authors, rood screens were introduced beginning from the year 760. A question remains, to what extent they were able to define a sacral place, and to what extent they constituted just a delimitation of boundaries between the place of prayer for the clergy and the place of religious practice of the lay faithful. An important moment was the appearance of closed choirs in large and long churches as a result of the development of the canon law at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries (Chedozeau, 1998, p. 19).

A typical French rood screen (in French jubé) was introduced at the end of the 12th century and was constructed as a hall of three spans. The middle span led to the interior of the choir, whereas both side spans featured altars visible to the lay faithful. The crucifix of the rood screen was centrally displayed above the choir door, which was equipped with curtains or sometimes with grating. The door was bilaterally flanked with candlesticks with lit candles. This composition was completed by great groups of sculptures, statues, paintings, low reliefs and objects placed in the interior after the removal of the choir barrier (Chedozeau, 1998, p. 16-17).

Similar rood screens were erected, among other places, in cathedrals in Sens (1135-1176) in the years 1220-1230, in Chartres (1195-1240) in the years 1220-1240 and in the cathedral of Amiens (constructed from 1220) around the year 1260. The French rood screen (jubé) played its function well in Belgium. Up to our time, this type of rood screens has been preserved, for instance, in the interior of the basilica in Walcourt (11th-12th c.) and the Notre-Dame cathedral in Tournai (12th-16th c.). An example of a preserved rood screen can be admired in Spain, in the cathedral in Toledo dating back to the 13th century. In the case of Poland, a historical presence of the rood screen of the French type was documented, e.g. in the Mother of God Church on the Sand in Wrocław (1334-around 1380) or in the Franciscan church in Zawichost (1245 – 1256). The inspiration of the form of the rood screen of the French type lasted in Europe as long as up to the 18th century.

Historically, in Poland we may find numerous structures reminding of the above-mentioned large pulpits. However, they had only one altar for those practising the cult, and not two – which were placed underneath the platform of the French rood screen. When the altar visible to the lay congregation was located on the main axis and was flanked on both sides by the doors leading to the choir, then we are talking about the German rood screen (choir screen), which was also introduced in Central Europe. As for partition screens, also different from the French ones, the pulpit was located behind them on the main axis and was opening, under the arch, towards the interior. Such screens made it possible to place the

pulpit on a position higher than the ciborium of the altar. Another type was the rood screen, in which the partition in its entire length was built in the form of a pulpit without the presence of an altar for the cult celebrants, who, in front of it, could find their place before God (Bogdan, 2008, p. 65)

The polar opposite of the rood screen (choir screen) featured seats for the church hierarchy, the rostrum (bema) and the altar, which were located essentially to the east of the continuation of the nave, at the choir termination. In this place, only the bishop and the clergy formed the chancel choir congregation. They were preceded by the rood screen (choir screen), which took the central place in the first part of the Holy Mass celebration. The rood screen was located on the west entrance to the choir, making it possible to deliver sermons and preach the word of God. There was also the seat for the bishop or parish priest present in this place, however, it was used only on grand occasions (Bouyer, 1991, p. 65). Basically, the rood screen (choir screen) had two functions attributed to it, namely that of a screen (partition) and that of a tribune. They were slowly on the decline in the 16th and 17th centuries due to the demand for good visibility of the liturgical ritual in the temple. Also, the weakening of the status of canon priests contributed to the elimination of rood screens (choir screens) at the turn of the Baroque epoch and the Neoclassicism (Chedozeau, 1998, p. 24).

However, when the above-mentioned status was still powerful, the space in front of the rood screen (choir screen) was visited by the lay faithful, without the possibility of seeing the inside of the choir. That fact referred also to the space surrounding the liturgical choir in the church with the ambulatory, which was a characteristic feature of both Gothic and Romanesque layouts. However, in the Gothic period, the ambulatory of the choir underwent metamorphosis into a more mystical image in relation to its Romanesque form. The transformation was made in the form of radiating chapels, among which the central radiating chapel was dedicated to the Holy Virgin Mary (Willesme, 1982, p. 16-17).

The Lady Chapel, as a characteristic chapel at the axial termination of the temple, found a new purpose after the liturgical renewal of Vatican II, as a place of storing the Eucharist. Obviously, any other chapel in the Gothic interior can be designated to play the above-mentioned function. That also refers to the exposition of the Eucharist in a monstrance. Until recently, in cathedrals or collegiate churches, the tabernacle was not part of the main altar, but was kept in a chapel of a similar function (Bouyer, 1991, p. 75). This fact serves the purpose of individualization of space beyond the liturgical choir in relation to that choir. In the Gothic period, it existed as a closed space and now it functions as an open space.

With the rood screen (choir screen) present, the Gothic lay faithful could not directly participate in the ritual, but were distanced from the mystery of the Holy Mass and not supposed to witness it. A large intersecting composition, closing the perspective, was used to bar the view. From the height of its construction, a lector was calling for the blessing before the reading of the Gospel: 'Jube domine benedicere'. Hence the French name 'jubé' – meaning the rood screen (choir screen), whose structure is practically non-existent nowadays (Guillouët, 2016, p. 123).

With the rood screen (choir screen) present, the procession of the gifts disappeared, whereas the communion of the faithful took place only on special occasions. Most religious songs were sung only by the choir, the whole Liturgy of the Word was incomprehensible due to the use of the Latin language, which was understandable only for the clergy. Nothing was left for the faithful to participate in. Devout lay people were advised to say their private prayers of worship parallel to the liturgy, however, without any connection with it, for instance the rosary. More educated ones were given advice to become engrossed in the reading of a book being the basis for private meditation (Bouyer, 1991, p. 64).

Gothic sacral space does not define the relationship between the space of a lay person praying to God and the space of the altar. Each of these places existed rather for its own sake. Those praying in the Gothic times in the nave were either standing or kneeling. The faithful had no place in the choir except for few chosen dignitaries. A different situation took place in large cathedrals or collegiate churches,

where there were more free seats in the zone of the stalls for clerics and choir singers. It referred to the presence of men, who were more willingly accepted in the space of the choir than women.

In view of all the faithful, beginning from at least the 12th century, one or two additional altars were placed in the nave. It was done even when the choir with the sanctuary was closed in relation to the rest of the interior. Such supplementary altars were not generally used for public celebrations, but for more or less private Holy Masses. After all, in this way the devout faithful had an opportunity to participate in the Eucharistic celebration (Bouyer, 1991, p. 69).

3. Altar in the light exposition, treated as a sacrificial table

The Gothic sanctuary, constituting the eastern termination of the choir, embraces the altar or altars by means of its ambulatory and a balustrade located in front of it. With reference to cathedrals and collegiate churches, they had one main altar, whereas Benedictine monasteries two – above the crypt containing relics of the titular saint or the saint of the monastic order. The medieval sanctuary also included a considerable number of tomb stones, tombs and holy relics. If the lay faithful had no access to the choir stalls, there was even more reason for not admitting them to the most holy space of the church (Chedozeau, 1998, p. 26-27).

Following the demolition of the rood screen (choir screen), the whole Gothic sacral space belongs visually to the eastern liturgical choir, which, from a historical perspective, is built within the space located at the architectural termination of the floor plan (within the cathedral's head – chevet). When it has a form of the architectural choir it includes radiating chapels, ambulatory and liturgical choir reserved for the clergy in the Gothic epoch (Guillouët, 2016, p. 94-95). In the case of a lack of the radiating chapels, its boundaries are delineated by the ambulatory. When there is no ambulatory, the notion of the architectural choir is identical with the notion of the liturgical choir.

Contrary to the rood screen (choir screen), which bans access to the main altar, the visual language of the light in the Gothic temple does not separate or restrict anything, but it links all zones of the interior. Sunrays are evenly distributed throughout the whole nave, in the ambulatory and side aisles. The whole Gothic space comes to life thanks to the light, as if immersed in God's grace. The sun, or rather sunlight, symbolizes the Highest Lord who is God.

The basis for this symbolism has been laid out in a fragment of the Gospel of John, whose words contribute to spiritual and artistic imagination. According to St. John, Jesus speaks about himself that he is the light of the world. In line with the Saviour's words, whoever follows him will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (Bible, 1980, Gospel of John, 8,12, p. 1226). Apart from that, light has many symbolic meanings in the whole Bible (Feuillet, 2009, p. 69)[2].

That is the reason why the eastern liturgical choir has the right to be more illuminated by means of stained-glass windows in the eastern apsidal end of the church than the rest of its interior. In this particular way, the Gothic builders emphasized the symbiosis between the sanctuary and the clergy zone. The zone of choir stalls was subordinated to the zone of the main altar in spite of the existence of a transparent, nevertheless, barrier between them. It is symbolically expressed by the fact that the nave of the Gothic basilica is built as an oriented one, from west to east, and the light entering the interior from the east reminds the faithful about the light coming into the interior from the west through the great rose window (Bogdan, 2008, p. 25-28).

It became obligatory to build Gothic basilicas in such a way so that the head of the viewer would face the east. This concept was reflected in the architecture as the termination of the church floor plan (the chevet) was oriented towards the rising equinoctial sun. That proclaimed that the Church,

2 In the biblical tradition God is light (Ps 27, 1; Iz 60, 19-20), which in itself is divine because God separated light from darkness (Gen 2, 3). Christ is the light of the world (John 18, 12; 9, 5), focusing on the light of the law (Ps 119, 105) the Messiah enlightens people (Łuk 2, 32), who in their own way should be the reflection of God's illumination (2 Kor 4,6): such light comes from love (1 Jan 2, 8-12). The journey towards salvation is a fight against darkness, which is waged by people in the light of the Spirit.

which was fighting on Earth, had to be directed and managed with moderation and spiritual balance, both in joys and sorrows. In consequence, the church's chevet (the end of the floor layout) should not face the west, that is the rise of the sun's solstice. The western light as the solstice light does not provide a symbolic answer as far as the state of moderation and spiritual balance is concerned (Durand de Mende, 1996, p. 28).

Stained-glass windows do not diminish the atmosphere created by daylight. Their colours are joyful, contrasts gentle and the whole space emanates with a symbolic peace of the heavens. The altar situated underneath the choir windows shows the part of liturgy which is expressed through the movements and gestures of the celebrant's hands. The word spoken by him justifies the search for the symbiosis between the sound of the voice of truth and the colour of stained-glass windows. They reflect the liturgical word and symbolically find strength to identify themselves with the truth. The truth that the spiritual light concealed in the Eucharist at the altar has a greater value than the one coming into the interior from the outside through the tracery of stained-glass windows. In a special way, the altar signifies first of all the mortification of our senses or of our heart, in which the commotions of the flesh receive consultation and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Secondly, the altar denotes spiritual Church and this fact is expressed by the four directions of the world, over which Church extends its reign. Thirdly, the altar constitutes an image of Christ, without whom no gift can be offered as a pleasant one to God. It reminds of Church which has a custom of addressing God in its prayers, however, through the mediation of Christ. Fourthly, the altar is a symbol of Christ's body, which entails the final aspect, i.e. the representation of the table at which Christ ate and drank with his disciples (Durand de Mende, 1996, p. 55).

It complies with the legacy of the Council of Trent, which took place between 1542-1563, and implements thus the 'explanation of the doctrine concerning the offering of the Holy Mass'. The Council, acting against errors resulting from the Protestant Reformation, decided to defend the Catholic teachings on the mass. Following the Council, three great popes of that period: Pius V (1566-1572), Gregory XIII and Sixtus V shaped the reform after the Council of Trent. The first of the above-mentioned popes is known as the one who introduced the ways of holiness, which had been previously practised in history, to the Holy Seat. The changes included the re-organization of the Roman Curia and the introduction of simplicity of life and austerity of morals. Saint Pius V put the liturgical life of Church into new forms. Taking into consideration the Trent guidelines, he reformed the missal and breviary. All that was implemented by virtue of Bulla Quo Primum of 1570 (Banaszak, 1989, p. 161).

In medieval churches with the closed choir, the main altar was different from that in the Trent church. Behind the rood screen (choir screen) functioning in the Gothic epoch, the altar existed only as a sacrificial table and did not feature the tabernacle cabinet on it. The sacrificial table was surrounded by fabric curtains, which could completely screen it. It was sometimes topped with a canopy and constituted the centre of the sanctuary. Normally, the altar was bare and did not feature any candles or the crucifix, which could be placed on it only during the ceremony. Sometimes, it leaned against a small altarpiece – the retable, whereas in churches without the Eucharistic cabinet it was topped with a hanging element (for instance, dove), where the Holy Bread was stored (Chedozeau, 1998, p. 29-30).

When the Gothic main altar was built in such a way that it lacked the connection with the tabernacle, its majesty did not express 'the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar'. A different situation took place beginning from the Trent period when the tabernacle was placed behind the table (mensa) of the main altar, which fact shaped the form of the altar different from the Gothic one. That fact modified the role played by the Holy Bread and consequently the awareness of the lay faithful present in the church. In the Middle Ages, the Reserved Sacrament was perceived as the one set aside for the sick, rather than the manifestation of the real presence of Christ. Such presence was shown only

by means of a monstrance. The placement of the tabernacle over the altar table (mensa) expressed, from above, the Catholic dogma of the real presence of Christ when the Communion was distributed from the *holy table* (Chedozeau, 1998, p. 52).

Different to the tabernacle, the sepulchrum altar existed in the medieval period and later in the after-Trent period, to finally become honoured in a similar way till the times of the Second Vatican Council. After Vatican II, when the sepulchrum was present under the altar table (mensa), it was no longer necessary to place the relic of a martyr in it – as was the case in the pre-council period. It was enough to refer generally to the relic of a saint (OWMR, published in 1975, no. 266). However, the way of placement of the sepulchrum under the post-conciliar altar table (mensa) in principle reminds the method of its placement in the pre-council period.

Before the Second Vatican Council, the altar table slab was supposed to be made of one homogeneous, natural, intact and unbreakable stone (K.P.K., 1917, Can. 1198, §1). It refers to regular hard stone without the obligation to use noble material, such as marble (S.R.C., 1899, no. 4032). At the same time, a ban was introduced on using artificial stone, including plaster, cement or terrazzo. It was obligatory for the altar table (mensa) to be constructed as a single uniform block, without joining horizontal layers of the stone, in order to create the top of altar table (Danilewicz, 1948, p. 54).

Such a stone block had to lie on a base, called stipes, which were also made of stone. Other materials, such as brick, metal or wood, were excluded. It referred at least to the four pillars (stipes) which supported the altar table (mensa) (K.P.K., 1917, Can. 1198, § 2). Having ensured that the stipes were made of stone, it was possible to use bricks or different stones of various sizes to fill in empty space under the altar table and between the four stone pillars. A rule was also adopted that the space under the altar table (mensa) was not filled in, which made it possible to construct it in the form of a table where the table top was stabilized by four corner columns with an empty space between them (Danilewicz, 1948, p. 54).

4. The altar with and without the exposition of the tabernacle

The altar itself consists of two main parts. There is always the table (in Latin mensa) and the base (in Latin stipes) screened by the antependium (OWMR, 1975, no. 265). The antependium can be made in the form of a fragment of fabric or a panel placed below the altar table (mensa). If additionally there is the retable exhibited above it, either painted or sculpted, it does not belong, in a liturgical sense, to the altar. Starting from the late Gothic, a similar vertical decoration of the altar forms its background. It is permanently fixed with the sacrificial table, it expands and often becomes a triptych (Koch, 2013, p. 464, 490).

Historical research concludes that apart from very few exceptions of altars from a period of more or less late Middle Ages, none was used for the 'versus populum' celebration. So beyond Rome and its closest surroundings, there is no trace of an alleged application of this position facing the people (versus populum). As a result, we are not able to cite the Church's stand on this matter, which would order this way of celebration in connection with the adoption of the Roman rite after the 9th century (Bouyer, 1991, p. 72-73).

The 'versus populum' celebration, the non-Trent one, began to be used in the 20th century after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The priest has to not only circumwalk the sacrificial table, which was possible even before the Council, but also say the Holy Mass facing the congregation (OWMR, 1975, no. 267; Inter Oecumenici, 1964, no. 91). This purpose is served by the fact that the altar, both in our time and in the times of the Church Fathers (Antiquity), constitutes only a sacrificial table, i.e. it creates a composition without the participation of the predella, retable and tabernacle and readably presents a well-adapted, independent and flat plane for the offering of Christ's sacrifice. An indispensable element of this space is a tablecloth, crucifix and candlesticks (OWMR, 1975, no. 268, 269, 270). Obviously, the crucifix and candlesticks may stand beside the altar and not necessarily on it.

Clear readability of this sign, in the form of self-sufficiency of the table without any supplementary functions apart from the chief function of the

Eucharistic transubstantiation, invokes great respect for the gift of the Eucharist. Therefore in the sacral interior of the second half of the 20th century, by removing the tabernacle from the altar, it is forbidden to accentuate the presence of Eucharistic Christ on the altar from the beginning of the Holy Mass. According to the Canon law, this presence is the fruit of the consecration, which is not performed at the beginning of the Holy Mass (Inter Oecumenici, 1964, no. 95; Eucharisticum Misterium, 1967, no. 55).

Gothic liturgy does not define, in a visual sense, the place of the cabinet for storing the Hosts. At that time the tabernacle in its present form did not exist yet. In the Middle Ages, the Holy Species of Bread and Wine were stored in a capsa in the vestry constituting sacrarium and were carried to the choir only for the time of the Eucharistic celebration. The capsa also stored the Holy Scriptures and the sacrarium itself communicated with the choir (Bouyer, 1991, p. 74).

However, many medieval churches can be found where there were cabinets for storing the Holy Species located in the choirs. It took place, for instance, on the northern side, where the Book of the Gospel was also placed. On the other hand, in the cabinet located in the southern wall of the chancel (presbytery) other books were placed, which were used as lectionaries. In addition, there existed a custom that the Eucharistic pyx was hung over the altar. It was used solely during the celebration as it contained the Holy Sacrament which had just been carried from its cabinet and elevated over the sacrificial table (Bouyer, 1991, p. 74).

The first Gothic tabernacles appeared in the 13th century in the form of tower cabinets, elaborately decorated, rising high above the floor level. Each time they were placed on the northern side of the altar, as separate forms not directly related to the altar. When in the Renaissance epoch their height was lowered, they were moved as the proper tabernacles to the centre of the high altar (Bouyer, 1991, p. 75).

Before Vatican II, there was an obligation to permanently store the Most Holy Sacrament only on one altar in the church. This rule did not refer to the churches with the perpetual adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament. In such interiors, the presence of the second tabernacle was a good solution. In this way, there were two tabernacles, which were located on the altar table (mensa) of the corresponding altar (Danilewicz, 1948, p. 76).

Before the Second Vatican Council it was obligatory to store the Most Holy Sacrament in an immovable tabernacle situated in the central part of the altar. Also, in agreement with the ordinary bishop, the consecrated hosts could be stored for the night in a safer place than the church. In addition, to supplement the above, the corporal and the chancel light or altar light (the so-called eternal light) were indispensable in each place which stored the Most Holy Sacrament (Danilewicz, 1948, p. 76).

The tabernacle on the main altar, which was exhibited above the altar table (mensa), was obliged to function as the altar of the Most Holy Sacrament – creating the most perfect space. It is a visible and undoubted sign of the authentication of its existence and the reinforcement of its cult. That is the reason why the structure of the predella should emphasize that the tabernacle above it constitutes the dominant of the central part of the altar. It constitutes a readable form, existing at the end of the main axis of the church. A visual image of the tabernacle at the top of the central part of the altar slab should not contradict the functional freedom of the altar table (mensa), which precedes it and on which the transubstantiation takes place (Zieliński, 1959, p. 94-95).

The tabernacle has to be always hermetically closed from each side. Before Vatican II it also had to be immovably situated on the altar and fixed onto it, which protected it from being robbed. Also, small open windows for the viewing of the Most Holy Sacrament were banned (S.R.C. 1806, no. 2564). The obligatory use of the conopeum, concealing the external part of the tabernacle, emphasized the gravity of its function. A similar external veiling of the tabernacle, a remnant of an old custom of covering the whole altar with byssus curtains, was obligatory in spite of the application of gold, silver or other precious metals for its construction (S.R.C. 1880, no. 3520). The conopeum could be made of silk, linen, woollen or hemp, in white or a different colour consistent with the liturgical colour of the day. Black colour was not taken into consideration and was generally replaced by purple (S.R.C. 1882, no. 3562).

5. Post-conciliar altar without the exposition of the tabernacle

In our time, the Church Law precisely states that after Vatican II, the church which is newly built or the historical one which is liturgically renewed should feature only one altar for the performance of liturgical functions (OWMR, 1975, no 267; Inter Oecumenici, 1964, no. 93). It invokes the thought about the only Saviour, Jesus Christ, who is symbolized by this very altar (Bogdan, 2020, p. 117)[3]. When it is situated on the main axis of the temple in the Gothic choir or in front of it, it is possible to preserve the historic altar at the end of the axis to extend the tabernacle function connected with it. When the partition screening the Hierarchy is no longer present nowadays, the lay faithful may stay around the sacrificial table. Contrary to the Gothic epoch, everybody can visually participate in the Holy Mass today.

Following Vatican II, the sacred space with internal pillars supporting the historic interior, including Gothic one, and the one without the internal pillars, is always defined by one sacrificial table playing a liturgical function. The church built in the second half of the 20th century does not have the chancel (presbytery) exhibiting the system of stalls. In the post-conciliar church all seats, except for the celebrant's seat, are located in the nave of the faithful, which is one as one is the Lord, one sacrificial table and one community.

The post-conciliar chancel (presbytery) is a liturgical counterpart of the medieval end or termination of the liturgical choir. Nowadays it has lost its old name and is now called the zone of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The zone features the sacrificial table, i.e. the altar, the table of the Liturgy of the Word of God, i.e. the pulpit, and the celebrant's seat, i.e. the sedilia (a place of presiding). Apart from the above-listed objects, also the tabernacle and the baptismal font may be placed in this zone. Obviously, the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Word have a crucial importance in the presbytery (OWMR, 1975, no. 258; Inter Oecumenici, 1964, no. 91).

With the introduction of a single space into the church with the ambulatory, with the lack of the historical main altar, the zone terminating the Gothic interior in our time becomes more clearly comparable to the zone of the contemporary architectural presbytery than at the presence of the old type of the altar. The decisive factor is the decision not to accentuate the system of two sacrificial tables on one axis, but a single post-conciliar altar table. In this case, the arrangement of a space for the contemporary tabernacle, originally located at the axial end of the historical Gothic choir, in a different part of its zone, or beyond it, at a small distance from the altar – is a correct solution.

The tabernacle may also find its place in the chapel of the Most Holy Sacrament or in a different chapel, where the second altar may be placed in compliance with the Church Law (OWMR, 1975, no. 261). It refers to a chapel which is separated from the church nave, however, it is open towards its space. Such a solution ensures communication, which is necessary for the priest carrying Hosts after the performed consecration from the altar serving the liturgical function on Sundays and other holidays to the chapel with the single tabernacle functioning now in the church space.

With the tabernacle located on the historical high altar, the carrying of the Most Holy Sacrament by the priest from the post-conciliar altar table to the tabernacle, and vice versa, is clearly readable as the way planned alongside the main axis of the layout. With the presence of a long Gothic choir and the location of the post-conciliar altar at its beginning, the way between the two altars becomes visibly long. The majesty of this route is highlighted by the height of the Gothic choir and its soaring verticality achieved thanks to the application of the ribbed vault.

3 New liturgical books clearly refer to the original tradition of Church. Therefore the Roman Pontifical provides guidelines to build only one altar in new churches, as it denotes the only Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the only Eucharist of the Catholic Church. Simultaneously, it is suggested that the construction of many altars should be abandoned, when it serves the purpose of making the sacral interior more beautiful. Obviously, it is permissible to build the second altar, but in a specially prepared chapel, separated from the nave.

In the second half of the 20th century, as a result of the Vatican II sessions (1962-1965), the Liturgical Law introduced the renewal of the Liturgy, which separated the tabernacle from the altar table. Even in the 1950s it was not common. Nowadays, the sacrificial table as an independent altar table (mensa), without being combined with the tabernacle, is sufficient to confirm credibility of the consecration (Inter Oecumenici, 1964, no 95; Eucharisticum mysterium, 1967, no. 55). Obviously, the altar – either bound with the tabernacle function or without it (like it was in the Gothic period) – is always exhibited as the chief place of the liturgical celebration and offertory. From a theological perspective, the altar does constitute an image of Christ himself. It is understandable as the Body of Christ is perceived as the site of the sacrifice, martyr's death, after which the resurrection followed (McNamara, 2017, p. 212; Obrzęd poświęcenia ołtarza, no. 22a).

The tabernacle exhibited on a stella and bound with the altar by means of communication provides different autonomy than the one located in the wall or a stained-glass window. A special responsibility befalls a designer or artist, who introduces a new tabernacle in place of the eliminated old one, which existed at the post-Trent termination of the Gothic choir. The materials and colours used are always of great importance. The application of different colours and the structure of textures speak in the space deprived of internal pillars, whether it refers to the Gothic choir or the contemporary presbytery. They speak about the hierarchy of objects in the most important liturgical space of the church.

It is decided by human creativity, which contrary to divine creativity, consists in manufacturing and thus using the existing materials, such as wood, stone or hues. It is the artist who provides them with an individual form and meaning. Discernibly, God's creativity is different to man's creativity. The divine creativity is creation in itself. Between it and man-made creation there is always the so-called 'disparity in their essence or nature' (Kowalczyk, 2020, p. 76-77). A true artist designing liturgical spaces and objects serving God is aware of the existence of such disparity.

John Paul II's Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* emphasizes the importance of the visual cultural and architectural experience in the service of the Mystery, being the expression of full faith of the Church. Therefore various forms of altars and tabernacles developed in different liturgical spaces. They reflect not only motifs of human imagination, but also rules resulting from the clear understanding of the Mystery (John Paul II, 2003, p. 62). To serve the faithful, it requires the accuracy of the artistic expression regarding the formal expression of the Church's faith, in accordance with the pastoral guidance (John Paul II, 2003, p. 64)[4].

The tabernacle located at the termination of the main axis of the Gothic choir is situated higher in space in relation to the post-conciliar altar table (mensa) and accentuates its background, when you look at it from an axial perspective. When it refers to the tabernacle located under the historical retable, the preservation of the historical beauty of the whole high altar becomes obligatory. It amounts to the preservation of the aesthetics of the dominant of the historical culmination of the Gothic choir, which through its visual harmony invokes the need for a longer pause before Christ dwelling in the tabernacle.

It reminds of the words of John Paul II, who in the above-mentioned Encyclical emphasizes the significance of 'the art of prayer'. It is backed up by an aspect of a spiritual conversation, which stirs us to a constant need for silent adoration before the Most Holy Sacrament (John Paul II, 2003, p. 32). A proof of this fact can be found in the post-Trent space of the Gothic choir, which features, at its termination, the authentic art of constructing altar forms culminated with the tabernacle and retable. After all, beyond the time of the Holy Mass, the present Gothic choir has a form of a large chapel, filled with desire for silent adoration.

4 The Church has always given artists broad space for their free artistic creation. However, sacral art must be able to accurately express the mystery contained in the Church's faith and to comply with pastoral guidance provided by competent church authorities. It refers both to visual arts and church music.

In old churches, including Gothic ones, which were renewed by the post-conciliar liturgy, there is a custom of placing the tabernacle behind the mensa of the main altar. However, it is also acceptable to situate the liturgical presence of the tabernacle over the mensa of the side altar (OWMR, 1975, no. 258). In this case, the way delineated between the celebrant standing behind the sacrificial table and the tabernacle does not go along a straight line, which exists in the case of the tabernacle functioning on the historical main altar. It is supported by the composition of two altars, the historical one located at the eastern termination of the choir and the contemporary one situated at the western introduction to the church space. Both of them were erected on the main axis of the church, bilaterally flanked by the system of stalls between them. They are practically non-existent in short presbyteries built after the Gothic period and the way between the historical and the post-conciliar altar of the 20th century is visibly shorter.

The order to dismantle the rood screens (choir screens) of the long choirs after the Council of Trent made it possible for everybody to visually locate the zone of stalls, which participates in the liturgical arrangement of the interior in the same way as it does today. It refers to two historic dispositions of the clergy stalls located opposite each other, with the amphitheatre-like rows, erected one behind another. What is important is that the beginning or the end of free space between the zone of stalls becomes a proper site for the location of the post-conciliar altar in the 20th century. When it finds its place at the beginning of the above-mentioned free space, it constitutes the beginning of the choir zone. A similar layout indicates the possibility of placing it in front of the choir on the main axis by extending the way linking the liturgical altar and the historical altar connected with the tabernacle.

This way is definitely the shortest when the post-conciliar altar finds its place at the eastern termination of the free zone between two systems of stalls. Then, it is visibly closer to the zone of the functioning tabernacle on the existing historical altar. It makes it possible to introduce, into the space of the Gothic choir, the zone of seats located in front of the post-conciliar altar. The seats are organized in rows perpendicular to the system of stalls bilaterally flanking a similar arrangement of the interior.

Therefore along with the simultaneous introduction, into the choir, of the congregation situated in the choir stalls and perpendicular rows of seats, a concept re-appeared to call this zone 'the church functioning within the church'. Obviously, without the presence of the rood screen (choir screen), that presents a picture of a long Gothic chapel at the termination of the floor plan, which plays a liturgical function and is open on the main axis towards the church nave. Such a solution is not possible when the church features a short presbytery, without the possibility of implementing additional seats for the faithful. Then, the search for the concept of 'church functioning within church' cannot be further continued.

Summary and Conclusions

Apart from structural and cultural values, like the stone skeleton accompanied by stained-glass tracery walls, the architecture of Gothic temples also leaves the legacy connected with the liturgical sphere. The display of the great rose window on the façade of the French cathedral bears witness to the symbiosis of light and liturgy, where the symbolically setting sun refers to the presence of the altar concealed, in the Gothic period, behind the rood screen (choir screen) – the façade of the choir which has barely survived till our time (see: Photo 1A, B). Another, rarely preserved, liturgical object is the tabernacle tower, which was placed next to the altar topped with a triptych, whereas triptych retables often constitute a preserved testimony from the epoch of late Gothic (see: Photo 2A, B). Following the Gothic period there still exists the legacy of long choirs with the exposition of stalls showing the style of the epoch in which they were constructed (see: Photo 3A, B). What is also current is the impact of the architecture of the ambulatory responsible for the transparency of the Gothic interior, liturgically open toward radiating chapels, including the Holy

Lady's chapel, which exhibit altars with reference to the centralization of the main altar elevated in the Gothic choir (see: Photo 4A, B).

Since the ambulatory of the zone of the Liturgy of the Eucharist (the contemporary ambulatory) may constitute an element of modern sacral interiors, they functionally remind more of Gothic than post-Trent interiors, which do not feature the presbytery ambulatory. It refers to single-spatiality, which enables the visibility or 'viewability' of the interior of the Gothic choir from each side after the elimination of the rood screen (choir screen) and the replacement of a brick partition of the choir along the ambulatory with a transparent grating, after the Gothic period. The function of encircling the post-conciliar altar by the congregation in contemporary interiors does not have any reference whatsoever to the churches shaped according to the Trent pattern, i.e. the church of Il Gesù (1568-1584), Baroque churches and churches from later epochs, where the absence of the ambulatory reinforces the visual language of the 'viewability' of the altar zone exhibited solely towards the nave zone.

The legacy of Gothic façades and stained-glass art constitutes a great part of European culture. The art and architecture of this period combines structure, visual effects and symbolism in a perfect way. The after-Trent, post-conciliar renewal helped to understand the mysteries of the Gothic temple in a more profound way, whereas the Vatican II renewal fully defined the universal character of the Gothic architectural interior and its flexibility as regards the requirements of the liturgical renewal in each epoch.

The liturgical renewal of the Council of Trent, which was valid up to the 1960s, introduced a concept of a long way leading along the main axis of the layout through the main nave and the choir to the high altar. After the Vatican II renewal, the post-conciliar altar may find its place exactly on this way.

With the altar table situated deep inside the Gothic choir, against a background of the historical altar, or without such a background, the universal character of the Gothic layout shows respect for the concept of the church with after-Trent liturgy. Nowadays, a long, post-conciliar presbytery may play a function of the chapel during week days, whereas on holy days it may naturally constitute the culmination of the Sunday church for a big number of the faithful.

In the 20th century, the location of the post-conciliar altar on the way along the main axis of the layout leading to the historical high altar together with its location before the zone of the Gothic choir emphasizes respect for the contemporary post-conciliar church. That refers to the concept of the post-conciliar sacrificial table which exists surrounded by the faithful when they find their place in the naves of the main body and in the arms of the transept.

Since the post-conciliar altar of a contemporary architectural object may be designed in its geometrical centre, or close to it, this shapes, in a natural way, the space encircling the zone of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This is a form of the contemporary ambulatory, where different chapels may be designed, such as: the chapel of storing the Most Holy Sacrament, the chapel of the exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, the chapel for parents with children, and, finally, the most readable one – the chapel of the week church. The location of one of the above-mentioned chapels on the architectural axis behind the zone of the Eucharistic liturgy emphasizes the aspect of historical presence of the chapel of our Lady. All this defines historical universalism of the Gothic temple.

Photo 1. Façade of the Gothic cathedral with the exposition of the great rose window and rood screen (choir screen), the west façade of the Gothic choir. A. Paris. Notre-Dame Cathedral (1163 – 1270). B. Tournai (Belgium). Notre-Dame Cathedral built from 12th to 14th century (Gothic choir erected in the years 1243-1255). Photo: Author.

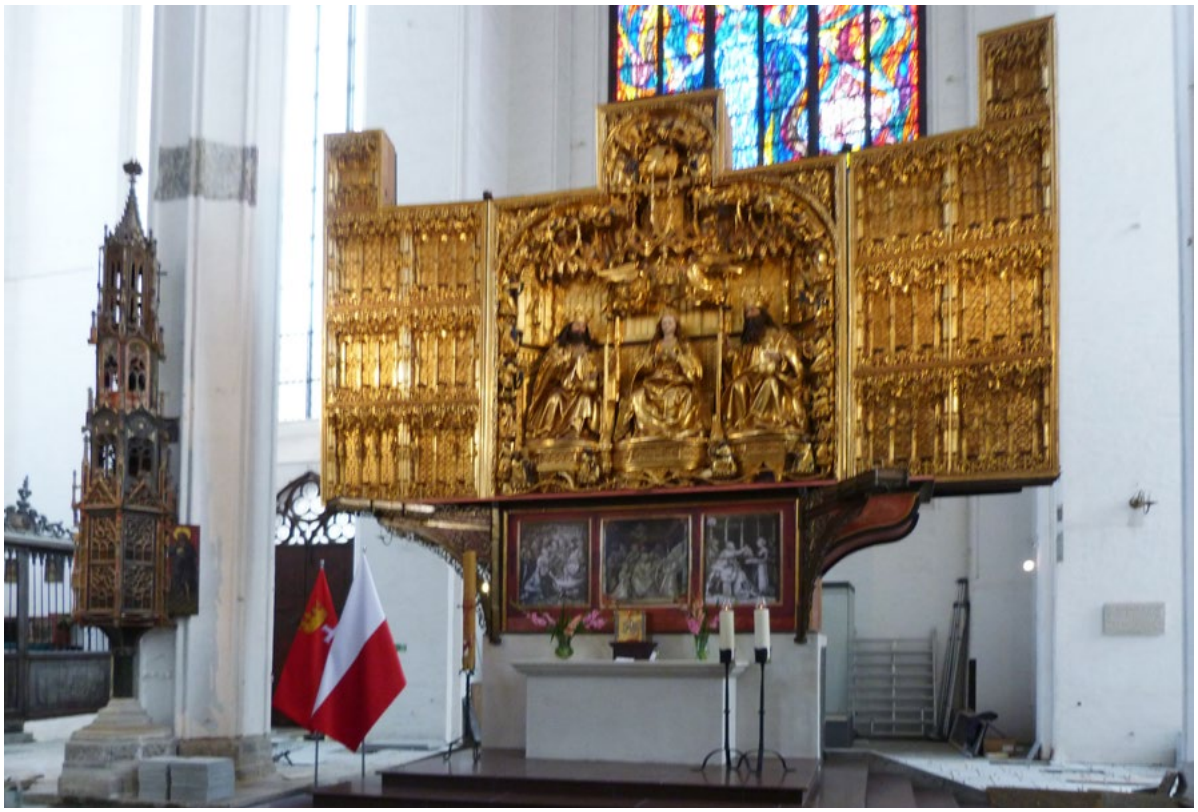

Photo 2. Gothic tower tabernacle situated on the right side of the altar in the Gothic period and the function of the retable in the form of a triptych above the altar topped with the post-Trent tabernacle. A. Gdańsk. Basilica of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1343-1502), tower tabernacle (1478) and retable (1511-1517, Master Michael from Augsburg). B. Nysa. Church of St. Jacob and St. Agnes (1423-1430), retable, Passion Altar from the early 16th century. Photo: Author.

Photo 3. Function of the stalls in a long Gothic choir near the post-conciliar altar located in its west zone. Gothic choir culminated with the post-Trent altar. A. Wrocław. Cathedral of St. John the Baptist (1244-1376).
B. Paris. Notre-Dame Cathedral (1163-1270). Photo: Author.

Photo 4. Function of the ambulatory versus shaping the transparency of the Gothic choir. A. Saint-Denis. Basilica of Saint-Denis, the first-in-the-world Gothic choir (1140-1144). B. Mons (Belgium). St. Waltrude Collegiate Church, Gothic choir (1450-1691). Photo: Author.

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Music in the context of Augustine of Hippo's teaching on the Church[1]

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Marek Malec[a] ✉

[a] *Marek Malec, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2316-1638, Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow*
✉ : *marekmalec@op.pl*

Abstract: The article presents some of Augustine's assumptions about church music. Nowadays, his thoughts related to music contained in his philosophical works are widely known and studied. This paper, however, concentrates mainly on his homiletic speeches and speeches delivered on special occasions in which Augustine taught about the Church. In his speeches, Augustine portrayed music as an external sign of the unity and universality of the Church, which were taken care of in the ancient community. The music performed during the Church's liturgy also became a good example for polemics with pagans and heretics. In Augustine's opinion, music also supports eschatology well, as it pictures future events in which the worship of God through music will have no end. Many of Augustine's thoughts referring to the Church and music have been preserved, however the work is limited to only a few of the more interesting examples. The results of the analysis can be compared with the contemporary teaching of the Church on sacred music, which emphasizes, for example, the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy, as well as internal activity–the source of these suggestions is embedded in the ancient Church and reminds us of those theses, among others, recorded in his works and preached by Saint Augustine of Hippo.
Keywords: alleluia, eschatology, Church, sacred music, psalms

Introduction

Currently, not many authors undertake the task of explaining Augustine of Hippo's (354-430 AD) pastoral approach to musical issues. It is because the intellectual efforts of researchers tend to concentrate around the difficult issue of music theory contained in philosophical works–suffice it to mention Maria Bettetini's study, in which the author lists and summarizes seventy-four articles written between 1940 and 1990 dedicated to the work De musica (Bettetini, 1991). Among the few authors who partially address the symbolic and theological issues related to music are German scholar Jutte Günther, who explores the essence of Das neue lied mit herz (Günther, 2019), and two Italian researchers: Laurence Wuidar, who examines the symbolism of musical instruments contained in the work Enarrationes in Psalmos (Wuidar, 2014), and Giuseppe Micunco, who assumes that Augustine addressed musical issues in his speeches essentially within three aspects: existential, professional and pastoral (Micunco, 2011).

The article attempts to present several issues related to the theology of music by analyzing bishop Augustine's homiletic teaching in connection with his ecclesiological thought. This issue, it is assumed, is nowhere to be found in the quoted works. In turn, the proposed scheme will help to go deeper into the issues of contemporary liturgical music.

1 Article in polish language: Muzyka w kontekście nauki o Kościele Augustyna z Hippony, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Male.pdf

1. Liturgical singing a way for the Church to express itself

Bishop Augustine often began his homilies by citing a passage from a psalm sung during the liturgy, and even dedicated the entire homilies to the psalms; this is particularly evident in the collection of sermons that focus on to *the Book of Psalms* of the Old Testament. In these homilies, the author concentrated on explaining the essence of prayer and praising God together. Psalms, on the other hand, sung during church services expressed the thanksgiving character of the liturgical assembly, which often became an element of theological instruction. It also did not escape the Author's notice that some psalms were sung more solemnly and frequently (En. Ps. 41.1).

A particular feature of the Church's singing that Augustine was keen to emphasize in his speeches was concord (*consona voce*), since, he believed, common singing indicates unity and emphasizes the character of the community (Sermo 153.1). The Author believed that music preserves unity of heart among believers who sing–*una voce et uno corde* (Sermo 162C.1). Augustine was convinced that singing together influences the faith of a single person (Ev. Io. Tr. 12.9). Finally, he also claimed that the singing of all Christians creates one common voice (*unus cantat*) because there is also one Christ in the Church (*unus Christus*) (En. Ps. 86.4).

An important element of Augustine's teaching was his attention to the division of the faithful during the singing of psalms in the liturgy, which provided an appropriate point for ecclesiastical consideration.

The custom of the Church of Hippo was alternate singing of the cantor and the liturgical assembly. On this basis Augustine concluded that the cantor sings on behalf of all those gathered for the liturgy, and the response of the liturgical assembly is performed on behalf of the individual Christian (Ev. Io. Tr 12.9). According to Augustine, therefore, in the Church there is an exchange of reciprocity between the members of the community through which unity in the Church is preserved.

This approach to singing in the Church of Hippo became the starting point for certain theological generalizations. Augustine proclaimed: "cantat Ecclesia" (Sermo 366.1), by which he meant that singing was not only connected with conventional behavior during the liturgy, but became a way of expressing the unity of the Church, so much so that Augustine considered singing equivalent to listening to the readings and receiving the Eucharist (Sermo 57.7.7). Therefore, over time the psalms performed in the Church became an image of Christian life as well, especially resounding in Augustine of Hippo's characteristic and repeated message to the Christian community in Hippo: "sing with your lives." According to the bishop of Hippo, singing is praising God in the Church, among the saints, and is performed in joy (Sermo 34.1.6). The singing that the Church undertakes is a song of praise (En. Ps. 21(1).23), which is sung for God with praise and joy in the heart (Ep. 140.17.44). Thus, the singing of psalms expressed well the identity and life of the Church. Augustine emphasizes that what is sung in a psalm should become part of the Christian life. *The Book of Psalms* became an ethical instruction manual for Christians indicating the morality of conduct. Finally, through singing, Christians distinguish themselves from pagans (Tr. con. pag. 1.).

In the subsequent assumptions of the Bishop of Hippo, the singing of the Church is combined with the singing of Christ, who is the Head of the Church. In the theological interpretation of *the Book of Psalms*, the ancient bishop drew attention to those psalms which belong only to Christ, and which David sang in His name thus becoming His type. Among the psalms there are also those sung by the Church joining in the singing of Christ, which *harmonizes* the Christian community (De Tr. 4.3.6). If Christ was the only one to sing, the singing would belong to him, but since the whole Church sings, she sings in Christ and in her entirety becomes Christ. The Church unites with Christ when she sings with faith, hope and love (En. Ps. 100.3). Through her singing, the Church joins in the sacrifice made by Christ on the cross. The Church joins in this sacrifice through its own *sacrifice of praise* (sacrificium laudis), which Christians express through prayer or action, when the tongue blesses God by singing and enduring the hardships of their own lives (En. Ps. 49.23).

By singing, the Church not only manifests its unity, but unites with Christ, who gives new life. This union of the Church with Christ is also explained through musical

images. *The new man*, in Augustine's teaching, uses *a new song*, different from that which was performed in the times of the Old Testament (En. Ps. 39.13). What comes from *the old man* are not only *old songs*, but also *bad songs* (*cantica mala*) (En. Ps. 137.10). Christ himself has made his voice the singing of the Church (Epist. 140.6.15; De Tr. 4.3.6.). The entire Church becomes one Christ if it unites with its Head-Christ when it performs psalms and hymns (En. Ps. 100.3). Through the singing of the entire *Body of Christ*, the building of a new community, the house of God, is accomplished. In Augustine's mind, *a new song* also forms the community of the Church (Sermo 116.7.7).

The singing of *a new song* concerns the fulfillment of the new commandment, i.e., love of God and neighbor, and this is a task not only of the individual man, but is given to the community of *the new man*, which Christians are (Sermo 336.1). *The new man* opposes *the old man* by virtue of the faith he has (Cont. Faust. 24.1) and consists in having the Body and Blood of Christ within him. This is also expressed by singing *the new song* that convicts to *a new life* (En. Ps. 39.13). The lips of *the new man* sing the song, and the heart does what the lips sing about. In his statements, Augustine uses the example of heretics who, in the opinion of the Bishop of Hippo, shout and sing aloud, but their hearts are closed. There are also those among them who have their lips closed and do not sing the praises of God (En. Ps. 119.9). Augustine argued that what is sung during the liturgy has its effect on daily life. Basically, daily customs are the accompaniment of what the lips sing about (En. Ps. 132.5).

The unity between Christ and a Christian is also explained using other images, such as the tympanum. The stretched hide on the drum of the instrument resembles Christ hanging on the cross at Golgotha. According to Augustine, the allegory of the drum points to Christ's supreme love for man. The Church, on the other hand, plays the tympanum and sings along with Christ, which is supposed to signify the Church's maiden joy resounding with spiritual songs (*spiritaliter sonorae*) (En. Ps. 67.35).

Priority in the singing performed by the Church is given to the human heart, which is the source of prayer, since from the heart comes all praise of God that goes outward and is heard. Hence, the Christian song first has an inward orientation (*canticum intus*), which is difficult to recognize externally without maintaining unity in the Church (Sermo 198.1). Finally, it is love itself that sings the new song (Sermo 33.1; En. Ps. 95.2.). Keeping the Christian song in the heart is also a guarantee that the singing will never be interrupted, even if it is outwardly silent (En. Ps. 37.14.). Therefore, Augustine believes that the singing can also continue outside the liturgy, in the act of praise, through Christian life. Praise of God can be done not only with the lips, but also through deeds, mercy, gratitude, moderation, and modesty (Ep. Io. Tr. 8.1; En. Ps. 149.16.). Audible singing, on the other hand, is a continuation and expression of the singing kept in the heart.

It should be borne in mind that inwardly oriented Christian singing stems from the Pythagorean assumptions of the Author. However, an analysis of passages in Augustine's works shows that singing having its place in the heart can be heard, and Augustine argues that the lips are to harmonize with the heart (Epist. 48.3). Essentially, Augustine's instruction on the tongue as an organ used in music runs on two planes. On the one hand, Augustine argues that language is pernicious, especially when it is not in unity with the heart, and on the other hand, if the tongue cooperates with the heart, it can give glory to God. The ancient Philosopher pointed out clearly that the tongue became an instrument of salvation–Jesus used what is mortal, i.e., transient sounds, to get to know heaven and the immortal Word of God (En. Ps. 103(1).8). Augustine uses a kind of syllogism here and states that the proclamation of truth means nothing if the heart does not agree with the tongue (En. Ps. 57.23), while the heart itself even demands the singing of the lips (En. Ps. 48(2).10). Therefore, Augustine exhorts: "sing with your voices, your hearts" (*cantate vocibus, cantate cordibus*) (Sermo 34.3.).

In modern studies of Augustine's thought, the internalization of singing is emphasized, which is due to the philosophical approach to the art of music at that time. What constitutes a complement to this both theological and philosophical thought is the prayer of the Church, which in Hippo readily used the art of music, singing psalms or as worship by performing the

well-known *jubili*, or songs without lyrics. Undoubtedly, the justification for common singing performed in the Church also stems from Augustine's conversion, as he himself emphasized the effect of singing on the soul, particularly noting the performance of psalms in Milan during services led by Saint Ambrose. Augustine is enthralled by the singing of the entire Church, and wonders what is the relationship between reason and feeling in the context of audible music (Conf. 10.33). Therefore, he ultimately concludes that singing gives consolation (*consolationis*) and strengthens the spirit (*exhortationis*) (Conf. 9.6.15). Augustine's conversion bestows upon him a new perspective on the Church and musical aesthetics. Joseph Ratzinger stated that after his conversion, Augustine was not interested in the common, ahistorical philosophical truth available in the subject matter, where he gave only formal significance to historical revelation, since after his conversion he fully accepted the revelation contained in the Holy Scripture, but also learned about the traditions of the Church in Hippo (Ratzinger, 2014). It seems that this assumption also fits in with the reflection on music, which during Augustine's pastoral years in Hippo ceased to be interpreted as mere speculation, but performed in the Church externalized the intentions of the heart and allowed, according to the words of *the Acts of the Apostles*, the Christians to be of one heart and one spirit (cf. Acts 4:32).

2. Unity, universality and holiness of the Church

Augustine's musical images are based on several identity assumptions of the Church, which include unity, universality and holiness. It turns out that all three theological features are related in some way to the teaching on music, which leads us to assume that the Church expresses herself through music, which is of an ecclesiastical nature.

The message on unity is a major theme of Augustine's teaching. Augustine asserts that only the Catholic Church can sing the authentic song of love (*the new song*). Those who do not maintain unity with the Church are excluded from this song. For the goal of the Church's unity is reconciliation with God and man which is accomplished by the same visible signs, such as the common singing of the followers. The entire world, Augustine believes, sings the same song to God in harmony and unity. Using an meaningful example, Augustine believes that the Donatists also sing psalms during their services, yet they do not possess the same love (caritas), since they are separated from the Catholic Church. Therefore, their singing is neither dignified nor authentic. Although Catholics and heretics pronounce the same words, sing the same text of psalms, yet they both live in discord. It means that the singing of the Donatists is deaf (En. Ps. 95.11) and does not present lasting values (En. Ps. 95.3). It should be noted that the Christian musical aesthetics at this point in the teaching were not set by artistic expression or even by the way the singing was performed, but by internal criteria, in this case the love and unity of the Church. It can therefore be thought that the preserved sense of the sung word is privileged in relation to external aesthetics. Augustine formulates this principle in words: inconsistency in singing leads to disharmony of heart (En. Ps. 95.11).

The community of unity between Christ and the Church was also explained by Augustine by referring to the biblical image of the love of the betrothed man and the betrothed woman. This image carries a musical meaning. Both the betrothed man and the betrothed woman sing the same song, and their voices resonate with each other. There is also a theological image in this comparison: since the married two are one flesh, they should also form one voice (Epist. 140.6.18). In Augustine's allegory, the wedding song contains praise of the betrothed man, while the theme of the betrothed woman's song is joy and the fact that the Church has Christ as her betrothed man (En. Ps. 44.3). Augustine, in his comparison, goes even further and turns the allegorical sense into a literal one, as he also seeks to find a musical genre worthy of praising such a loving relationship. Thus, the ancient Author writes about a wedding song using the ancient technical terms *carmen nuptiale* and *epithalamium* referring to nuptials (Malec, 2023).

The teaching on the universality of the Church was expressed in the belief that the whole world sings the same song, so all Christians should join in singing *Alleluia* together, which was customary in Hippo dur-

ing the period of Easter. Whoever, on the other hand, does not sing together with the Church blasphemes against God. A natural extension of singing should be the performance of good deeds (En. Ps. 149.2). For those who do not sing in union with the universal Church, i.e., sing in separation from the Church, are enemies of love, the fullness of which is contained in the ten strings of the psaltery symbolizing God's Ten Commandments (Sermo 33.5). The singing of the Church resounds throughout the world (*omnis terra*), although for Augustine the expression refers to the Church spread throughout the world. All Christians throughout the Earth participate in the singing of the new song (Contr. Pet. 2.47.110.). Thus, *the new song* is not sung alone, but in the Church, when a Christian's voice joins the voices of the entire community (En. Ps. 66.6). The Church sings the song of unity by praying together, keeping joy and praise in her heart (Epist. 140.17.44).

Augustine expressed the fact that music is *sacred* in the words: *sancta musica* (En. Ps. 143.18; Conf. IV. 15.), although it should be admitted that this expression occurs quite rarely. On the other hand, it should be noted that Augustine sought a boundary between the secular and the sacred, which today takes the form of a *sacrum-profanum* formula. Music performed in and by the Church is different from that heard in theaters or immoral feasts. First of all, Augustine stated that singing should be taken from the Holy Scripture, about which we can learn from the historical context, since in Augustine's time it was customary to perform psalms during the liturgy. Secondly, from Augustine's surviving speeches, it is clear that the theater of the time was associated with immoral behavior of actors and desecration of feast days (Ep. Io. Tr. 4.4). The third reason for the separation of the Church's music from secular music was the widespread use of musical art in pagan cults, where music even contributed to bodily pleasures negatively perceived by the Bishop of Hippo (Sermo 279.13).

Another element related to the search for the *sacrum* for the Church's music was the expansion of the theology of music and the establishment of a separate autonomous Christian musical aesthetic. Augustine was convinced that sacred music should communicate and explain the truths of faith and depict things to come. Augustine explained that music must not be attached to lower-order beauty, i.e., the audible and visible (Grześkowiak, 2014). On the contrary, the source of the Church's music should be found in the Word of God and in the human heart, which is the subject of the full knowledge of God. The excellence of music is also evidenced by its connection to the liturgy and the liturgical assembly, which is ready to give glory to God in community with the Head-Christ. Music should have positive content, and its theme should be the praise of God in hope (*in spe*). An important feature of sacred music for Augustine was also the reasonableness of singing, which is opposed to stimulating only emotional and affective perception (En. Ps. 98.5). The reasonableness of singing is marked by Augustine's instruction to Christians to sing in truth (*in veritate cantare*) (En. Ps. 123.3), which, naturally, in Augustine's case means turning away from the practice of performing mythological chants dedicated to deities invented by man.

A certain complement to the above characteristics of music is Augustine's conviction that singing should be pious (*divino cantico*) (Contr. Jul. 4.14.66; cf. Conf. 10.49-50), which indicates towards the purpose and dignity of the art performed in the Church. Music, for Augustine, becomes a tool for seeking God himself through beauty, and this means that Christians should not stop only at the formal elements of music, such as, for example, the metrical feet used back in Augustine's time. The Church's music cannot lead only to aesthetic perfection, because, as it has already been said, the source for the aesthetics of the music was to turn to the Word of God and the soul. At the same time, what was associated with the Church's music was eulogizing God's attributes. In one of his sermons, Augustine stated that the theme of singing should be the very majesty of God and his attributes: omnipotence, immeasurability, eternity, love or the fact that he is the Creator of the world and Savior in his Son Jesus Christ (Sermo 33.2).

Music, therefore, in the texts of the Bishop of Hippo is sacred because of its autonomy and independence from commonly performed music. It should be mentioned that in one of his polemical

texts, Augustine addressed the Pelagian bishop Julian and remarked that he should know church music (*ecclesiastica musica*) (Contr. Iul. 5.5.23), which confirms the developed technical expressions defining the Church's singing, as well as the independence and autonomy of the Church's art.

3. Singing of eschatological hope

The ancient Author introduces two basic horizons of meaning of the Church's singing. The first is expressed by the word *in re*, that is, in reality, and the second by the word *in spe*, that is, in hope (Sermo 255.5.5). This division is due to the complexity of the visible and invisible Church, and it means that the singing of the Church awakened in earthly reality will continue in heaven. Therefore, the right moment to clarify these issues became the liturgical period of Easter in Hippo. In fact, the entire liturgical period of the Church in Hippo was divided into two basic parts: preparation for the resurrection and the time after the resurrection. Singing was an essential part of the Easter celebrations. In addition to the fact that songs during this period expressed hope and joy, Augustine further asserted that music prepares Christians for the singing that will continue without end in heaven (En. Ps. 137.7.). The time of resurrection is also a time of hope for the Church, which in singing the resurrection rejuvenates itself by continually moving from *the old song* performed in the Old Testament to *the new song* performed by *the new man* reborn through the resurrection (Wuidar, 2014).

The theme of music also incorporates the truth about the Church's pilgrimage. Singing accompanies Christians on their way to heaven by rekindling their hope for eternity. Singing itself, therefore, does not satisfy Christians, as was the case in pagan cults, where the task of music was to liberate feelings, thus leading to immoral behavior. Singing, on the other hand, accompanied Christians on their pilgrimage to heaven (En. Ps. 66.6).

The hope for eternity that the Church has is explained by Augustine most often through the singing of *Alleluia*. In fact, this singing also has two references in Augustine's texts: for this singing is performed by angels in heaven before God and on earth by the Church. Therefore, through this singing, Christians mark the way to the heavenly kingdom (J. Günther, 2019). The singing of *Alleluia* also indicates the joy of the Church, which through this outward expression prepares for eternal peace and joy, where the singing of praise will be endlessly performed (Sermo 252.9). The manner in which the psalms were performed also provided Augustine with an opportunity for theological clarification. For the singing was performed in a melismatic manner, which for some Christians seemed too long and tedious. Augustine instructed the followers that singing in heaven would have no end, but neither would anyone be bored, for it would be performed perfectly (Ep. Io. Tr. 10.6; En. Ps. 83.8).

Augustine's conviction about the angelic performance of singing was mainly derived from philosophical knowledge and the Pythagorean approach to music, in which man is incorporated into the harmony of the universe, in which eternal music takes place. Augustine was convinced that the music verbalized by the Church takes place first in heaven and has its origin in heaven. Through the singing of the Church, Augustine explained the communion of saints and the interdependence between earthly and heavenly realities. Above all, it is God the Father who is the first to sing in the Universe, as Augustine's coherent project on the theology of music shows. Augustine claimed that the entire Universe is a psalm sung by God (Epist. 166.13). God is singing, and music draws human souls to itself. On the other hand, the figure of Christ-Logos, who also resounds through silence and in songs and speaks to man, is inscribed in human history (Wuidar, 2014).

4. Perspective for contemporary sacred music

In the writings of St. Augustine, we can find the basis for the teaching of *the Second Vatican Council*, which noted that singing, as related to words, is an integral part of the solemn liturgy (CL 112). Augustine develops this theme as he considers the Church's singing in typical genres drawn from the Bible, such as psalms, hymns and the singing of *Alleluia*. This paper, on the

other hand, focuses on showing the ecclesial nature of Christian music, which enriches the issues of the relationship to the word discussed by showing it in the Church's union with the Head-Christ, who is at the same time the eternal Word of the Father.

An important feature of Augustine's teaching is to show the Church praying together, that is, Christians actively participating in the liturgy. This activity is not just an outward expression of random people gathered in one place and time, but since this prayer flows from the heart of man, it is deliberate and performed in a conscious manner. A contemporary instruction on *the prayer of the heart* can be found in the postulates of the *Musicam Sacram* instruction, which emphasizes the activeness of the followers' participation in an external and internal way (MS 15). On the other hand, the presented dualism essentially initiated in Plato's times today takes the shape of a twofold direction of approach to sacred music: spiritualism–which is to support the spiritualization of man during prayer, and the incarnational current–which is an extension of the Incarnation (Karpowicz, 2021). The task of music is not only to bring people closer to God, but also to show the fullness of humanity (Stankiewicz, 2014).

It is also a theological development for sacred music to show the face of the *sacrum* of the music, thus expanding the theology of *the new song* sung by accepting the events of the cross and participating in the resurrection. *The new man* sings another *new song*, unknown to outsiders, together with Christ, who by dying on the cross *harmonized* with *the new man* and was buried in order to rise with him to new life (Romans 6:4). This participation in salvific events is well illustrated by the music that the Christian performs to unite himself with Christ. A feature that clearly stems from Augustine's teaching on music is the union of Christ and the Church during singing. Also in modern teaching, it is emphasized that Christ is present in the Church whenever the Church prays and sings psalms (KL 7).

A clear return to Augustine's teaching is the portrayal of sacred music as *holy* by Pope Pius X in his motu proprio on music. In this document, the Pope recommended that sacred music be separated from all secular and theatrical elements (Pius X, 2002). This truth has also been somewhat *resurrected* in the teaching of other modern popes, yet with its roots in the teaching of St. Augustine, who faced exactly the same problem of listening to and performing theatrical music in his pastoral place in Africa.

The final comparative element for contemporary sacred music discussed in this article is the teaching on things to come. This theme was used by Augustine especially in his sermons and speeches. Such a direction of understanding music was also taken by the contemporary instruction *Musicam Sacram*, which states that the musical art performed in the Church is a prefigurement and image of what is being accomplished in Jerusalem (Musicam Sacram 5).

Source texts:
Augustine's works in Latin are available at: www.augustinus.it

Abbreviations used in the text
Ev. Io. Tr. – In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus centum viginti quatuor
En. Ps. – Enarrationes in Psalmos
Tr. con. pag. – Tractatus contra paganos (Sermo 198augm.)
De Tr. – De Trinitate
Epist. – Epistolae
Contr. Faust. – Contra Faustinum Manichaeum
Conf. – Confessiones
Contr. Pet. – Contra Litteras Petiliani
Ep. Io. Tr. – In epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos
Contr. Iul. – Contra Iulianum

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Blessed priest Jerzy Popiełuszko as a personal model in upbringing towards the virtue of courage[1]

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Weronika Juroszek[a]

[a] *Weronika Juroszek, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1266-6091, Institute of Pedagogy, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Silesia*

Abstract: The paper focused on personal models in upbringing towards the virtues. The aim of the research was to answer the following question: "How can we use the example of blessed Jerzy Popiełuszko in upbringing towards the virtue of courage?". The author used the history-pedagogy biographical method. The life and activity of the martyr cruelly murdered by the communist Secret Service were analysed. During his whole life, Jerzy Popiełuszko demonstrated the will to follow Jesus Christ in everything, including accepting a cruel death in the spirit of loving his enemies. The author concentrated particularly on the period of his life when he stationed in a military unit in Bartoszyce known for its strict discipline (1965-1967). It was then, at the age of 19, that he had already perfectly completed the courage criteria. The applied criteria for the virtue of such courage have been proposed by Jacek Woroniecki – a Dominican monk, philosopher, pedagogue, and one of the most outstanding Thomists. The results of the research are the guidelines for upbringing in the virtue of courage. The process should concentrate on the will to overcome fear in the face of danger, patience and perseverance in suffering without expecting admiration or praise, courage with prudence, sensitivity to the harm of others and conscious distance from cowardice and insolence. The study showed that Popiełuszko fulfilled the Woroniecki's criteria for courage from the Christian perspective. The author analysed the 'scapegoat mechanism' used by the communist Secret Service to torture selected people. The examples from the life of Jerzy Popiełuszko that are the inspiration on how to shape the virtue of courage are useful in upbringing. The concept proposed by Jacek Woroniecki can be used in the next analyses of potential candidates for being the model of a courageous person.
Keywords: priest Jerzy Popiełuszko, virtue of courage, personal model, Jacek Woroniecki, Christian upbringing

Introduction

In upbringing towards values, an important role is played by people who have perfectly demonstrated in their lives how to defend the highest ideals. Their biographies, perceived in terms of uniqueness, provide the environment with valuable forms of action even in extremely difficult conditions (Juroszek, 2023a, 2023b, 2022; Okoń, 2007). These people, referred to in the literature as personal models, encourage other people to follow them by affecting the emotional and motivational spheres of their followers (Okoń, 2007).

This paper analyses the figure of blessed priest Jerzy Popiełuszko. So far in the literature, his activity has been subjected to many inquiries, mainly from historical (Daszkiewicz, 1990; Gromadzki, Witkowski, 2022; Kindziuk, 2014; Litka, 2009), theological (Bartoszewski, 2009; Brien, 2016; Skoczylas, 2012; Sochoń, 2010) and pedagogical (Skoczylas, 2012) perspectives. Due to the psycho-pedagogical focus of the content of this article, the paper by Kazimierz Skoczylas (2012) deserves special attention. Priest Jerzy Popiełuszko was presented there as a personal role model in Christian upbringing. Using the example of Jerzy Popiełuszko's life and activities, Skoczylas demonstrated how one could follow Christ by following him in preaching the Gospel and serving the neighbour. Skoczylas paid particular attention to Popiełuszko's constant readiness to accept death for the faith in the spirit of love of enemies.

The aim of this paper was to analyse the life and activities of priest Popiełuszko from the perspective of the model of a courageous person. This analysis

1 Article in polish language: Błogosławiony ks. Jerzy Popiełuszko jako wzór osobowy w wychowaniu do cnoty męstwa, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Juro.pdf

was conducted by referring to the book by Jacek Woroniecki (2000) on the issue of Catholic upbringing ethics and the Christian ideal of upbringing. The concept proposed by Woroniecki was chosen for several reasons.

Firstly, Woroniecki defined upbringing as the process of consciously shaping both skills and virtues in the student from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood. Secondly, he attached great importance to the consciously constantly renewed effort put into work on oneself (self-upbringing), which should continue until death. In other words, Woroniecki was of the opinion that a person's work related to self-upbringing should never cease. Thirdly, Woroniecki postulated that the process of forming particular virtues in the student should be guided by the lives of saints. Fourthly, he stressed the great importance of martyrdom as the pinnacle manifestation of courage. The homage that Christianity pays to martyrs poses tremendously difficult requirements related to the acceptance of death (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 428). Jesus Christ, who prayed for his tormentors with no rebellion or complaint and suffered death for the salvation of mankind, can serve as an example.

In the life of priest Popiełuszko, one can find a constantly renewed will to follow Christ in everything, including accepting a cruel martyr death that took place on October 19, 1984. On that day, while driving a car from Warsaw to Toruń, Popiełuszko was abducted by agents of the Security Service. He was tortured and finally thrown into the Vistula River in a sack with stones.

On day 23 of the trial in the Provincial Court in Toruń, lawyer Andrzej Grabinski stated that "the victim was chosen in cold blood. There was cold determination in choosing the victim. Such a victim was chosen in cold blood so that the case could be high-profile with the highest impact" (Daszkiewicz, 1990, p. 251).

To this day, the case of the death of Popiełuszko has not been solved. During the so-called "Toruń trial", three people, who were the employees of the Ministry of Interior, were found guilty of murder.

However, prosecutor Andrzej Witkowski (one of the most dedicated lawyers to the case) claims that probably different people murdered Popiełuszko. According to Witkowski, the torture Popiełuszko experienced was only the beginning to the final torture. As Witkowski states, after Popiełuszko was abducted by the Polish Security Service, he was taken over by the Russian Special Service. Using the most gruesome torture, the agents of the Service tortured him for several more days.[2]

According to Woroniecki, the examples of immense courage, fortitude, and heroism in the face of cruel death are also encountered in non-Christian cultures, which proves that human strength alone can overcome much, including the pain and horror that accompany cruel and sophisticated death penalties. However, Christian martyrdom is imbued with the values not found elsewhere. These values stem from a tremendous belief in the role of suffering combined with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the salvation of others. Woroniecki related to the heroic suffering of the martyrs accepted in the Christian spirit in the following way: "Instead of mere stoic fortitude, it is permeated by a profound love for one's neighbour, manifested even towards the oppressors, and next to it there are calmness, placidity, and sometimes even joy that one has the opportunity to give Christ this highest proof of love" (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 429).

Of note, Jerzy Popiełuszko manifested such extraordinary faith as early as at the age of under twenty. Tormented by his superiors in a military unit in Bartoszyce, Popiełuszko uttered the significant words: "God, how lightly one suffers when one is aware that one is suffering for Christ" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 22-23).

The fragment of the biography of Popiełuszko related to his time in a military unit is exceptionally eye-catching. By following the excerpts of letters from that period written by clerical student Popiełuszko, we can learn how to become an authentically courageous person.

2 Those interested in this topic are encouraged to read the publication by Ryszard Gromadzki and Andrzej Witkowski (2022)

1. Research problem, aim and method

The subject of the paper was focused on the role of personal role models in upbringing towards virtues. The aim of the paper was to answer the research question: "How can we use the example of blessed Jerzy Popiełuszko in upbringing towards the virtue of courage?".

The history-pedagogy biographical method was applied (Szulakiewicz, 2015a, 2015b).

In pedagogical research, the popularity of analyses of a biographical nature has increased tremendously over the past several years. There has been a steady increase in the number of researchers interested in the upbringing dimension of the experiences present in a person's life cycle. These researchers explore the extent to which a person is shaped by certain factors–from the socio-economic situation to the immediate (primarily family) environment. In the case of history-pedagogy analyses, the objective, historical context of the activities of a given figure is considered crucial (Skrzyniarz, 2016, p. 14).

The life of Jerzy Popiełuszko fell into the period of the Polish People's Republic and the associated socio-political domination of the USSR. The Security Service was responsible for the control and surveillance of society. It consisted of an elaborate network of functionaries and subordinate agents known as secret collaborators.

The history-pedagogy biographical method makes it possible to show clerical student Popiełuszko as a model of a courageous person against the background of historical events related to the activities of the Security Service. The task of the functionaries of the Security Service was to select from the crowd outstanding individuals who were capable of opposing the communist system and force them to switch to the side of the Security Service (Szwagrzyk, 2005). It is well known that the priest was not afraid of threats or intimidation. Ultimately, even in the face of bestial torture, he remained faithful to the highest values.

His biographers emphasize that the period in which Popiełuszko first came face-to-face with the representatives of the communist system was his stay in Bartoszyce, a military unit of strict discipline created specifically for clerical students. The task of military functionaries was to invigilate and indoctrinate clerical students, with the ultimate goal of discouraging them from the priesthood (Juroszek, 2023c).

In this paper, the criteria for courage were cited after Jacek Woroniecki (2000). Biographical studies were used (Gromadzki, Witkowski, 2022; Kindziuk, 2014; Skoczylas, 2012; Sochoń, 2010; Litka, 2009) as well as letters written by Jerzy Popiełuszko during his stay in Bartoszyce to his parents and priest Czesław Miętek who was his clerical father. These letters were collected and compiled by Gabriel Bartoszewski (2009).

2. Upbringing to the virtue of courage as the formation in the student of the will to overcome fear in the face of danger

Referring to the works of Aristotle, Woroniecki detailed two factors in the virtue of courage. The first factor is related to the attitude of not retreating in a threatening situation, which requires overcoming fear. The second factor is associated with the readiness to fight courageously (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 426). Such positive attitudes can be contrasted with cowardice (understood as a lack of courage) and audacity treated as an abuse of courage with false excess of courage (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 430).

According to Woroniecki, cowardice is worse because it directly opposes courage. Cowardice shows its worst form when fear takes control of a person's will to such an extent that the individual opposes the highest values (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 430-431). Then, the person withdraws, flees from danger and does not defend what should be defended. For Woroniecki, cowardice often manifests in a lack of civil courage i.e. a concession of opinions in a situation of any pressure, not to endanger anyone.

True courage is not the same as the absence of fear, but it is the ability to overcome it. As Woroniecki stresses, many truly courageous commanders went into battle with great trembling of the body (which was visible even to outsiders) and (at the same time) fought heroically (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 431). A constantly activated will to fight life's adversities without giving up is crucial for courage.

Such an attitude captures attention throughout Popiełuszko's life. Careful tracking of his biography confirms that he constantly aroused in himself the will to overcome fear in a situation of increasing threat from the Security Service since the attacks from the Service (manifested e.g. by constant summoning for interrogation) increased. The priest's courage was thus shaped in a process of permanent and steadfast resistance to evil.

The Service's aggressive actions were in line with the precepts described in social psychology, according to which each successive act of aggression increases the likelihood of further attacks. Social psychologists proved that if a person commits aggressive actions, their attitude towards the victim changes at the cognitive level (Aronson, Wilson, Akert, 1997). A dehumanization process involves giving the victim animal characteristics (e.g., of a reptile, worm, pig, barking dog, etc.). The torturer also begins to use more and more violence against the victim.

Such a situation occurred in the case of Popiełuszko. Hatred towards him from the Security Service increased. The Service organized many ambushes against him, the peak being the famous cruel words of Wojciech Jaruzelski, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, calling for the execution of the priest. At the end of the summer of 1984, Jaruzelski sent a final urging to his close associate General Czesław Kiszczak (who at that time served as Interior Minister) to "do something to make Popiełuszko stop barking" (Gromadzki, Witkowski, 2022, p. 16).

The employees of the Security Service constituted an apparatus of violence whose purpose was to catch and invigilate outstanding people who were charismatic, had a strong moral backbone and were courageous and unyielding to finally give them an ultimatum: switching to the side of the Service or bestial death. Popiełuszko's biographers emphasize that he was subjected to constant tests, including threats (by letter or telephone), foreshadowing terrifying visions of death, torture, and sometimes even torture details (Daszkiewicz, 1990, p. 470). At the peak of his activity, Priest Popiełuszko received so many threats that they were collected in several volumes (Daszkiewicz, 1990, p. 470). Popiełuszko constantly made an effort to overcome the feelings of fear. He did so from the perspective of closeness to Christ, to whom he gave all his fear in the face of growing danger. Krystyna Daszkiewicz, a professor of law and psychologist who followed the backstage of the so-called Toruń trial for many years, stressed that Popiełuszko often asked for prayers for him. According to Daszkiewicz, "he did not stay indifferent to any summons he received ... Popiełuszko asked the faithful in the Church to pray for him in these difficult moments. He addressed them in the following way: 'This Tuesday, I ask you to pray. At 9:30 a.m., I received my sixteenth consecutive summons for interrogation at the Mostowski Palace ... It is very helpful to know that someone remembers [me] in the prayer at this time" (Daszkiewicz, 1990, p. 385).

In conclusion, courage is not the same as the absence of fear but consists in not giving in to it. Of note, not giving in is not a one-time act but a constantly repeated action. Popiełuszko was summoned to interrogations several dozens of times, and in each case, he had to renew his will to be faithful to the highest values.

3. Priest Popiełuszko as a personal role model in enduring suffering

Woroniecki stressed the great importance of forming courage in the student in everyday life, contrasting such an approach with single-only acts of courage undertaken in exceptional situations. Courage is shaped in silence, away from publicity and the spotlight. Woroniecki understood it perfectly when he clearly emphasized that true heroes are born in families that shape fortitude in every situation and not for a show-off, blowing the cult of pseudo-heroism in the student (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 470).

Throughout his life, Popiełuszko tried to patiently endure life's difficulties and the accompanying suffering. As already mentioned, such an attitude was regarded by Woroniecki as the most valuable and difficult form of courage accompanied by patience and perseverance. Patience sustains a person's will not to give in to obstacles and to permanently fulfil one's obligations (Pasterniak-Kobyłecka, 2021; Horowski,

2020, 2017; Woroniecki, 2020, 2000; Kornas-Biela, 2019; Mazur, Skrzyniarz, Kiereś, Płazińska, 2018; Popiełuszko, 1985).

The task of patience as a virtue typical of courage is to resist discouragement, complaints and self-pity (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 438). Priest Popiełuszko included the following words in his letter written to his parents from the unit in Bartoszyce:

> "In the world, in this vale of tears, everyone suffers. There are no people free from worries. We have worries in the army. You have *[them]* at home. Do not worry, do not be discouraged when suffering comes many times and when unpleasant moments occur" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 14).

The content of his letter indicates the precept according to which the attitude of courageous suffering in everyday life is easier for those who genuinely believe in God. Popiełuszko stated further:

> "In every nuisance, one must seek God's will. Therefore, one must seek peace in God. It is best to do so in silent prayer, in trusting everything to God" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 26).

Popiełuszko shaped courage in himself by being close to Christ. Such an attitude is in line with the concept proposed by Woroniecki, according to which a Christian can derive a specific spiritual joy when suffering, which is the result of elevating the human race to the supernatural order and making it accessible to participate in the suffering of Jesus Christ through theological virtues (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 429).

True courage is often related to suffering in silence, without expecting admiration or praise from the environment. Since courage is strongly admired by people, it has a special power to cause self-love and vanity (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 433). In a person, especially a young individual, craving for the recognition of others, there may be a tendency to seek opportunities to boast about one's courage. According to Woroniecki, such an approach cannot be understood in terms of virtue. This is because it offers no guarantee that it will be activated under conditions imperceptible to the environment, i.e. hidden from the human eye.

Popiełuszko faced such a challenge related to experiencing his courage in secrecy in Bartoszyce. This event was described below in more detail as an illustration and, at the same time, an inspiration for the students on how to shape one's courage in silence.

The superiors in Bartoszyce immediately paid close attention to clerical student Popiełuszko because of his steadfastness and some leadership over the other clerical students (Juroszek, in print, 2023). Jan Sochoń, one of Popiełuszko's biographers, listed the following means by which the superiors in Bartoszyce tormented Popiełuszko: constant summonses for interrogation (due to obsequiousness and denunciatory activity of agents), being forced to crawl on the ground for hours (fully dressed in the uniforms), being forced to clean military toilets while wearing a gas mask, etc. (Sochoń, 2010, p. 26).

One day, one of his superiors noticed the Rosary on Popiełuszko's finger. He ordered him to take it off, which met with a firm refusal from Popiełuszko. Below are the words of Popiełuszko in a letter to his clerical father:

> "He took his anger out and used various methods ... I stood barefoot for an hour (60 minutes). My feet got cold and bruised, and so at 9:20 p.m., he told me to put my shoes on ... I was rather silent, saying prayers in thought and giving my suffering to God caused by the crushing weight of the backpack, mask, gun and helmet as propitiation for sins. "God, how lightly one suffers when one is aware that one is suffering for Christ" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 22-23).

It is worth noting Popiełuszko's words: "I was rather silent," which proves the willingness to consciously experience his difficulties in silence. Popiełuszko did not expect admiration for his courage from his fellow clerical students and gave his suffering to Christ.

4. Upbringing to the virtue of courage as the formation of courage along with prudence

Due to the virtue of courage, a person becomes fearless and able to endure even the most difficult experiences. Woroniecki uses the words 'courage' and 'boldness' for such a form of courage. These virtues involve the will to activate an attitude of moving forward, action and attack. As Woroniecki emphasizes, this attitude is accompanied by the activation of a strong current of vital forces that allow a person to resist danger (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 426). The description of this attitude of Popiełuszko related to the situation with the Rosary was as follows:

"At 10:20 p.m., a political commissar came and ordered me to take off the Rosary in his presence. Why was I supposed to do so? I did not do it since it did not bother anyone, and I will not take it off just because someone cannot stand it" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 23).

As Popiełuszko further reported:

> "... Some corporal, who wanted to butter up to an officer, told me to take off my Rosary. He said it was not a ring to wear in the army. I said: 'It depends for whom'. He began to fly at me and forcefully wanted to take me to the officer. The guys flew at him. I thought they would kill him. I wanted the officer to come to me because I would not go to him. Why should I do it? Just because he wants it?" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 25). The formation of courage in a person is greater when a person has managed to control fear, especially in situations where danger will occur unexpectedly.

Courage is of the greatest importance when imbued with the element of sanity. Otherwise, impudence comes into play and makes a person rush blindly towards danger without realizing it and understanding what a person might lose (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 432). According to Woroniecki, this form of courage is not the courage itself, and additionally a student may never reach it if courage is not imbued with reason. It is the reason that ultimately gives moderation to courage (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 432). This approach corresponds with the description of the attitude of clerical student Popiełuszko in the military unit in Bartoszyce. While showing courage, Popiełuszko was also able to simultaneously reasonably control the conditions in which he found himself and draw logical conclusions from the processed data.

At this point, it is worth quoting the following words of Popiełuszko:

> "The corporal complained that I was at loggerheads with him. I am to be punished by the order. But it has already been the second day and there has been no punishment yet. To be free from accusations, I have passed the exams with flying colours today. They will not accuse me of taking care of everything except for what is necessary" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 25).

While showing courage in his actions, Popiełuszko also showed wisdom, stating that he did not want the authorities to accuse him of opposing the whole set of rules and regulations. He clearly stressed that he would be diligent and systematic as far as his academic progress was concerned.

Alicja Żywczok made an interesting analysis of the connection between courage and prudence. She found that courage could not be identified with bravado, or foolhardiness. To form courage in oneself, it is important to have self-discipline, inner consolidation, focus on the target, and the ability to transcend oneself (Żywczok, 2021).[3]

As Żywczok summarized in her analysis of the works of selected Polish historians, the connection between courage and caution was emphasized by the most prominent Polish scholars several hundred years ago, particularly Wincenty Kadłubek. In his famous "The Chronicle of Poles," he included such words:

3 The relationships between courage and caution were also analyzed by Weronika Juroszek in her book on the life and activities of General Emil Fieldorf "Nil" (Juroszek, 2023b, p. 69-70).

"caution gives birth to confidence, and confidence gives life to courage, thanks to which a man transcends himself in boldness" (Kadłubek, 2009, p. 39).

In the analysis of the activities of clerical student Popiełuszko as a model of a courageous person, the Christian context must be given attention. Popiełuszko shaped his courage by entrusting himself to Christ in prayer. Of note, this prayer was systematic and planned.

"The matters of the prayer are arranged in my platoon best... We pray the Rosary together every day. At each tenth, someone else gives the intention, and one mystery of the Rosary is for oneself" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 24).

This prayer made the clerical students spiritually strengthened, as evidenced by Popiełuszko's words summarizing one of the typical days spent in Bartoszyce:

"We were satisfied from the whole day and everyone was spiritually strengthened" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 25).

5. Upbringing towards the virtue of courage as the formation of sensitivity to the injustice of others in the student

In upbringing towards the virtue of courage, it is impossible to ignore the formation of sensitivity to the injustice of others in the student. In the unit in Bartoszyce, the attitude of the fellow clerical students of Jerzy Popiełuszko deserves special attention under the conditions of activation of manipulative techniques introduced by the superiors that were based on planned, dishonest control of the actions of group members. One of them was aimed at making Popiełuszko a scapegoat.

The scapegoat mechanism involves saving the cohesion and unity of the group in a difficult and crisis situation by choosing a victim who is the object of collective aggression (Aronson, Wilson, Akert, 1997). The person who is the most different from the group members (e.g., in terms of social background, views, or appearance) becomes a scapegoat. At a more or less conscious level, group members keep telling themselves that the victim is the cause of their problems, while the harm done to the victim unites the group.

Superiors in the army wanted to make Popiełuszko a scapegoat and direct the aggression of his fellow clerical students against him. Popiełuszko wrote about the actions of his superiors in the following manner:

"I am to be assessed by the peer tribunal as a rebel. But fortunately, I have good colleagues who sit in this tribunal" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 23).

The manipulative measures the superiors took failed due to the high mutual loyalty of the clerical students. Solidarity worked at the human level, which Popiełuszko confirmed by his words quoted above.

This line of thought is in line with the concept of courage proposed by Woroniecki who draws attention to the role of support provided by the educational environment. This support is particularly important in the case of a very young person whose personality is finally being established. Fellow clerical students from the military unit in Bartoszyce proved to be a source of tremendous support for Jerzy Popiełuszko. Not only did they manage to resist their military superiors and remain unprovoked to act against their fellow clerical student, but they also responded with great solidarity with him in each subsequent step. In this sense, the plans to implement the scapegoat mechanism by the superiors were ruined, which was due to the harmonious and systematic cooperation of the clerical students.

The following are examples illustrating the will of the superiors to set Popiełuszko at variance with the rest of the group. These examples can serve as a warning to students and educators on how not to succumb to the manipulative actions of selected members of the class group–the attitude of Popiełuszko against the group by suggesting that its members were burdened with enormous flaws (such as cowardice). Popiełuszko immediately realized that the superior wanted to set him at variance with his fellow clerical students:

> "... yes, he kept saying all sorts of things...
> that I was respected in the room before,
> and now I am a tool in the hands of others
> who are cowards afraid to expose them-

> selves. It is made up, of course – the will to quarrel with fellow clerical students. But we are familiar with such tricks" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 23).

Humiliating and ridiculing Popiełuszko in the presence of his fellow clerical students is illustrated by the words of Popiełuszko that show such an attitude of one of his superiors:

> "He tried to ridicule me. To humiliate me in front of my fellow clerical students, then again to surprise me with the possibility of leave and furloughs" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 22).

Popiełuszko and his fellow clerical students reacted to such provocative actions with an increased sense of community combined with prayer, which gave them strength to maintain group unity. As Popiełuszko wrote in his letter referring to the situation in Bartoszyce:

> "Matters related to prayers are going best in my platoon. But it is not our fault because they selected a group of rebels for this platoon. We pray the Rosary together every day" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 24).

The clerical students reacted in solidarity to the propaganda speeches of their superiors. One of the descriptions of such meetings is included in a letter to Clerical Father Czeslaw Miętek:

> "Today we had political [classes] with a Mr. Chorążewicz. He spoke for the whole seven hours about the attitude of the state to the Church and the prospects for the future. He presented the Primate in the most negative light. Cardinal Wyszyński is responsible for all the evil. It is his fault that the Pope did not arrive in Poland... He forbade the bishops to meet De Gaule. I will not quote everything because I noted forty pages, but I think these few quotes will allow Father to imagine at least a bit of the course of political lectures ... We chewed Chorążewicz out. When he was pushed to the wall, he agreed with us on many things because he could not defend our accusations. It turned out that he was a 'poor person of letters' and some sort of the master of arts man who had no knowledge of these matters except for the subject he had prepared" (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 28-29).

In conclusion, several issues are worth noting. First, as a person with a unique, steadfast, charismatic personality, priest Popiełuszko showed that it was possible to be steadfast under all circumstances. In the process of upbringing towards the virtues, such people play a very important role, as they gather other people around them by influencing them with their attitude. For this reason, one of the first steps of totalitarian systems is the elimination of outstanding and distinguished individuals. It is therefore crucial to protect such people as much as possible. The clerical students of the military unit in Bartoszyce were an excellent example of a supportive group that did not allow their most precious fellow clerical student to be made a scapegoat.

The role of joint prayer cannot neglected. It is significant that the clerical students managed to recite this prayer every day in military conditions, which required great courage since finding a clerical student in a kneeling position with the Rosary in his hand was related to sanctions, especially in the case of community prayer (Bartoszewski, 2009, p. 20-21).

Conclusions

The aim of the paper was to answer the research question: "How can we use the example of blessed Jerzy Popiełuszko in upbringing towards the virtue of courage?". Based on the analyses, guidelines for upbringing towards the virtue of courage were established. The educator should aim at forming in the student the will to overcome fear in the face of danger, patience and perseverance in suffering

without expecting admiration or praise, courage with prudence, sensitivity to the harm of others and conscious distance from cowardice and insolence.

For Poles, Jerzy Popiełuszko is a symbol of a person who remained faithful to the highest values despite bestial torture. At this point, it is worth quoting the following words of Jacek Woroniecki: "Those who died believed that we would carry on their work ... The nation lives through upbringing. Educators instil the feelings, thoughts and aspirations of those who died into the hearts and minds of the younger generation" (Woroniecki, 2000, p. 321).

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Responsibility of a man in the teaching of the Catholic Church[1]

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Anastazja Sorkowicz[a]

[a] *Anastazja Sorkowicz, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7102-9546,*
Institute of Pedagogy, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Silesia in Katowice

Abstract: Writing this article was inspired by the words of John Paul II spoken during his third pilgrimage to Poland, which concerned parental responsibility for life, for love, for upbringing and which were reinforced with the statement that a man should be the first to undertake this responsibility. This study is aimed at presenting some selected elements of the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the responsibility of men, as well as at considering the Church's position on defining a man in the context of his fundamental role, which is fatherhood. The source literature of this text consists of selected documents of the Catholic Church. The available studies on the indicated subject were also analyzed. On the basis of the conducted research, it can be concluded that the teaching of the Catholic Church draws attention to the divine origin of the human and treats parenthood as an area of special cooperation between the Creator and the creation. It is emphasized that human parenthood should be primarily responsible, therefore joint decisions of both spouses regarding procreation should be made freely and thoughtfully. A mature man is aware of his responsibility for building a world in accordance with the Creator's intention, and therefore he does not agree to any form of depriving marital coexistence of the double sign: of strengthening the mutual bond and of procreation. A man's responsibility for life is most strongly expressed through his opposition to any actions that violate human dignity in such a delicate area as procreation of life. In the context of a man's responsibility for upbringing, it should be stated that healthy fatherhood consists in conscious, permanent building of relationships first with the wife and then with the child. A man should actively participate in the child's life with true commitment. The education of successive generations of men requires the visible presence of a man-husband-father in the family, who does not liberate himself from his male obligations by reckless shifting them to a woman-wife-mother, but brings to the family all the features and behaviour patterns of a mature and responsible man, such as self-control, constant work on his own character and setting high requirements for himself. The undertaken issues seem particularly important from the perspective of the human being, whose one of the most important characteristics is development, permanent maturation to new challenges. Due to the unchangeable human nature, it can be said that the teaching of the Catholic Church on male responsibility remains valid despite the changing living conditions of successive generations.
Keywords: Catholic Church, man, responsibility, fatherhood

Introduction

The observation of contemporary trends in science and culture and the participation in social life allows one to conclude that what is dealt with currently is not discovering the truth about life and human nature, but rather the individual *creation* of subjective truth. Cognitive relativism allows everyone to have *their own truth*, because objective truth does not exist and everything is relative. Ethical relativism, on the other hand, undermines the objective nature of moral norms and "grants everyone the right to establish these norms *on an ongoing basis* at their own discretion" (Bejma, 2015, p. 164-169; Sławiński, 2014, p. 46). Objective reality and the obligation to use the truth seem to belong to the past and are presented as oppressive to human freedom. In the matters concerning the most delicate spheres of life, there is a tendency to animalize the nature of the human person. The human is given the right to create their own nature according to any idea they choose. The slogan: "you can be who you want" is no longer an encouragement to consciously discover your individual possibilities, but suggests the right to "create yourself" regardless of the truth about the essence of humanity. It can be said that one currently deals with a tacit consent to the spreading subjectivism in the basic issues that define the human being.

1 Article in polish language: Odpowiedzialność mężczyzny w nauczaniu Kościoła katolickiego, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Sork.pdf

The realistic teaching of the Catholic Church draws attention to the need not only to create truth, but also to discover it and then build one's life based on the revealed truth. Therefore, it seems to be a good area for searching for unchangeable regularities that govern human life. The realistic approach, assuming respect for truth, requires searching for (and not independent creating) answers to questions about human nature and the tasks resulting from this nature. For believers, the teaching of the Church is binding, for people who do not identify with the Catholic religion, it may be an interesting suggestion. The Catholic Church is keenly interested both in the human being treated as the crown of creatures and in their relationship to themselves and the surroundings. The life of every person, every woman and every man is treated as a priceless gift and, at the same time, as an obligation to the Creator which should be treated with full responsibility.

This text was inspired by the words of John Paul II spoken in the Polish land in 1987: "A man must be the first in taking this responsibility" (for love, life, upbringing – A.S.; John Paul II, 1997, p. 455). The article is aimed at trying to recapitulate some selected elements of the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding men's responsibility and to consider the Church's view on defining a man in the context of his fundamental role, which is fatherhood. The source literature for this text are selected documents of the Catholic Church. The available studies on the indicated subject matter were also analyzed.

The undertaken issues seem particularly important from the perspective of a human being, whose one of the most important characteristics is development and permanent maturation for new challenges. There is no need to justify the accuracy of the observation that every "person is responsible for their holiness, for their life, for the quality of their life" (Półtawska, 2018, p. 15). Believers additionally realize that the responsibility of both parents for life also applies to an eternal dimension, that "the father is supposed to lead the child not only here, in the world, but also to eternity" (Półtawska, 2018, p. 99).

A man's attitude characterized by immaturity, the desire to remain a never-growing boy, the need for constant changes, life at the expense of others, and the inability to face the facts is called the "Peter Pan Syndrome" (Zarębianka, 2008, p. 255-257). The observation of social life allows one to conclude that nowadays both types of men can be met: men whose behaviour indicates the above-mentioned condition, as well as men who consciously undertake the tasks of an adult man (see: e.g. Kornas-Biela, *Introduction*, 2014, p. 7). Many empirical studies also indicate the polarization of men's attitudes (Majorczyk, 2013, p. 44). In the light of the above, it seems advisable to re-read the teaching of the Catholic Church on extremely important social issues.

The wording of the title of this article somehow forces an answer to the question concerning what responsibility is. This issue has been addressed by various thinkers. An example of a broader philosophical approach to the concept of "responsibility" can be the text by Johannes Schwartländer (2004).[2] This article will include approaches that consider the indicated concept from the personalistic perspective.

Karol Wojtyła made a significant contribution to defining the concept of "responsibility". It is worth paying attention to the title of one of his most representative publications: "Miłość i odpowiedzialność" (Wojtyła, 2015).[3] The aforementioned work, as its author emphasizes in the Introduction, "does not constitute (...) an exposition of the doctrine. However, it is primarily a fruit of the constant confrontation of the doctrine with life" (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 13). As Wojtyła points out in the further part, the doctrine, or teaching of the Church, in the field of sexual morality is based on the Gospel, "whose statements on this subject are concise and at the same time sufficient" (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 13). Karol Wojtyła relates responsibility in love to responsibility for a person, "the one who is drawn into the closest community of being and acting, whom one makes in a sense one's own property by taking advantage of their devotion" (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 116). Therefore, in Wojtyła's terms, responsibility is the responsibility

2 J. Schwartländer, (2004). Odpowiedzialność jako podstawowe pojęcie filozoficzne (Responsibility as a basic philosophical concept).

3 K. Wojtyla, (2015). Miłość i odpowiedzialność (Love and Responsibility).

for a person, "it flows from this person and returns to them" (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 116). The above-mentioned author points out that the huge amount of responsibility for a person can only be understood by those "who have a thorough sense of a person's value" (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 116). Responsibility for love consists in caring for the real good of another person, and at the same time it is connected with mutual personal growth (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 116). A sense of responsibility involves caring, but never rudeness or pain. According to the author, one deals here with the enrichment and "extension" of the human (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 117). Wojtyła considers the separation of love from the sense of responsibility for a person as a denial of love itself and as selfishness. He writes: "the more of the sense of responsibility for a person, the more of true love" (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 117).

According to Father Marian Nowak, "the sense of responsibility is connected with the awareness of the tasks to be fulfilled" (Nowak, 1999, p. 344). The same applies to Krystyna Ostrowska's approach: the sense of responsibility consists in taking care of everything that "results from the assigned or voluntarily undertaken tasks" and in their conscious implementation (Ostrowska, 2004a, p. 22). Responsibility is also explained in terms of an attitude resulting from awareness and freedom, which allows for making decisions and accepting their consequences (Rynio, 2021, p. 11). The indicated interpretation seems to be extremely important and worth emphasizing in the context of considerations pertaining to a man's responsibility.

1. A man – who is he?

The simplest answer to the above question is: a man, like a woman, is a human being. There is no human being who is not either male or female. Gender, i.e. masculinity or femininity, as a bodily reality is focused on reproduction. "This reality is not assigned at birth, or ever later. (...) gender is created at the moment of a child's conception. (...) Biological reality goes deeper than anything that can be changed through cosmetic surgery and sex hormones" (Anderson, 2021, p. 14; Bassa, 2015, p. 29-30). At the same time, it must be emphasized that gender dysphoria is a very painful condition and that people suffering from it should be approached with respect – they "neither choose it nor simulate it" (Anderson, 2021, p. 14). The issue of transgenderism does not fall within the scope of this study, therefore it will not be analyzed in more detail here.

The teaching of the Catholic Church in the words of John Paul II defines both masculinity and femininity in terms of "the original sign of the Creator's gift" and at the same time a conscious gift, originally experienced by a human being, both by a man and a woman (John Paul II, 2020, p. 73). Both femininity and masculinity are "a primary fact of nature that a human must accept and personally fill with meaning" (Benedict XVI, 2012). Representatives of both sexes have "a *spousal* property inscribed in their bodies, i.e. the ability to express love, exactly this love in which a human being becomes a gift and fulfils the very sense of their existence and of their being through this gift" (John Paul II, 2020, p. 74). Father Bronisław Mierzwiński points out that "the body expressing the element of masculinity is a gift for a woman; the body expressing the element of femininity is a gift for a man" (Mierzwiński, 1999, p. 187). Marriage is the most important space that reflects the ability of a man and a woman to complete each other. It is important that no one chooses their gender, but it is given as a task (Półtawska, 2018, p. 91).

Therefore, the full answer to the question about the identity of a man is: he is a human fulfilling his humanity in a masculine way. Masculine means, among others: other than feminine, being in opposition to femininity, also: being "in a kind of life confrontation with a woman" (Ładyżyński, 2008, p. 146). The male way of experiencing humanity is neither better nor worse than the female one: representatives of both sexes are equal in their "inalienable" dignity, as emphasized by the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Both men and women "in their *being men* and *being women* reflect (...) the wisdom and goodness of the Creator" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, 369). The teaching of the Church also states that the equal dignity of people, women and men, is realized in physical, mental and ontological complementarity (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,

2004, n. 8, p. 17). Recognizing the basic equality of men and women allows for calm, complex-free acceptance of the actual differences between the sexes. The Church also suggests that problems related to gender differences should be approached in the context of relationships, not competition or rivalry (ibid.). Understanding the nature of humanity as a relational reality (this term was used in the cited text of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, n. 6, p. 13) makes it possible to consider the role of both men and women in the world, without omitting the natural and justified differences between the sexes, simultaneously emphasizing the value of cooperation (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2004, n. 6, p. 13; Pokrywka, 2010, p. 130).

2. Marriage and responsible parenthood as human vocation

The natural space for the realization of the relational nature of a human being, created as a man and a woman, is marriage. It is here that both spouses equally are called to build a community of people between each other and with children to whom they pass on their lives. A man and a woman, equal in their humanity and at the same time different, by entering into marital life, which unites them with "the closest bond" (Paul VI, 2013, n. 12, p. 190), become capable "of giving birth to a new life, in accordance with the laws contained in the very nature of a man and a woman" (ibid.). The Creator planned the cooperation between men and women in the most delicate matter: the transmission of life. The Second Vatican Council teaches: "God himself said that *it is not good for a human to be alone* (Genesis 2:18), and *he made a human from the beginning male and female* (Mt 19:14), desiring to give them a special participation in his own creation, he blessed a man and a woman, saying: *be fruitful and increase in number* (Genesis 1:28)" (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1967, n. 50, p. 579). These words constitute a kind of program of human earthly life, designed by the Creator. Every human-woman and every human-man is called up to motherhood or fatherhood.

Both a man and a woman take part in the process of transmitting life in the literal sense, and both are responsible for ensuring that this most delicate process takes place in accordance with the Creator's intention: "the birth of a child is a deeply human and highly religious event because it involves the spouses, who form *one body* (cf. Genesis 2:24), and at the same time involves God himself who is present" (John Paul II, 1995, n. 43, p. 78). The "image and likeness" come from God, as a property of the human being (John Paul II, 2021, n. 9, p. 23). Therefore, a man and a woman can never be considered "creators of a new life", but only as collaborators of God the Creator (John Paul II, 2021, n. 9, p. 27). A husband and wife, by building mutual unity, also in the most literal sense, the most delicate, most intimate closeness, become parents of a third person – a child (John Paul II, 1999, p. 44). A transcendent source of human parenthood (fatherhood and motherhood) is God's fatherhood (John Paul II, 1999, p. 44; Walaszczyk, 2015, p. 105). Therefore, the human being should make every possible effort to make their parenthood worthy of their humanity and, at the same time, of similarity to the Creator.

It is good if both parents feel they are gifted with parenthood as a consequence of their mutual love. Karol Wojtyła points out that parenthood is not only an "external fact" related to giving birth and having a child, but also an "internal fact", i.e. "an attitude that should characterize the love of a woman and a man when they have marital life" (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 231). Therefore, it would be appropriate to assume that when entering marital intercourse, both a husband and a wife should acknowledge the fact of potential parenthood (Ryś, 2015, p. 71). Both motherhood and fatherhood should be considered, according to Wojtyła, "on the personal level, not only on the *natural* level, it is like a new crystallization of the love of persons, which grows on the basis of their already mature union" (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 231).

The Catholic Church teaches that natural law requires that each marital act should retain its internal aim to transmit life (Paul VI, 2013, n. 11, p. 189). This concerns respecting the natural laws of fertility and its periods, which "by themselves introduce (...) breaks between subsequent con-

ceptions" (ibid.). "Therefore, if these two essential elements of the marital relationship are preserved, i.e. the signification of unity and parenthood, then it fully retains its meaning of mutual and true love and its reference to the very lofty task to which the human is called – namely, to parenthood" (Paul VI, 2013, n. 12, p. 109; cf.: John Paul II, 2021, n. 12, p. 40). The teaching of the Church indicates the need to maintain an integral vision of the human able to keep the internal order of the marital relationship by responsible adapting their decisions to the current situation of the marriage and family, i.e. being guided by "prudential consideration and generosity" (Paul VI, 2013, n. 10, p. 188). Thus, parenthood should be, above all, responsible. Both spouses ought to know and respect the biological natural laws governing human fertility and to skilfully control "the innate drives and passions" (ibid.). Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae vitae* opposes the reduction of humanity to its biological dimension and draws attention to the full importance of intimate marital relationships. It is emphasized that the creation of this document (*Humanae vitae*) was related to the desire to experience sexuality without fertility emerging in the world. What seems worth noting is that nowadays one also deals with the search for procreation without sexuality – by using the in vitro technique. Both ways of separating the double sign of marital intercourse, i.e. both deepening the marital bond and procreation, are in contradiction with the view of the human as a being created in the image of God and endowed with the dignity of a person.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly states that the human is "not something, but someone. The human is capable of learning themselves, of self-control, of giving themselves freely and of forming a community with other persons" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, 357). A responsible approach to life is fulfilled through respect for every conceived person and is expressed both in the enlargement of the family and in the decision to postpone the conception for a specified or indefinite period (Jankowski, 1999, p. 313-314). Therefore, according to the Church, the issue of transmitting life should be considered from the perspective of the entire human vocation, including both the natural and temporal order, as well as the supernatural and eternal one (Paul VI, 2013, n. 7, p. 185). It is emphasized that the human should not be a passive executor of the Creator's will, but can recognize the laws implanted in their nature and can freely respond to them. The actions of a wife and husband can therefore be fully personal, that is: reasonable, free and responsible (Mierzwiński, 1999, p. 187; Pokrywka, 2010, p. 261). The Catholic Church, in the words of John Paul II, teaches that: "It is obvious that responsible parenthood does not only consist in adapting to the biological rhythm. It is rather about expressing the truth about a person, who is a deep unity of spirit, mentality and body. This unity can never be reduced to a set of biological mechanisms. Only in the context of the spouses' mutual love, total and unconditional, can conception – this event that concerns the future of humanity – be experienced in its full dignity (John Paul II, 2004, n. 2).

Both parents, the mother and father, experience parenthood in their own way. It is obvious that the woman and her entire biological organism is more involved in transmitting life. It can be said that she herself has been shaped towards motherhood from the very beginning. Her body prepares in many ways both for the conception of a child and later for providing the little person with everything they need, before and after the birth. "Biological facts" impose on a woman much more involvement in the process of giving birth to a human being (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 231). Motherhood, which has its biological determinants, engages all levels of a woman's mentality (Olearczyk, 2011, p. 89), "her full psychological readiness is conditioned by biological readiness (...), the direction towards motherhood is so obvious to a biologist that it cannot be denied in any way" (Półtawska, 2009, p. 230). However, a man as an equal "perpetrator of parenthood" is "biologically distant" from it (John Paul II, 2021, n. 12, p. 44). Physical paternity exists outside the male human body. At the psychological level, fatherhood "begins" later than motherhood (Olearczyk, 2011, p. 89). Therefore, a man must somehow learn to be a father: "fatherhood must be specially developed and raised" (Wojtyła, 2015, p. 231).

To sum up this part of the discussion, it can be said that the teaching of the Catholic Church draws attention to the divine origin of the human being, and treats parenthood as an area of special cooperation between the Creator and the created being. It is emphasized that human parenthood should be, above all, responsible, i.e. the spouses' decisions regarding procreation should be made freely and thoughtfully.

3. A man responsible for love and life

One of the most representative examples of the teaching of the Catholic Church on men's responsibility seems to be the chapter of the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* entitled: "A man as a husband and father". John Paul II draws attention to the fact that "a man is called to live in the awareness of his gift and the role of the husband and father" (John Paul II, 2000, n. 25, p. 45). The basic task of a man is to recognize his own nature and find the answer to the question of who he is.

Realizing who a man is and what his role in the world is concerns every man, not only the one who intends to raise a family. Wanda Półtawska draws attention to the commonness of the vocation to fatherhood (Półtawska, 2018, p. 47, 98). It is obvious that not every person becomes a parent in the biological sense. The Catholic Church mentions spiritual fatherhood, which is to be a path of every man without exception (Augustyn, 2008, p. 138). Thus, it can be concluded that every man is called to fatherhood, which can be fulfilled either literally, i.e. both biologically and spiritually (in marriage and in the family) or spiritually (which applies to celibate men). The most important task of a man is to discover who he is and to recognize how he can "father", i.e. serve other people entrusted to him (Pulikowski, 2008, p. 160).

John Paul II points out that it is through a woman's motherhood that "the mystery of a man's masculinity is fully revealed: the parental, fatherly meaning of his body" (John Paul II, 2020, p. 95). Therefore, a man realizes his human vocation primarily through fatherhood, which, as noted above, does not need to have a biological dimension. In a marriage that transmits life in the strict sense, both the man and the woman are called primarily to mutual affirmation. This is a fundamental element of responsibility of both of them for love. Marital love is fulfilled through participation in the reality of being "with someone" and "for someone". This mutual "for", that is, a relationship of mutual gift, is to be experienced by spouses as the basic principle of their personal existence (John Paul II, 2020, p. 72-73). The teaching of the Church indicates that a man should live with his wife "in a special form of friendship between persons" (John Paul II, 2000, n. 25, p. 45) and should develop a "new attitude of love" (John Paul II, 2000, n. 25, p. 45). A man is to love his wife with a subtle and at the same time strong love (John Paul II, 2000, n. 25, p. 46). It is love for his wife and children that enables him to understand himself and "to fulfil his fatherhood" (John Paul II, 2000, n. 25, p. 46). A conscious approach to one's own development serves not only the man himself, but also the people entrusted to him.

The teaching of the Church emphasizes the need for a man to take *generous responsibility* "for the life conceived under the mother's heart, by carefully fulfilling the duty of upbringing shared with his spouse, by work that never breaks up the family but strengthens it in coherence and stability, by giving testimony to mature Christian life" (John Paul II, 2000, n. 25, p. 46-47). A man: husband and father, is therefore responsible for life, for upbringing, for working for the family and for being and becoming an increasingly more mature Christian.

As mentioned above, the spouses' responsibility for an unborn life begins at the moment of making the decision about sexual intercourse, "responsibility must precede a conception" (Półtawska, 2009, p. 232). It is therefore necessary to acknowledge that all laws of nature are not the work of the human and therefore should not be violated. Believers recognize that the Creator is the author of reproductive physiology, which must be known and accepted. Therefore, the need for a man to take on this *generous responsibility* requires becoming aware of the fact of potential fertility. "A man, aware of the procreative possibilities of his body and gender, is at

the same time free from the coercion of his body and gender" (John Paul II, 2020, p. 74). It is worth remembering that a person never has the necessity to engage in intercourse. This regularity applies to both women and men. Due to the personal nature of human bonds, intercourse cannot be treated as an activity necessary to preserve life or physical or mental well-being. The compulsion of sexual activity would deny freedom as a typically human property and would undermine the logic of mutual giving between the spouses: "freedom is understood (...) as having oneself (as self-possessing)" (John Paul II, 2020, p. 75). The awareness of the spousal nature of the human body excludes any use of the body of another person or the spouse, as well as any, and thus sometimes self-harming, action directed towards one's own body. It is good when every person fulfils their own sexuality, viewing it as a gift.

It should be noted that nowadays it is possible to precisely identify the periods in which, as a result of sexual intercourse, a child may be conceived. A mature man strives to manage his behaviour consciously and responsibly – especially the one related to engaging in sexual life. Due to the fact that a female body functions cyclically, "a man is much more of a father than a woman is a mother; in fact, potentially a man is always a father. (...) by engaging in a sexual act, he always transmits life" (Półtawska, 2009, p. 232). It is the woman who bears the greatest consequences of intercourse. Therefore, she should be taken care of to the fullest possible extent by her husband, with whom she jointly and consciously makes decisions regarding the most important issues. Thus, on the part of the man, there can be no question of any transfer of responsibility for joint action to the woman. Conceiving a child should be a joint matter of the wife and husband from the very beginning. It can be said that the test of a man's level of responsibility for life is his approach to the situation of conceiving a child, regardless of whether the conception was planned and regardless of the conceived child's health condition. It seems obvious that in the case of the so-called unplanned conception, also men may have difficulties with accepting this fact. This state of affairs is expressed in shock reactions, disbelief, denial, and even, in extreme cases, hostility. However, it is worth taking into account the possibility of personal development in the case of initiating an unplanned pregnancy (Lichtenberg-Kokoszka, 2010, p. 170). Male, fatherly responsibility is expressed through his relationship with all people entrusted to his care.

An interesting list of the features of a real, i.e. responsible, man is suggested by Stanisław Sławiński. The author indicates, among others: protectiveness (towards the woman with whom a man shares life and towards all other women) and self-control (over emotions and sexuality). The second mentioned property is particularly important. Sławiński draws attention to the periodic functioning of a woman's body and the resulting possible instability of moods and weaker control of her own reactions. A man in control of himself will faithfully stand by a woman, regardless of her current psychophysical condition, will provide her with a sense of security and with his own well-balanced reactions (Sławiński, 2014, p. 48).

To sum up this part of the considerations, it can be concluded that a man responsible for life does not agree to any form of sterilization of the marital act. Moreover, a man's responsible love will not allow procreation without sexuality. Therefore, he will oppose the use of male reproductive cells to create new human beings outside the context of mutual closeness between a woman and a man. A mature man is aware of his responsibility for building a world in accordance with the Creator's intention and this is the main reason for the opposition to assisted reproductive techniques. Not all technically possible actions can be considered fair. A man's responsibility for life is expressed through his opposition to any actions that violate human dignity in such a delicate area as transmission of life.

4. A man as a responsible educator

"Taking into account the biological process of human conception in the mother's womb – the union of 23 chromosomes contained in the sperm head with 23 chromosomes contained in the egg cell – the equal participation of both parents in the further continuation of parenting and caregiving tasks should be perceived as a natural phenomenon. Apparently, the asymmetry in the degree of involve-

ment of both parents in their basic functions was introduced by cultural conditions" (Fijałkowski, 2001, p. 286). The quoted statement by Włodzimierz Fijałkowski determines the direction in the discussion undertaken in this section of the text. Considering the equal dignity of women and men, as well as "the quantitatively balanced contribution to the conception of a child" (Fijałkowski, 2001, p. 286), what should be first emphasized is the need for joint involvement of both parents in raising a child, which is a spiritual continuation of the biological birth (John Paul II, 2021, n. 16, p. 66). The promotion of biparentality from the conception, through all stages of a child's development, seems to be the most just and natural consequence of the creation of a human as a man and a woman (see: e.g. Ostrowska, 2004b, p. 87-88). At the same time, it is worth remembering that just as masculinity should always be perceived in relation to femininity, fatherhood should be viewed analogously: always in relation to motherhood (Augustyn, 2009, p. 31). Considering the natural order of creation, in which "the male-female dualism appears as an essential element of God's plan" (Johnson, 1998; after: Augustyn, 2009, p. 31), it is difficult to accept any other explanation for this subject matter.

The consequence of perceiving female and male parenthood and the most important task of mothers and fathers, which is raising children, in the context of a mutual relationship, is the focus on the purposefulness and importance of the marital bond for the development of children. The basis for each parent's "separate" relationship with the child is a strong and lasting bond with the spouse, which remains the most important for both spouses throughout the entire time in which marriage and family last (Sorkowicz, 2014, p. 80-88). Both the wife-mother and the husband-father build their motherhood and fatherhood on the foundation of mutual closeness and complementarity. "Both parents hug the child in their own way with their hands", which, however, are different (Ładyżyński, 2008, p. 154). It is a truism to say that the mother brings different values into a child's life than the father. The woman's predominance in up-bringing may result in the child being exposed to her overprotection. However, male dominance may result in the accumulation of excessive requirements without appropriate care. It is emphasized that although joint care of a child may cause conflicts, they will be of a developmental nature and will serve the entire community (Ładyżyński, 2008, p. 155). The child needs to experience difference and permanent cooperation of both parents. Thus, the husband-father is obliged, as already mentioned, to "carefully fulfil the duty of upbringing, shared with his spouse" (John Paul II, 2000, n. 25, p. 47). Therefore, a man must be aware of the differences resulting from gender conditions and must respect them. He absolutely should not try to be a substitute mother. His responsibility is expressed in being a man, not a second mother (Janas, 2022, p. 106).

It seems worth emphasizing as well that a healthy relationship between a man and a woman also literally protects the lives of children. Research results show that women experiencing violence from their partners are more likely to decide to have an abortion (*Ekologia prokreacji. Vademecum*, 2021, p. 162-168).[4] The lack of support from a man-father and his selfish avoidance of taking responsibility for conceiving a child encourage a woman to kill the child in the prenatal period of life (*W obronie życia. Kompendium niezbędnej wiedzy*, 2020, p. 36).[5] Therefore, it can be said that the first task of a man resulting from taking on the responsibility for raising children is to faithfully maintain a relationship with his wife and, at the same time, constantly build this unique bond.

Another task of a man-father is related to building a relationship with the child. If a man is emotionally mature and has built a strong relationship with his wife, he will also naturally feel comfortable in the relationship with his child (Augustyn, 2011, p. 123). It is important to take into account the need for contact between the father and the child from the beginning of the child's life. It is good

4 *Ekologia prokreacji. Vademecum* (Ecology of procreation. A Vademecum), (2021).
5 *W obronie życia. Kompendium niezbędnej wiedzy* (In defence of life. A compendium of necessary knowledge), (2020).

when a man has the opportunity to share with his wife the first joys and worries related to the period of waiting for the birth, when he participates in the delivery and care of the infant (Fijałkowski, 2001, p. 287-290; Kornas-Biela, 2014, p. 163). It is worth noting that a man's attitude towards his wife who expects a child is also his attitude towards the child. Therefore, a responsible man makes sure that contacts with his wife are as tender as possible (Kornas-Biela, 2014, p. 163). The situation is similar after the childbirth: the wife-mother strongly and at the same time very personally feels the involvement of the husband-father in providing the child with everything the child needs.

It is clear that a child needs specific equipment and financial security to live. However, limiting the father's role to providing financial support for the family is contrary to an honest view of male responsibility. One of the most important elements of responsible upbringing of children is the presence of the father and the constant and reliable experience of his peaceful closeness. Obviously, the father's presence at different stages of the child's life and development varies. However, what remains unchanged is the need to consciously accompany the child, show unconditional acceptance, and spend time together selflessly. The latest research report on Poles' attitudes towards parenthood and fatherhood presents interesting results: for contemporary Poles, the term "father/dad" is most often associated with upbringing, support and authority (Wadowski, 2023, p. 9, 36-38). It seems important to highlight that the father's mature approach to the role of an educator of his own children, "his not counting the time spent together", his being in a relationship with the child, not only has a positive impact on the young generation, but also enables the man's personal growth.

Summing up the considerations regarding a man's responsibility for upbringing, it should be stated that the man's involvement in building a bond with his wife and conscious and full participation in the child's life is extremely important. A responsible man does not agree to be just the "mother's husband", but he actively takes on the tasks of a father. What is more, all his actions are well-thought-out and rational.

5. Instead of the ending: education of a responsible man

According to Father Karol Meissner, the formation of a young man for fatherhood is a task that requires, first of all, paying attention to everything that distinguishes a human as a being with a gender from animals and indicating the consequences of this state of affairs. The second element of supporting young people in the educational process is emphasizing the relational nature of fatherhood and motherhood. Another task of the adult generation in the context of educating men is to name the difficulties related to fulfilling the role of a father in the family and to present ways of dealing with them. The last task faced by educators of young men is, according to the above-mentioned author, proposing such educational activities that can prepare a young man to take on the tasks of a husband and father (Meissner, 2011, p. 139-140).

The aforementioned suggestion seems to be extremely apt and up-to-date, especially in relation to the cognitive and ethical confusion of the contemporary humanity. Therefore, every boy should be made aware of his responsibility for life as early as possible: his own life and the life he may create in the future (Półtawska, 2011, p. 134-135). A proper education of a boy should lead to respect for his own body. Young people should be shown the parental sense of gender, the spousal meaning of the human body and both the equal dignity and sexual difference of men and women should be clearly emphasized. It also seems important to approach parenthood in terms of the "incredible privilege" of participating "in the creative role of God the Creator" (Półtawska, 2011, p. 133-134).

The most appropriate way to show the relational nature of fatherhood and motherhood seems to be the living example of parents who love each other and care about their mutual bond. A boy has a bigger chance of becoming a responsible man when he has the opportunity to grow up in a full, mutually supportive family, where mutual selfless help is treated as an ordinary element of life in a community of people. The teaching of the Catholic Church not only confirms the right of every child "to grow up

in a family, with a father and mother who can create an appropriate environment for their development and emotional maturation", but also emphasizes the need to mature "in a relationship, confronting the masculinity and femininity of father and mother", which makes it possible to achieve emotional maturity (Congregation for Catholic Education "Stworzył ich jako mężczyznę i kobietę" z myślą o drodze dialogu na temat kwestii gender w edukacji, 2019, n. 38).[6] According to the Church, "it is in the family community itself that a child can be educated to recognize the value and beauty of gender difference, equality, and biological, functional, psychological and social complementarity" (ibid.).

Achieving male maturity by a boy will be easier if the son has the opportunity to observe his father's ways of dealing with difficulties and when these difficulties do not overshadow the entire family life (it is worth remembering here that the son does not expect his father to be infallible and blameless in everything, Augustyn, 2009, p. 44). "The father is the one who brings love, peace, security, wisdom and makes the son independent. The father never forgets about his responsibility for the family, he gives his son special responsibility – he demands and expects a response, he gives his son demanding tasks that make him responsible. He is a servant of the child whom he should teach responsibility and service" (Rynio, 2021, p. 377). To describe the desired fatherhood Wanda Półtawska uses, among other things, such terms as: "generous" and "permanent" (Półtawska, 2011, p. 134). A natural way to raise a young man to responsibility is also to agree to his full participation in family life by taking on specific duties and performing them reliably without waiting for special gratification. The boy will become a responsible man when, instead of fighting for power in the family, he will be able to observe mutual service.

When educating a boy to take real responsibility for his own life and the life of his loved ones in the future, it is also worth drawing attention to the need to strengthen the father's presence in upbringing while striving for the cooperation with his wife in every area of their shared life. What can be sometimes noticed is a dangerous tendency for the mother to usurp the right to a certain "parenting monopoly", to exclude the husband-father from making decisions concerning the children. This can result from an incorrect marital relationship and from the transmission of some unfavourable cultural patterns involving the glorification of the role of the Polish Mother who can cope with all challenges on her own. There are situations when the mother shows extreme immaturity, which makes it difficult for the man to mature (Augustyn, 2009, p. 32). This is about the maturing of both an adult man and a boy-son. From the very beginning, both spouses-parents should want to raise a man, not a never-growing boy. A father responsible for life and upbringing, through his conscious and constant presence, should protect all children, especially sons, against motherly overprotection.

Moreover, a healthy marital relationship, combined with the awareness of parenthood perceived as cooperation with the Creator, are an antidote to educational shortcomings. As Danuta Opozda emphasizes, "achieving maturity in parenthood depends on the ability to create a mature relationship in marriage" (Opozda, 2019, p. 56). Spouses-parents need to realize that children are not their property at any stage of development, but are, in a sense, "loaned" to them for some time. Too strong and immature relationships between a mother and a son seem to be a factor that significantly disturbs the process of educating the boy towards male responsibility. Therefore, a father who is aware of his educational duties (especially towards his son) will ensure that appropriate proportions of care and healthy requirements are maintained.

Healthy education of subsequent generations of men requires the visible presence in the family of a man-husband-father who does not release himself from his masculine obligations by recklessly passing them on to a woman-wife-mother, but brings to the family all the good features of a mature and responsible man. What seems worth emphasizing is the

6 Congregation for Catholic Education, *Stworzył ich jako mężczyznę i kobietę* z myślą o drodze dialogu na temat kwestii gender w edukacji (*He created them male and female* with a view to dialogue on gender issues in education), (2019).

extremely positive activity of numerous associations gathering men, the aim of which is to help men find their own male identity and to prepare them to play the role of a father in a mature way (Korab, 2015, p. 174-176). It seems important to point out that every man, even the one who did not have good role models, can grow into fatherhood.

A man's conscious taking responsibility for the most important matters: life, love, raising children, the family as a whole, is the concern of new generations. Jacek Pulikowski believes that "if the world is threatened with destruction, its fundamental source is the crisis of male love and responsibility, which becomes a crisis of fatherhood" (Pulikowski, 2008, p. 171). Re-reading the logical, orderly and consistent teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the indicated subject matter, looking for inspiration in this teaching for the most difficult work, which is working on oneself, seems justified both from a personal perspective and for the sake of the common good. This article does not exhaust the subject. It can only become a contribution to further searching.

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Contemporary women towards ancient customs and superstitions regarding pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum

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Karolina Kossakowska[a] ✉, Daria Domarańczyk-Cieślak[b]

[a] *Karolina Kossakowska, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3618-1918, Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Lodz*
[b] *Daria Domarańczyk-Cieślak, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3618-1918, XX Secondary School of Juliusz Słowacki, Lodz*
✉ *Corresponding author: karolina.kossakowska@now.uni.lodz.pl*

Abstract: The aim of the study was to investigate whether contemporary women believe in ancient customs and superstitions related to pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, and infant care. A cross-sectional study was conducted using online surveys. The study involved 120 women aged 21 to 69 years. The Scale of Attitudes towards Superstitions related to Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Newborn Care, and the Attitudes to Fertility and Childbearing Scale were used for data collection. No significant relationship was found between place of residence, age, and education and the belief in perinatal superstitions among the surveyed women. However, it can be stated that the greater the belief in superstitions among the surveyed women, the more they value a child. The topic of contemporary women's belief in ancient advice, customs, and superstitions related to pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, and infant care seems to be an interesting area of exploration. In further analyses, it would be worthwhile to ensure greater diversity of the respondents in terms of sociodemographic characteristics and to consider qualitative research model.
Keywords: psychology, history, superstitions, pregnancy, childbirth

Introduction

Customs and superstitions are an important element of our culture and history. They are inextricably linked to the eras in which they functioned and the area where they were found. All of them were changing under the influence of science, and the medical community even considered them dangerous. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Warsaw hygienists (Warsaw Hygiene Society) began to fight against the practices contrary to science present in society in the press and books, as well as during scientific meetings.

The concept of "superstition" was explained in the Psychological Dictionary as a widespread socially irrational view in any field of events or phenomena, explaining them by referring to mystical factors remaining beyond rational control, inconsistent with scientific knowledge (Szewczuk, 1979, p. 220). Researchers draw attention to the sources of various types of superstitions and point to religious practices. They often refer to pagan beliefs and rituals. They are passed down from generation to generation without any thought given to their rationality. A type of superstition is superstition, which is defined by scientists as the belief in mysterious, supernatural connections between phenomena, in the destructive or saving power of words, things and signs (Metelska, 2016, p. 159).

In turn, custom is most often defined by representatives of various scientific disciplines as a rule of social behavior enshrined in the tradition of a given community, imposed on an individual under the pressure of social opinion. Customs constitute a normative system regulating a wide range of important matters for a group that are beyond the influence of law, morality, aesthetic patterns and religion. Customs

enabling the group to maintain unity and cultural continuity are a factor determining the formation of feelings and social bonds (Szewczuk, 1979, p. 183). Researchers emphasize that an individual's failure to comply with the required behavior may result in condemnation, unpleasant behavior towards him or her, and even exclusion. Ethnologists even use terms such as banishment or sanctions for punishments taken against a member of the community. The use of such a range of measures is intended to result in a change in the individual's behavior and his adaptation to the rest of society (Grad, 1987).

1. Customs and superstitions, as the elements of culture

Research on customs and superstitions is conducted by scientists in various fields including ethnologists, anthropologists, regionalists, sociologists and psychologists. All researchers note that the above-mentioned forms of behavior are particularly related to important events in a person's life, which include entering new social roles, such as pregnancy and the birth of a child, marriage and death.

Dąbrowska-Wnuk (2018) states that from the moment a woman realizes that she is pregnant and will become a mother, she is confronted with many beliefs and views about the proper course of pregnancy and childbirth. The source of this information are not only professionals (e.g. doctors or midwives), but also "experts" from the future mother's environment. The information acquired becomes the main point of reference for the decisions a woman makes. The need to meet social expectations of being a good mother is so strong that it prompts us to take many actions aimed at optimizing the child's development, actions that are not always fully conscious and rational. As the researcher emphasizes, this is related to the activation of mechanisms aimed at ensuring safety and psychological comfort. A pregnant woman wants it to go smoothly and for the child she gives birth to to be healthy and strong (Dąbrowska-Wnuk, 2018).

Despite changing socio-cultural conditions, the vast majority of future mothers consider the child's well-being the most important, which is why they follow the known superstitions, advice and customs passed down from generation to generation. As Bielawska-Batorowicz (1999, p. 222) writes "although the biological process of human reproduction does not change, views on procreation change over time and are different in different cultural circles".

Superstitions, customs and advice are one of the oldest elements of culture and have accompanied people since the oldest religions they professed. When Europe became Christianized, it would seem that superstitions in particular would disappear under the influence of the Church's unfavorable teachings. However, they were too deeply rooted among the population to disappear and functioned alongside the orders and recommendations of the new faith.

Scientists became interested in the study of childhood late in life. Only works on pediatrics and women's health during pregnancy and the postpartum period were created. Old medics used the term "infantia" or "muteness" to describe the period of a child's life from birth to the seventh month or two years of age. However, research on how children were cared for, recommendations on how to raise them, and superstitions regarding their care began to be analyzed only in the 20th century. The first to take up the topic in the form of a compendium related to the third wave of the Annales school was the French historian Philippe Ariès in the book entitled "The Story of Childhood. Child and family in the old days" (published in 1960). In the circles of historians, sociologists and ethnologists, he is even referred to as the "discoverer of the child" as a research topic. In Poland, researchers also began to study customs, advice and superstitions about pregnancy, childbirth and infant care only in the second half of the 20th century (earlier publications concerned medicine and law). Over time, we began to take a closer look at the issues of recommendations, orders and prohibitions addressed to pregnant and postpartum women, as well as to newborn children. However, before scientific and research works were created, the source of information about them were private notes and later the press and printed guides (Żołądź-Strzelczyk, 2002).

In the oldest preserved treaties, the message was clear–the main purpose of marriage was procreation. The woman's role was to give birth to as many healthy

children as possible, according to the common opinion that "a good wife is a fertile wife." In the light of Aristotle's philosophy, a woman was supposed to be an "incomplete man". The same thesis was later proclaimed by St. Thomas Aquinas. Until the 17th century, married women were almost always pregnant or in the postpartum period and this was a natural phenomenon (Bogucka, 2006).

1.1. Customs and superstitions concerning pregnancy, childbirth and infant care in ancient Poland

The available literature on the subject contains descriptions of a very large number of superstitions, customs and advice regarding pregnant women and newborn care. The period of pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period has been treated as special since ancient times. Especially women expecting a child were accompanied by a very large catalog of prohibitions and recommendations, which was to protect them and their children from the effects of evil forces. The collected superstitions mainly come from historical monographs and articles.

The woman was most often blamed for the lack of an heir and was advised to pray to Saint. Jacek or Saint Giles, and preferably a pilgrimage to places of worship related to these saints. The absence of a child in marriage was considered a cause for shame and a lack of Divine Providence. During pregnancy, people prayed for health and a happy birth to Saint. Roch and Saint Margaret. During childbirth, the care of the woman giving birth and the midwife was entrusted to saints: Dorothy, Catherine, Margaret and Jacek (Żołądź-Strzelczyk, 2002).

Over the centuries, the list of superstitions, advice and customs regarding pregnancy, childbirth and infant care have changed, and some of them have disappeared. These included beliefs that were completely surprising from today's perspective, but also some that still exist today. Żołądź-Strzelczyk (2002) in the book "Child in former Poland" describes, among others, the following superstitions, such as: "A pregnant woman should not eat hare meat, because the child will be timid and timid like a hare, or will have bulging eyes"; "A pregnant woman should only look at nice things and people and surround herself with such objects so that she does not "stare" and give birth to a sick, ugly or dead child. However, if she looks at something she shouldn't, it may leave a mark on the child"; or "The mental state of a pregnant woman has an impact on the child, she must not get upset, argue or scream. She should be nice and gentle."

In ancient times, it was also believed that pregnant women were exposed to the forces of black magic, so they were advised to sleep with a piece of iron, e.g., a pin. They also had to pray to Our Lady every day, wear medals and crosses (magic is intertwined with pagan customs). However, this contradicts the superstition that wearing something around the neck is harmful because it could cause the umbilical cord to wrap around the baby's neck. According to Żołądź-Strzelczyk (2002, p. 41): "Pulling and squeezing are unwise and dangerous, [stepping] is unpleasant, driving, walking up mountains, stairs, beds, lifting, stretching arms, hard-working movements, dancing, are very harmful , lying for long periods of time, frequent unhealthy sitting, crying and worrying when one of the white-headed women feels pregnant, beware of these things (...)".

It was also recommended to untie knots, knots, unfasten belts, and open zippers to prevent the baby from getting stuck in the genital tract or wrapped in the umbilical cord. From the 17th century, cesarean section began to be used in Poland (recorded). A pregnant woman could not be a godmother due to the prevailing belief that "One of them [the pregnant woman or the baptized child–note] authors] will pay with death for this ceremony" (Żołądź-Strzelczyk, 2002, p. 60). This superstition is also present today.

The woman and the newborn were isolated from the world immediately after birth–it was believed that the greatest dangers awaited them at that time. The so-called nocturnal creatures that harassed children and made them cry. Unbaptized children were, according to legend, exposed to charms, black magic and more frequent diseases. It also explained all behaviors that could not be explained. The mother had to sleep facing the baby, she could not turn her back.

The choice of name was very important, because the saint whose name the child received was supposed to take care of him. The choice of name was deter-

mined by family considerations (dynastic names, after family members). It was also recommended to name the saint who celebrated his feast on the day the child was born (naming himself). A child was also often named after a previously deceased sibling (the belief that it was the same child in a different form). Godparents also had to be chosen carefully–their people were supposed to bring splendor and increase the prestige of the family. During baptism, the child was sometimes placed on the grave to ensure the care of the ancestors. During baptism, the godmother wears a white linen robe as a sign of the splendor and beauty received at baptism, i.e. freedom from sin and acceptance into the Church. The baptismal outfit showed the wealth of the parents, a hat was obligatory. It's good if the clothes and the crib came from another child.

Dirt was considered harmless to the child and even beneficial to health. Hygiene procedures were limited, cradle cap was considered a head protection, and children's heads were reluctant to be washed. Changing diapers was also restricted, and urine was considered a medicinal product and was also added to various medicines. It was also recommended that the mother feed the baby herself, if possible. Foreign food was supposed to cause the child to suck out the defects and diseases of another person. Other guides explicitly stated that sick mothers could pass the disease on to their children through food. When a woman was unable or unwilling to breastfeed, a wet nurse was hired. From the 18th century, it became common to send children to the countryside to be breastfed. The wet nurse had to be properly selected – have the right food, be good and not nervous. She also could not be quarrelsome, prone to alcohol, prone to anger, and should avoid marital passions.

Some beliefs said that you couldn't move the cradle because the baby would not sleep well, others said that you had to move it to deceive evil spirits. You must not put a stranger's baby in the cradle, and you must not rock an empty cradle. Superstition said that the owner of the cradle could then die. In turn, tying a red ribbon over the cradle or placing red beads on babies' hands was intended to protect the child from infatuation.

The customs and superstitions presented above related to pregnant and postpartum women from the 18th to the mid-20th century are the most widespread. The examples mentioned can, of course, be supplemented with further behaviors present in sources systematically discovered during subsequent queries. It is worth noting that some of them have survived to this day either directly or in a changed form and are an important element of our tradition.

1.2. The present study

The aim of the study was to investigate the attitude of contemporary women towards ancient superstitions, customs, and advice on pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, and infant care. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, no directional hypotheses were set. Only the following research questions were formulated: 1) Does belief in superstitions differ based on place of residence of the respondents? 2) Does belief in superstitions differ based on the education level of the respondents? 3) Is there a relationship between belief in superstitions and the age of the respondents? and 4) Is there a relationship between belief in superstitions and the attitudes of the surveyed women towards fertility and having children?

2. Method

2.1. Procedure and participants

The research was cross-sectional. The data were collected between September to October 2022. Participants were recruited through advertisements on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram devoted to women, family life, parenting, and childcare. The only inclusion criteria were 18 years old and Polish nationality. Each participant had to provide their consent to participate by signing electronic informed consent form. Subsequently, they received aa personalized link to the web-based survey. The research procedure adhered to the principles of the Helsinki Declaration of Human Rights (WMA, 2013). The study was approved by the university advisory board. As the study was of an informative cross-sectional purely

descriptive nature, no formal ethical approval was required under the country's legislation. Participants were informed of the purpose, risks, and benefits of the survey. They were told they could withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason without a penalty. All participants provided electronic informed consent prior to participate in the study. Electronic informed consent was prepared in accordance with the Ethics Guidelines for Internet mediated Research (British Psychological Society 2017).

After the survey was completed and approved by the participant, the responses were automatically sent to the researcher. If any of the participants had questions or doubts about the study, they could send them to the researcher at the e-mail address provided in the form. None of the participants in the study reported any problems related to the study.

The sample consisted of 120 women. Since there were no errors or missing data when filling out the questionnaires, the responses of all the surveyed women were included in the analysis. The women ranged in age from 21 to 69 years (M = 37.7, SD = 10.5). The majority of respondents had higher education (n = 104; 86.7%) and lived in cities with over 500,000 residents (n = 57; 47.5%).

2.2. Study measures

To address the research questions, a sociodemographic profile was used, including questions about age, place of residence and level of education, the Scale of Attitudes towards Superstitions related to Pregnancy, Childbirth and Newborn Care, and the Polish-language version of Attitudes to Fertility and Childbearing Scale (AFCS-PL) adapted by Kossakowska and Söderberg (2021).

2.2.1. The Scale of Attitudes towards Superstitions related to Pregnancy, Childbirth and Newborn Care

This questionnaire was developed for the purpose of the study based on selected old superstitions described in the theoretical part of the article. The original version consisted of 20 statements. However, after pilot testing of the tool, five items were removed based on exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The final version consisted of 15 items to which respondents responded on a scale from 1 (*I agree with the statement*) to 5 (*I disagree with the statement).* EFA also identified two factors called Superstitions about pregnancy and childbirth (Subscale 1) and Superstitions about the neonatal period (Subscale 2). Subscale 1 included 10 items, for example: "A pregnant woman cannot be a godmother, because it heralds the death of the pregnant woman or her godson" or "Putting corsets, clothes with strings and jewelry around the neck of a pregnant woman exposes the baby to the umbilical cord wrapping during childbirth." Subscale 2 consisted of 5 items, for example: "A child who is breastfed for too long is not very intelligent" or "A red ribbon should be tied over the baby's bed/stroller so that no one can charm him." Total scores ranged 15-75, where a higher score indicates a lower tendency to believe in superstitions. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients in the study sample were 0.87, 0.67 and 0.89 for the first and second subscales and the total score. In the case of the second subscale, the value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient turned out to be slightly lower than the recommended value of 0.70. However, subscale two consists of only five items, and because internal consistency coefficients are sensitive to the number of items, the values obtained appear to be acceptable. Additionally, the summary score showed satisfactory internal consistency.

2.2.2. Attitudes to Fertility and Childbearing Scale – AFCS (Söderberg et al., 2013; adapted by Kossakowska and Söderberg, 2021)

AFCS is used to measure fertility attitudes and having children, where fertility is understood in it as a human ability to conceive a child. However, having a child refers to pregnancy, motherhood, parenting and building a family. The Polish Version of the AFCS consists of 26 statements, comprising three factors (Fertility and The Child as an Important Value, Child as a Barrier, and Personal Awareness and Responsibility Concerning Having a Child), which have demonstrated satisfactory internal consistencies (Cronbach's alfa 0.98, 0.93, 0.81, respectively).

The examined person responds to the statements given on a five -point scale, where 1 means *completely disagree*, and 5 means *completely agree*. AFCS has no general result. Obtaining high results means a high level of each dimension. The described study only uses the subscale 1 entitled Fertility and the Child as an important Value. This is since it represents the only dimension in the AFCS scale, which does not contain claims regarding the planning of offspring during the present time, so it can be used in the study of women after the age of childhood.

2.3. Data analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 27. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, were used to describe demographic and variables characteristics. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of distributions for all analyzed variables. Due to the lack of normality of the distribution, the non-parametric U Mann-Whitney's test and Kruskal-Wallis's test (with the Dunn's pairwise tests adjusted by the Bonferroni correction) was applied to compare the results between study subsamples. The Spearman's *rho* correlation coefficient was used to assess a possible association between continuous variables. The level of statistical significance for the study was set at $p < 0.05$.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive statistics of the study variables

Considering the range of points for the analyzed variables, the mean score concerning superstitions related to pregnancy, childbirth, the neonatal period and the total score indicate results that are in the middle of the scale, which means a moderate belief in superstitions (see: Table 1). However, remember that the higher the score, the lower the tendency to believe in superstitions. The average score on the Fertility and the child as an important value as measured by AFCS subscale (M = 37.2; SD = 11.70, range 11-55) indicates that the respondents have a positive attitude towards fertility and having children. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicate a deviation of the distribution of the analyzed variables from the normal distribution, therefore non-parametric statistical tests were used in further analyses.

3.2. Belief in superstitions and place of residence in a study sample

As the first aim of the study was to investigate whether the surveyed women differed in terms of their belief in superstitions based on their place of residence the three groups of women were compared. The Kruskal-Wallis test results for belief in superstitions scores showed that there is no differences between the mean ranks of the superstitions about pregnancy and childbirth ($H(2) = 3.35$; $p = 0.187$), superstitions about the neonatal period ($H(2) = 2.77$; $p = 0.251$), and superstitions' total score ($H(2) = 2.91$; $p = 0.234$). However, including individual superstitions in the analysis indicated differences concerning two superstitions (see: Table 2). The first of them was: "A pregnant woman cannot be a godmother, because it heralds the death of the pregnant woman or her godchild". According to Dunn's pairwise tests, this difference exists only between the residents of city below (small to medium) and over 500.000 (big city) residents. The median score for women from city below 500.000 was 49.07 compared to 65.81 for big city residents ($p<0.050$). W przypadku itemu "The mother who doesn't breastfeed loses the most herself" the Dunn's pairwise tests, found the difference between the countryside and city below 500.000 groups. The median score dla countryside residents wyniosła 64.94 w porównianiu z 47.37 dla pozostałej grupy ($p<0.05$).

3.3. Belief in superstitions and educational level in the study sample

Next, we investigated whether the surveyed women differed in terms of their belief in superstitions based on their educational level. Two groups of women were compared. The U Mann-Whitney test results for belief in superstitions scores showed that there are

Table 1. Descriptive statistics concerning superstitions related to pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care (N=120)

	M	SD	Min	Max	skewness	kurtosis	K-S
Superstitions about pregnancy and childbirth	36.46	7.42	16	45	-0.714	-0.586	<0.001
Superstitions about the neonatal period	28.37	2.37	18	30	-2.202	6.021	<0.001
Superstitions – total scores	64.22	8.99	40	75	-0.674	-0.543	<0.001
Fertility and the child as an important value (AFCS)	37.17	11.69	11	55	-0.217	-0.914	0.026

Table 2. Comparison in terms of belief in superstitions related to pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, and childcare depending on the place of residence in the study sample1 (N=120)

	Countryside n=35			City below 500,000 residents n=28			City over 500,000 residents n=57				
	m	sd	Mean rank	m	SD	Mean rank	m	sd	Mean rank	H test results	p-value
A pregnant woman cannot be a godmother, because it heralds the death of the pregnant woman or her godchild	4.38	1.02	59.26	3.96	1.23	49.07	4.60	0.82	65.81	6.770	0.034
The mother who doesn't breastfeed loses the most herself	4.68	0.73	64.91	4.11	1.12	47.37	4.63	0.67	62.00	7.047	0.029

1. Due to the large number of items and the extensive table that would take them into account, it was decided to present in the article only the results in which a statistically significant difference was obtained. The remaining results are available from the authors at the request of the Readers.

Table 3. Comparison in terms of belief in superstitions related to pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, and childcare depending on the educational level in the study sample[1] (N=120)

	University degree n=104			High school and lower n=16			z test results	p-value
	m	sd	Mean rank	m	sd	Mean rank		
Restricting a child's movement by tightly wrapping them in blankets protects them from harming themselves	4.57	0.79	62.64	4.19	0.91	46.56	-2.114	0.035
Putting corsets, clothes with strings and jewelry around the neck of a pregnant woman exposes the baby to the umbilical cord wrapping during childbirth	4.59	0.83	62.34	3.94	1.29	44.91	-2.416	0.016

1. Due to the large number of items and the extensive table that would take them into account, it was decided to present in the article only the results in which a statistically significant difference was obtained. The remaining results are available from the authors at the request of the Readers.

no differences between the mean ranks of the superstitions about pregnancy and childbirth ($Z = -1.17$; $p = 0.242$), superstitions about the neonatal period ($Z = -1.12$; $p = 0.263$), and the total superstitions' score ($Z = -0.91$; $p = 0.259$). However, when we compared individual superstitions, we found several differences. From the conducted analysis, it appears that the compared women differ in terms of their be-

lief in two superstitions. The first concerns the belief that pregnant women should not wear corsets, strings on clothing, or neck jewelry. The second pertains to the belief that a child must be tightly wrapped in swaddling clothes or blankets to prevent them from harming themselves (restricting movement). Higher scores were noted among women with higher education. Since the scores on the scale measuring attitudes towards superstitions are inverted, this indicates that women with higher education believe less in the mentioned superstitions than women with medium-level education. Table 3 presents the results of the comparison of beliefs in those superstitions that proved to be statistically significant in terms of the respondents' level of education.

3.4. Belief in superstitions and age in the study sample

Next study aim was to evaluate whether there is a relationship between the age of the surveyed women and their belief in superstitions concerning pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, and childcare. No correlation was found between the age of the surveyed women and their belief in superstitions, either in terms of overall results (*rho* = -0.01; $p = 0.921$) or specifically regarding superstitions about pregnancy (*rho* = -0.03; $p = 0.752$) or superstitions about the neonatal period (*rho* = 0.14; $p = 0.152$).

3.5. Belief in superstitions and the attitude towards fertility and having a child in a study sample

The final aim of the study was to check whether there is a relationship between the attitude towards fertility and having children and the belief in superstitions. The results of the Spearman's rho correlation analysis showed that there is a negative correlation between the overall score of belief in superstitions (*rho* = -0.26; $p = 0.007$), superstitions about pregnancy and childbirth (*rho* = -0.26; $p = 0.004$), and the attitude towards fertility and having children. Despite the negative values of the correlation coefficients, the interpretation of the result is positive. This is due to the fact that the scoring on the superstitions scale is inverted. This means that the greater the value of fertility and having a child was in the lives of the respondents, the stronger was their belief in superstitions about pregnancy and childbirth and the overall score of beliefs in superstitions. No correlation was found between attitudes towards fertility and having children and superstitions about the neonatal period (*rho* = -0.12; $p = 0.209$). However, the obtained correlation coefficients possess weak strength.

4. Discussion

Customs, and superstitions over the centuries (in a historical perspective) do not seem to be a popular topic of research among psychologists. They appear much more often in the works of ethnologists, cultural scientists, and historians (*cf.* Bołdyrew and Sosnowska, 2015; Kowalczyk, 2021; Popiołek et al., 2018; Popiołek, 2022; Putek, 1947). The period of pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum is one of the pivotal events in the life of a woman, a family, and in the past, the entire community. The aura of mystery surrounding new life means that it is probably one of the three (in addition to marriage and death and funeral) most popular topics of advice, customs, and superstitions.

In response to the research question, we found that the place of residence of the surveyed women does not affect the belief in ancient advice, customs, and superstitions about pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum. This result differs from the study by Dąbrowska-Wnuk (2018). The author also examined –apart from the degree of pregnancy advancement and perceptions of superstitions about it, sociodemographic differences – whether they can influence differences in superstitious beliefs. She noted that in the studied sample, rural women showed a stronger belief in superstitions than city dwellers. It seems that the lack of differences between the residents of villages and cities might be due to the relatively high percentage of respondents with higher education. Indeed, the very fact of undertaking higher studies is often associated, in the case of residents of smaller

localities, with the need to live in a larger agglomeration, where – as the study by Dąbrowska-Wnuk (2018) shows – belief in superstitions is weaker.

The second research question concerned the differences in belief in superstitions among the surveyed women depending on their education. Similarly to Dąbrowska-Wnuk's (2018) study, among the surveyed women, no difference was found in terms of overall belief in superstitions. In the author's study (Dąbrowska-Wnuk, 2018), the age of the respondents (16-51 years) and education were not statistically significant for the intensity of pregnancy superstitions. Moreover, among those surveyed by Dąbrowska-Wnuk (2018) there were pregnant women (while in our study we did not control this variable), which could additionally influence interest in the topic. However, minor differences noted in detailed analysis of individual superstitions (such as that putting corsets, clothes with strings and jewelry around the neck of a pregnant woman exposes the baby to the umbilical cord wrapping during childbirth) and beliefs may suggest that the relationship between belief in superstitions with the respondents' education exists, especially in the case of the most popular superstitions in our country, to which the indicated superstition belongs.

The third research question addressed to evaluation whether there is a relationship between age and belief in superstitions. The assumption that belief in superstitions, customs and advice decreases with age has not been confirmed. It seems that this is also related to the education and awareness of the surveyed women. A study on superstitions and differences in the perception of them with age among respondents was described by Krajewska-Kułak et al. (2011). The aim of their study was to check whether there are differences in the attitudes of patients towards traditional superstitions and superstitions in the group of adults (from 20 to 80 years of age) and adolescents (from 16 to 19 years of age). The results of the study showed that compared to adults, adolescents had less knowledge about superstitions and were less likely to follow them. Adults believed in talismans, the power of horoscopes and numerology more often than young people (Krajewska-Kułak et al., 2011). It should be emphasized, however, that although the mentioned work included a catalog of superstitions (e.g., superstitions related to bad luck after breaking a mirror or a black cat running across the street), only a few related to pregnancy, so it is difficult to literally compare the obtained results with the results of the current study.

The last research question concerned the relationship between belief in ancient customs and superstitions, and attitudes towards fertility and having children. In the research carried out for this study, we found that the more the surveyed women believe in superstitions, the more valuable they consider having a child. This seems to be related to caring for the child, taking (or being willing to take) actions that will protect it and ensure its good development. Gawlina (2003) comes to similar conclusions in the article "Motherhood as a value in the context of social changes". The author checked whether the following attitudes are true and valuable for the respondents nowadays: "True, mature love wants to be fertile and strives to start a family. Love that excludes the child is not yet mature love. This stereotype is called the three M stereotype: love – marriage – motherhood (Gawlina, 2003). For this purpose, she conducted research on a group of 212 students aged 19-26 who did not have children. The results show that for the respondents, a happy family life means having children, and 96% of the respondents would like to have children in the future, although 74% of them not yet. Another result was also significant, in which 58.8% of respondents believed that the stereotype that motherhood is the next step after marriage is correct. In her study, Gawlina (2003) also raised the issue of attachment to the teachings of the Catholic Church, which is related to the traditional family model, which assumes a model of a happy marriage with offspring.

The latest research on the superstitiousness of Poles, called "Superstitious like a Poles", was conducted by CBOS in 2018. According to the published report, 46% of Poles admit to not believing in superstitions. The majority of respondents (54%) declare that they follow at least one superstition, although–according to the report–compared to the 2011 survey, the number of people who believe in superstitions the most has decreased (from 12% to 9%). According to the source, the average respondent

believes in approximately two out of 10 superstitions analyzed. The most superstitious people are professionally inactive – especially the unemployed (average 3.27) and homemakers (2.88), those with primary or lower secondary education (2.32) and basic vocational education (average 2.13), respondents aged 45 to 54 (2.09) and slightly older (average 1.93) and practicing religion irregularly (2.04). Belief in superstitions, horoscopes and elements of magic is more clearly visible in women (2.13) than in men (1.43), (CBOS, 2018).

Study limitations and conclusions

Although the presented research addresses a rarely explored topic, it is not free from limitations. The cross-sectional nature of the study allows only for analyzing the co-occurrence of variables and not relationships of an influential nature. Data was collected online, which poses a limitation in the selection of the group. The group of surveyed women was not very diverse, especially considering education. To infer about differences or their absence in terms of analyzed sociodemographic variables, it would be worthwhile to reach out to residents of smaller towns and villages who do not have internet access and could not participate in the study.

The current research was quantitative, and – due to the deeply humanistic nature of the tackled issues – a valuable complement could be a qualitative study, using structured interviews or focus groups. Particularly interesting could be interviews conducted with respondents about their experiences related to counseling, customs, and superstitions. This could then reveal an interesting mosaic – a map of regional practices and traditions. Additionally, the historical perspective on customs, advice, and superstitions, especially in relation to the perinatal period, might not be of interest to everyone, which could have also influenced the selection of the group. The historical and cultural context is also a limitation. The described superstitions are tied to a specific area and population group. Many of them are strongly associated with pagan religion and ethnic issues. Most of these superstitions might be understandable only to the inhabitants of Polish lands or representatives of other Slavic nations with a similar culture. For people from Western Europe and other parts of the world, it might be challenging to understand the rationale behind such practices. The reverse would likely be true as well.

It's worth monitoring the procreative experiences of the respondents. The research material might also have limitations for readers outside Polish lands or the closest culturally related nations because it is tied to the traditions and culture of these areas. The catalog of advice, customs, and superstitions about pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period from the 18th to the mid-20th century cannot be considered complete. With ongoing research, new data on this topic are being discovered by scholars.

Studies on superstitions concerning perinatal issues should be continued by ethnologists, historians, sociologists, and psychologists. For such research material to be thoroughly examined, work on it should be interdisciplinary.

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The functioning of the family system and its relation to the psychological well-being of spouses in the context of their religious commitment[1]

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Anna Wańczyk-Welc[a], Małgorzata Marmola[b] ✉

[a] *Anna Wańczyk-Welc, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4743-1049, Institute of Psychology, University of Rzeszów*
[b] *Małgorzata Marmola, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2915-8891, Institute of Psychology, University of Rzeszów*
✉ *Corresponding author: mmarmola@ur.edu.pl*

Abstract: The article describes the functioning of family systems and its relation to the psychological well-being of spouses in the context of their religious commitment. The spouses play a very important role, as their mutual relationship affects the functioning the entire family system. Positive mental functioning, or the psychological well-being of husband and wife, can have an impact on these relationships. The aim of the study was to verify the connections between the functioning of the family and the psychological well-being of the spouses and to identify the predictors of the analyzed variables. The study included 130 married couples – an equal number of men and women making up 65 marriage systems bringing up school-age children. The following measures were used in the study: Family Assessment Scales (SOR) by Andrzej Margasiński (2013), based on the Polish adaptation of FACES IV – Flexibility and Cohesion Evaluation Scales by David H. Olson; Caroll Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales, as adapted into Polish by Dominika Karaś and Jan Cieciuch (2017); and the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10-PL) by E. Worthington and colleagues, as adapted into Polish by Jarosław Polak and Damian Grabowski (2017). The analyses of the relationship between the variables shows that the more balanced and well-functioning the system is, the higher is the well-being perceived by the husband and wife. The crucial predictors of a "healthy" family include some dimensions of well-being: high self-acceptance, personal growth, and positive relations with others. Some differences in the analyzed variables between husbands and wives were also found.
Keywords: family functioning, psychological well-being of spouses, religious commitment, marital relations

Introduction

Family is the basic environment of every person's development (e.g., Strużyńska, 2020; Wolska-Długosz, 2016) and at the same time a source of behavior principles and patterns for children (Brzezińska et al., 2016; Zalewska, 2017). In the systemic perspective, the functioning of all individuals making up a family is interdependent, and changes concerning any of the elements affect the others (e.g., Bajkowski, 2017; de Barbaro, 1999; Wampler & Patterson, 2020). Particularly significant in this system are parents, whose mutual relationship influences the functioning of the entire family system (Drożdżowicz, 1999; Franczyk, 2021; Weryszko, 2020).

Empirical research indicates that functioning in a healthy family is positively related to psychological well-being. Married people are happier than widowed or divorced individuals and happier than those who have never married; despite the conflicts it involves, marriage raises self-esteem and strengthens the sense of personal identity (Argyle, 2004; Trzebińska, 2008). The link between marriage and well-being seems to be strong because of the support received and thanks to the new roles that become a source of self-esteem (Niśkiewicz, 2016). One of the factors that increase life satisfaction is closeness (Babiarz & Brudniak-Drąg, 2013).

1 Article in polish language: Funkcjonowanie systemu rodzinnego a poczucie dobrostanu psychicznego u małżonków w kontekście ich zaangażowania religijnego, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4marm.pdf

Another interesting issue is the relations between the religious commitment of the spouses and the functioning of their families as well as psychological well-being, which is why this variable was also included in the present study.

1. A model of family functioning: the systemic perspective

One of the theories explaining the functioning and quality of the family is the systemic approach. The source of this approach is the thesis formulated by Herbert Spencer (1880, after: Klein & White, 1996) about the presence of universal processes in society as a general system, just like they are present in biological organisms that can be studied scientists of various disciplines. The application of the system metaphor to society made it also applicable to the family (Drożdżowicz, 1999). The foundations the systemic theory of the family postulate an influence of the system on the environment while at the same time acknowledging its separateness from that environment, marked by boundaries. The external boundaries define the range of information that gets into the system (from complete to strongly limited information), which makes it possible to distinguish the system from the environment. At the same time, in accordance with the feedback loop principle, some data from outside undergo transformations inside the system (internal boundaries) and returns to the environment. A flexible family system will therefore be capable of adapting to the new demands of the environment and to the changes taking place in it (Plopa, 2011) while retaining its own necessary separateness and integrity (Świętochowski, 2014).

Subsystems are distinguished within the family system (Franczyk, 2021; Weryszko, 2020). One of these is the marital subsystem, being a fundamental element of the family (Braun-Gałkowska, 1992), and the spouses themselves are described by Virginia Satir (2000) as "the architects of the family." This is so for many important reasons. The functioning of the marital subsystem influences the entire family because the quality of the relationship between the parents influences the quality of all the remaining relationships in the family (Nurhayati et al., 2019; Weryszko, 2020). The relationship between the married couple determines the ways of communication in the family (Galvin et al., 2015). The spouses' interaction style is a model of interpersonal behaviors for their children and will be transmitted to other social relations, also those outside the family (Sergin & Flora, 2019). What happens within the marital subsystem determines the family climate as well. The spouses give shape to the entire family life, and it is their relations that will determine the division of duties and the organization of the whole family life (Duda, 2017). Thus, marriage quality, marital satisfaction, the individual characteristics and traits of the partners in marriage, and the system of interactions between them make it possible to describe the whole family system, for instance, in terms of its level of cohesion or flexibility (e.g., Braun-Gałkowska, 2018; Olson, 2013), specifying whether the partners cooperate on the basis of mutual expectations, obligations, and the proportions of positive and negative behaviors, tinged with an emotional bond. The moment a child is born, the marital subsystem becomes a parental subsystem, which also has new tasks to perform and changes the organization of the whole family. Studies show dynamic changes of mutual influences in the family system depending on the stage of family life and other changes taking place in the family members (cf. Dąbrowska-Wnuk, 2018; Ostoja-Zawadzka, 1999; Rojewska, 2019).

One of the models illustrating family functioning is the Circumplex Model by David H. Olson (2013). In his model the author describes the family on three basic dimensions: cohesion, flexibility, and communication. The concept of cohesion is defined as the emotional bond between family members. Cohesion will be determined not only by the mutual emotional closeness between the members of families, the time spent together, shared interests, a common circle of friends, and making decisions together but also by setting the psychological boundaries between the family members (Margasiński, 2015). The second dimension of family functioning is flexibility, defined by the quality and degree of changes taking place in the systems. Flexibility comprises changes in leadership, roles, and the rules of mutual interactions, and these

changes result from negotiations between family members. The definition highlights the quantity of the changes rather than the possibility of making them (Margasiński, 2015). Family communication, which is the third dimension, is understood as the ability to engage in positive communication in partner and family systems. Communication is an auxiliary dimension and at the same time one that is indispensable for the family to change and adjust the levels of cohesion and flexibility to situational and developmental demands (Margasiński, 2013). An additional important dimension, which was not highlighted directly by David Olson (2004), is satisfaction with family life. The author defines it as the degree to which family members feel happy and fulfilled with one another.

Each of these dimensions is a continuum, from a very low, through moderate, to a very high level of the characteristic. This makes it possible to describe the family in many ways that constitute the Circumplex Model. The cohesion dimension ranges from disengagement (very low level), through balanced cohesion, to enmeshment (very high level), and the flexibility dimension spans a spectrum from rigidity (very low level) through balanced flexibility, to chaos (very high level; Margasiński, 2013). Communication is additionally involved in defining the functioning of the family; when it is effective and positive, it contributes to balancing the family system.

According to Olson (2013), what promotes healthy family functioning is balanced (moderate) levels of cohesion and flexibility, whereas very low or very high levels indicate problems in the family (Tomas & Olson, 1993, 1994, after: Olson, 2013). A higher level of satisfaction with family life is also found in balanced families and correlates positively with family communication. This means that families with a high level of satisfaction with family life are characterized by much better communication than those with a low level of satisfaction (Margasiński, 2015).

2. Psychological well-being

The experience of contentment or satisfaction is associated with the individual's well-being – a general positive mental state in different domains of life (e.g., Czapiński, 2017; Compton & Hoffman, 2019; Rashid & Seligman, 2018; Seligman, 2005). This understanding well-being is in line with the eudaimonic perspective adopted by Carol D. Ryff (1989), who described positive human functioning by means of six factors.

The first factor is autonomy, defined as living in accordance with one's own inner beliefs. An autonomous person recognizes themselves as an independent individual capable of acting upon internalized values and standards, particularly when external circumstances demand conformism. According to Ryff (1989), autonomous functioning also means resistance to cultural influences and a sense of freedom from social norms. Studies show (Carr, 2011; Ryff, 2014) that single adults have a higher level of autonomy than married people.

The second factor is environmental mastery, which means effectively and actively coping with significant events in one's environment. It also means skillful organization of the external world – namely, a kind of adaptation skill, but one that consists in creating and controlling the physical and social worlds in accordance with one's abilities, needs, and desires. Studies found that a positive predictor of environmental mastery was length of marriage, regardless of respondent's gender, while a negative predictor, particularly for women, was the fact of having three or more children (cf. Carr, 2011; Lopez et al., 2019).

The third factor is personal growth – the person's belief about the fulfillment of their potential. It amounts to the awareness that one has certain skills, talents, and body characteristics that enable personal development in a situation of challenges posed by the environment. The application of one's potential leads to an increase in competence and the belief that knowledge and skills can be used in practice, which in turn has a motivating effect on developmental aspirations and on the achievement of what one is capable of.

The fourth factor is positive relations with others, which means the ability to maintain string and lasting relationships with significant others. Ryff (1989) draws attention to the experience of satisfying interpersonal relations based on closeness, trust, love, and friendship, and to showing concern and engaging in activities for the benefit of others, which are an

important aspect of healthy human functioning. This dimension is undoubtedly positively linked with normal marital and family relations (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The research conducted by the cited authors also revealed an interesting pattern regarding respondents' gender. Adult women scored higher on positive relations with others than adult men, and this was the only gender difference connected with the dimensions of psychological well-being.

The fifth factor is purpose in life, which refers to the individual's belief that there is a valuable goal being pursued in their life and giving direction to it, even in adverse circumstances The author's research (Ryff, 1989) indicate changes in the perception of this dimension of psychological well-being with age. It is emphasized that in older adults the goals become more complex and diverse, and their achievement is, to a greater extent, postponed in time. This results in perceiving one's life as meaningful and having a direction.

Finally, the sixth factor is self-acceptance, defined as a positive attitude towards oneself and the acceptance of one's limitations. This factor is also a characteristic of mental health and indicates better effectiveness in action. Ryff and Singer (2012) point out that self-acceptance is the key aspect of well-being, especially in situations when the individual is dissatisfied with their own functioning. It allows the person to adopt an understanding attitude towards themselves, refuse to be bothered too much about one's imperfections, and readily maintain a positive self-image.

3. Religious commitment and its relations to family functioning and spouses' well-being

In the literature, information can often be found about the relations between religiousness and overall quality of life as well as mental and physical health. Researchers have also investigated the links between religiosity and the quality and stability of marriage (Braun-Gałkowska, 1984; Rostowska & Żylińska, 2009). Relations between religious commitment and family functioning have been explored, among others, by Dakowicz (2012), whose research revealed differences in marital relations and in the level of expectations from marriage depending on religious commitment. Spouses with higher commitment in this sphere had higher expectations from marriage, better interpersonal relations, and higher marital satisfaction. They create a climate of family life conducive to the personal growth of all family members. This author's research also investigated the family systems of religiously committed young women (Dakowicz, 2014), revealing higher marital satisfaction in respondents' parents and a higher quality of interpersonal contacts in these families. A question therefore arises about the direction of the relationship between religious commitment and family functioning; perhaps these relations are circular, which would mean that not only religious commitment helps built proper family relations conducive to development, but also such relations and the positive family climate may encourage young people to engage in religious activity. Similarly, the research by Bukalski (2016) indicated a higher quality of the marital relationship in spouses with higher religious commitment. According to this author, the convergence of the spouses religious beliefs has a significant effect on marriage quality, because both husband and wife accept the indissolubility of marriage. The results of that research also showed that in the group of men religiosity less often co-occurred with the understanding of love, communication, and relationship quality, while among women religious beliefs co-occurred with commitment and quality of life. Likewise, the study by Jarosz (2003) revealed that individuals with mature religiosity show no hostile behaviors towards their partners, build positive interactions, exhibit a protective attitude towards others, provide support, and are aware of social interrelations.

Previous studies were also devoted to the relationship between religiosity and well-being. Based on the results of his research, Krok (2009) found that religiosity showed weak associations with hedonic and eudaimonic quality of life, which are determined both by the external structure of religiosity and by the dimensions of quality of life. This author's research also concerned religiosity and quality of marital life, and it also revealed a not very strong positive relationship (Krok, 2012).

4. The methodological assumptions of the present study

The research presented in this article was devoted to the relationship between the functioning of the family system and the psychological well-being of husbands and wives.

The aim of the research was to find answers to the following questions:

- Are there differences between husbands and wives in the evaluation of family relations?
- Are there differences between spouses in the level of psychological well-being?
- Is there a relationship between the characteristics of the family system and the psychological well-being of husbands and wives?
- What is the relationship between the indicators of family system functioning and the psychological well-being of husbands and wives?
- What sociodemographic factors are related to the functioning of the family and the psychological well-being of its members?
- What predictors explain family relations and the psychological well-being of spouses?

The following measures were used in the analyses:

- Family Assessment Scales (SOR) developed by Andrzej Margasiński (2013), based on the Polish adaptation of David H. Olson' FACES IV – Flexibility and Cohesion Evaluation Scales;
- Psychological Well-Being Scales by Caroll Ryff, as adapted into Polish by Dominika Karaś and Jan Cieciuch (2017).

In our study we also used an extensive survey that we designed to collect sociodemographic data. Additionally, we collected information about respondents' religiosity. For this purpose, we administered the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10-PL) by Worthington and colleagues, as adapted into Polish by Jarosław Polak and Damian Grabowski (2017).

Family Assessment Scales are used to measure various aspects of family life. In the present study, we measured spouses' perception of the family. The scales enable the assessment of basic dimensions of family life: cohesion (emotional bond between family members) and flexibility (changes in leadership, roles, and rules in the family system). We also assessed additional aspects, namely communication, thanks to which the family can change the levels of cohesion and flexibility and the level of satisfaction with family life. Spouses were asked to assess the relations in the family in which they functioned at the time, which yielded results concerning the levels of variables measured by individual scales of the SOR: (A) balanced cohesion, (B) balanced flexibility, (C) disengagement, (D) enmeshment, (E) rigidity, (F) chaos, (G) communication, and (H) satisfaction. Family Assessment Scales enable a general assessment of the "health" of family functioning (Margasiński, 2013) through computing cohesion and flexibility indexes and the overall index. The "healthier" the family system, the more balanced it is; in that case, the values of the overall index are higher than 1, and when they are lower than 1, they indicate problems in the family system.

The Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS) measures individuals' well-being defined in accordance with the eudaimonic perspective. We used the full 84-item version of the questionnaire due to its acceptable psychometric properties. Based on factor analysis, six dimensions of well-being were distinguished: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Karaś & Cieciuch, 2017). These dimensions were described above in more detail. Scores are calculated for individual scales and the overall score is computed for the questionnaire as a whole. The choice of this measure was dictated by previous empirical findings, which suggest links between well-being and satisfying family relations (Ryff, 2014).

The Polish version of the questionnaire measuring religious commitment, RCI-10-PL, is a short 10-item measure assessing subjective religious beliefs that have an effect on activities in daily life and on relations with the group, understood as a religious or social community (Polak & Grabowski, 2017). As the authors observe, the scale concerns mostly the effects of religiosity on functioning in secular

situations and is neutral with regard to religious doctrines or traditions. It is, therefore, a measure fit for use in the area of family group functioning.

The study included 130 participants, with equal groups of 65 women and 65 men. When selecting the sample, we made sure that they were formally married spouses bringing up at least one child between preschool age and adolescence. The participants made up family systems in which the marital and parental subsystems could be clearly distinguished. The basic descriptive statistics for the study sample are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Except for the number of siblings variable, the values of skewness and kurtosis confirmed the alignment of variable distributions with the normal distribution. Participants' mean age was 40.35 years in the group of men (range: 25 to 58 years, *SD* = 8.7) and 38.20 years in the group of women (23 to 58 years, *SD* = 8.79). The spouses had been married for an average of 14.03-years (range: from 1 to 37 years, *SD* = 9.23) and were bringing up two children (range: 1 to 5 children). The wives were better educated than the husbands: 29 women (44.62%) had secondary education and 26 women (40.00%) had higher education, while 22 men (33.85%) had vocational education and 20 men (30.77%) had secondary education. The spouses showed religious commitment: the mean score was 29.63 (*SD* = 9.88) for men and 32.38 (*SD* = 9.58) for women, as against the American mean score of 23.6 (*SD* = 18.8) for the measure as a whole (Polak & Grabowski, 2017).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the sociodemographic characteristics of the spouses in the study

		N	*M*	*Mdn*	*Mo*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*Min.*	*Max.*
Number of children		65	2.20	2.00	2.00	1.02	0.50	-0.42	1.00	5.00
Length of marriage (in years)		65	14.03	12.00	10.00	9.23	0.50	-0.75	1.00	37.00
Age	Men	65	40.35	41.00	42.00	8.70	0.11	-0.80	25.00	58.00
	Women	65	38.20	39.00	40.00	8.79	0.17	-0.61	23.00	58.00
Number of siblings	Men	65	2.75	2.00	2.00	2.16	1.87	5.30	0.00	11.00
	Women	65	2.38	2.00	2.00	1.41	1.00	1.30	0.00	7.00

Note. *N* = number of participants; *M* = mean; *Mdn* = median; *Mo* = mode; *SD* = standard deviation; *Min./Max.* = minimum/maximum

Table 2. Education level of the spouses

	Men		Women	
Education	*N*	%	*N*	%
Higher	19	29.23%	26	40.00%
Secondary	20	30.77%	29	44.62%
Vocational	22	33.85%	8	12.31%
Elementary	4	6.15%	2	3.08%
Total	65	100.00%	65	100.00%

Table 3. Religious commitment of the spouses

		N	*M*	*Mdn*	*Mo*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	*Min.*	*Max.*
Religious Commitment Level	Men	65	29.63	31.00	33.00	9.88	-0.07	-0.51	10.00	50.00
	Women	65	32.38	34.00	34.00	9.58	-0.52	0.24	10.00	50.00

Note. N = number of participants; *M* = mean; *Mdn* = median; *Mo* = mode; *SD* = standard deviation; *Min./Max.* = minimum/maximum

5. Results

The application of Family Assessment Scales to marital systems made it possible to compare the scores of husbands and those of wives. As shown in Table 4, no statistically significant differences in the evaluation of family functioning were found between spouses. The tested marital systems scored average on nearly all scales, except for three of them: Disengagement, Rigidity, and Family Satisfaction, where the scores were above average (sten 7). This pattern of results indicates a satisfactory level of healthy family system functioning, but an increased level of Disengagement suggests that, on an everyday basis, each spouse is preoccupied with his or her own affairs and leads a rather individual life. Combined with high Rigidity, indicating certain difficulties in introducing situational or developmental changes, in problem situations such spouses may show a tendency to toughen their opinions, attitudes, and decisions at the cost of family cohesion. However, the predominance of separate activities over joint ones and a certain rigidity in mutual relations makes it possible for the spouses to be satisfied with their family life, and even to a great degree (7 sten), which attests to a sense of happiness and fulfillment that stems from satisfying family life. This is additionally supported by proper communication. The values of composite indexes – cohesion, flexibility, and total – were above 1, which attests to a balanced and therefore "healthy" family system, with no significant differences between the spouses.

To determine the relationships between husbands' and wives' evaluations of family functioning and selected variables, we used Pearson's *r* correlation test (Table 5). As the results show, the test revealed significant relationships.

It turned out that length of marriage and the number of siblings were positively correlated with Disengagement in men. The strength of this correlation is low, but it can be stated that the longer the marriage and the higher the number of siblings, the more disengaged from the family the husbands feel,

Table 4. Differences between husbands and wives and in the assessment of family functioning

Family Assessment Scales (SOR)	Husband (*N* = 65)		Wife (*N* = 65)		*t*(64)	*p*	Cohen's *d*
	M *Sten*	*SD*	*M* *Sten*	*SD*			
A. Balanced cohesion	29.02 6	4.38	29.43 5	3.97	-0.81	.42	-0.20
B. Balanced flexibility	25.37 6	5.69	25.91 5	4.78	-0.72	.47	-0.18
C. Disengagement	13.78 7	4.34	13.26 7	4.40	1.01	.32	0.25
D. Enmeshment	15.34 6	5.02	15.58 6	5.29	-0.42	.68	-0.10
E. Rigidity	20.12 7	4.82	20.34 7	4.36	-0.38	.70	-0.10
F. Chaos	15.86 6	5.18	15.86 6	4.86	0.00	1.00	0.00
G. Communication	40.72 6	6.84	41.08 6	6.46	-0.42	.67	-0.11
H. Satisfaction	40.37 7	7.43	40.94 7	6.25	-0.65	.52	-0.16
SOR cohesion	1.12	0.61	1.19	0.63	-1.11	.27	-0.28
SOR flexibility	1.02	0.44	1.03	0.36	-0.17	.87	-0.04
SOR overall	1.04	0.47	1.08	0.45	-0.94	.35	-0.23

Note. N = number of participants; *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *t(df)* = Student's *t*-test for two dependent samples; *p* = significance; Cohen's *d* = effect size
*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Table 5. Pearson's r correlation martix for the family assessment scales and selected variables in the groups of men and women

Family Assessment Scales (SOR)	Length of marriage		Age		Number of siblings		Religious commitment	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
A. Balanced cohesion	-.06	-.13	.07	-.13	.03	-.10	.24	.12
B. Balanced flexibility	.04	-.01	.17	-.14	.08	-.09	.05	.20
C. Disengagement	.28*	.10	.21	.12	.26*	.14	.15	.25*
D. Enmeshment	.04	-.12	.09	.10	.07	.10	.23	.21
E. Rigidity	.05	-.08	-.02	-.10	.01	-.08	.19	-.03
F. Chaos	.07	.03	.00	.18	.15	.21	.09	.24
G. Communication	-.09	-.15	-.03	-.30*	-.09	-.25*	.36***	.09
H. Satisfaction	.04	-.08	-.01	-.36***	-.01	-.30**	.32**	.01
SOR cohesion	-.04	-.14	.21	.06	.17	-.01	.01	-.06
SOR flexibility	-.04	.01	.23	-.01	.13	-.04	.05	-.09
SOR overall	-.09	-.16	.16	.05	.11	-.03	.14	-.05

Note. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Table 6. Differences between husbands and wives in self-reported psychological well-being

	Husband (N = 65)		Wife (N = 65)		$t(64)$	p	Cohen's d
Psychological Well-Being Scale	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Autonomy	4.43	0.76	4.38	0.72	0.37	.71	0.09
Environmental Mastery	4.43	0.72	4.47	0.63	-0.34	.73	-0.09
Personal Growth	4.37	0.78	4.40	0.62	-0.27	.79	-0.07
Positive Relations with Others	4.57	0.76	4.71	0.62	-1.30	.20	-0.32
Purpose in Life	4.53	0.78	4.49	0.70	0.47	.64	0.12
Self-Acceptance	4.52	0.72	4.51	0.70	0.07	.94	0.02

Note. N = number of participants; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; $t(df)$ = Student's t-test for two dependent samples; p = significance; Cohen's d = effect size
*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

the lower their emotional commitment becomes, the less time they spend together with the family, and the less often they consult their wives about their decisions. In the wives, a variable that turned out to be significantly positively correlated with Disengagement was religious commitment. The women who feel increasingly disengaged from their husbands increasingly often engage in religious life.

Significant correlations with selected variables were also found in the case of the Communication and Satisfaction scales, both in men and in women. A negative correlation with these scales is visible for age and number of siblings. With an increase in age and the number of siblings, the wives' rating of marital communication decreases and, most importantly, their satisfaction with family life decreases too (in this case the correlation was found to be the most significant, $r = -.36$ at $p < .001$). In the case of husbands, the higher the level of religious commitment, the better the communication ($r = .36$ at $p < .001$) and family life satisfaction.

Table 7. *Pearson's r correlation matrix for the psychological well-being scale and selected variables in the groups of men and women*

The Psychological Well-Being Scale	Length of marriage		Age		Number of siblings		Religious commitment	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Autonomy	.07	.07	.07	-.07	.13	-.01	.04	-.04
Environmental Mastery	-.01	.02	-.08	-.13	-.09	-.05	.20	.18
Personal Growth	.01	.03	-.06	-.03	-.09	-.04	.28*	.12
Positive Relations with Others	-.11	-.11	-.08	-.24	-.15	-.15	.31**	.22
Purpose in Life	-.18	-.14	-.08	-.06	-.11	-.05	.26*	.16
Self-Acceptance	-.12	-.01	-.06	-.05	-.05	.01	.27*	.21

Note. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Analyzing respondents' sense of psychological well-being (Table 6), we found no statistically significant differences between husbands and wives. Participants' scores were average on all the analyzed dimensions of well-being.

Pearson's *r* correlation test showed a relationship between religious commitment and four dimensions of psychological well-being, but only in men (Table 7). The more religiously committed the husbands were, the more capable they were of improving their skills and realizing their potential (personal growth), the more positive relations with others they maintained, the more accurately they defined their life goal (purpose in life), and the higher self-acceptance they had. What is characteristic, religious commitment was not related to the sense of independence and self-directedness, which are part of the autonomy of individuals' actions; nor was it related to environmental mastery, which is linked with a sense of agency.

Pearson's *r* correlations between family functioning variables and dimensions of psychological well-being in the groups or men and women are presented in Table 8.

The correlation analysis revealed significant positive correlations between family functioning variables and the dimensions of psychological well-being, except for one covariance – in men, disengagement correlated negatively with self-acceptance, which means that, for husbands, the lower the disengagement (or, in other words, the higher the family cohesion), the higher the self-acceptance, which determined a man's mental health, maturity, and optimal functioning. All remaining correlations are positive, indicating that the more balanced and well-functioning the family system is, the higher the well-being experienced by husbands and wives tends to be, though this is not consistently the case for all dimensions of the scale due to the lack of statistically significant results. It can be most strongly asserted, however, that high family life satisfaction, both in men and in women, is accompanied by a high level of perceived well-being – in all its dimensions, without exception. Likewise, the ability to engage in positive and effective family communication is associated with all dimensions of the spouses' well-being, except autonomy.

The last stage of analyses was an attempt to identify the determinants of family functioning and spouses' psychological well-being. For this purpose, we applied stepwise multiple regression analysis, with perceived family functioning and well-being as explained variables and with sociodemographic variables and respondents' religiosity as explanatory variables. The calculations included only those variables that were significantly correlated with the explained variables (see Tables 5, 7, and 8).

Some dimensions of psychological well-being – self-acceptance, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and personal growth – and religious commitment and length of marriage together statistically significantly explain between 6% and 28% of the variance in perceived family functioning (Table 9). The analysis revealed no significance of autonomy and environmental mastery in explaining family system functioning.

Table 8.*Pearson's r correlations between family functioning variables and dimensions of well-being in the groups of men and women*

Family Assessment Scales (SOR)	The Psychological Well-Being Scale											
	Autonomy		Environmental mastery		Personal growth		Positive relations with others		Purpose in life		Self-acceptance	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
A. Balanced cohesion	.09	.25*	.21	.25*	.31**	.36***	.31***	.53***	.23	.39***	.27*	.53***
B. Balanced flexibility	-.06	.17	.18	.40***	.09	.33**	.25*	.40***	.22	.32**	-.04	.37***
C. Disengagement	.09	-.14	-.20	-.09	-.20	-.12	-.22	-.07	-.20	-.24	-.27*	-.18
D. Enmeshment	-.12	-.16	-.12	-.08	-.14	-.16	-.15	-.11	-.23	-.04	-.09	-.09
E. Rigidity	.10	-.16	.19	-.12	.07	-.14	.06	.05	-.03	-.12	.06	-.02
F. Chaos	.06	-.07	-.15	-.17	-.06	-.14	-.15	-.07	-.10	-.15	-.17	-.23
G. Communication	-.03	.12	.27*	.28*	.38***	.30**	.41***	.38***	.44***	.31**	.39***	.39***
H. Satisfaction	.23*	.25*	.41***	.41***	.45***	.36***	.42***	.49***	.41***	.41***	.42***	.46***
SOR cohesion	.14	.16	.22	.18	.27*	.26*	.36***	.27*	.30**	.31**	.29*	.27*
SOR flexibility	.09	.30**	.17	.28*	.15	.29*	.31**	.31**	.17	.26*	.18	.37***
SOR overall	.16	.19	.23	.23	.27*	.36***	.43***	.31**	.35***	.32**	.32**	.37***

Note. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

At this point, it is worth focusing on how the above determinants differ between husbands and wives. Higher self-acceptance is a strong predictor of higher balanced cohesion (*beta* = 0.53) and a moderate predictor of better communication, higher flexibility, and higher SOR overall score (with *beta* ranging from 0.37 to 0.38) in the group of women. In the group of men, better positive relations with others are a significant moderate predictor of several family system characteristics: higher SOR overall score (the highest value of *beta* = 0.43), cohesion and flexibility indexes, and their balanced quality (with *beta* ranging from 0.40 to 0.25). Interestingly, higher self-acceptance is a weak predictor of lower disengagement in men (*beta* = -0.27).

Of the sociodemographic variables, length of marriage turns out to be the only predictor, and a weak one, of communication and satisfaction only in women, with the relationship between these variables being inverse, which means that longer marriage is related to weak communication and lower marital satisfaction. For men, a significant moderate determinant of higher family life satisfaction is high personal growth (*beta* = 0.45), while the determinants of marital communication were a more clearly defined purpose in life (*beta* = 0.37) and higher religious commitment (*beta* = 0.26, weak relationship).

Only three characteristics of the family system – balanced cohesion, communication, and satisfaction – statistically significantly explain 5% to 27% of the variance in psychological well-being (Table 10). Family life satisfaction is a predictor of all dimensions of well-being – its higher level is a moderate determinant of higher levels of all dimensions of well-being (*beta* ranging from 0.41 to 0.45), except for autonomy. The differentiation of this variable by participants' gender is clearly visible. Greater satisfaction with family life significantly determines higher levels of the following dimensions of well-being in husbands: personal growth (*beta* = 0.45), positive relations with others (*beta* = 0.42), self-acceptance (*beta* = 0.42), and environmental mastery (*beta* = 0.41); in wives, it is a weak predictor (*beta* = 0.25) of autonomy and a moderate predictor of environmental mastery (*beta* = 0.41) and purpose in life (*beta* = 0.41). In the group of women, higher balanced cohesion is a moderate predictor of higher personal growth (*beta* = 0.36) and a strong predictor of positive re-

Table 9. Predictors of family functioning in the groups of men and women

Explained variable	Gender	Explanatory variable	*B*	*SE*	*Beta*	*t*	*F*	R^2
A. Balanced cohesion	Husband	(Constant)	20.79	3.22		6.46	6.71***	.08
		Positive Relations with Others	1.80	0.69	0.31	2.59***		
	Wife	(Constant)	15.83	2.78		5.70	24.57***	.27
		Self-Acceptance	3.02	0.61	0.53	4.96***		
B. Balanced flexibility	Husband	(Constant)	16.85	4.26		3.96	4.11*	.05
		Positive Relations with Others	1.86	0.92	0.25	2.03*		
	Wife	(Constant)	11.38	4.25		2.67	11.87***	.15
		Positive Relations with Others	3.08	0.89	0.40	3.44***		
C. Disengagement	Husband	(Constant)	21.18	3.34		6.34	5.03*	.06
		Self-Acceptance	-1.64	0.73	-0.27	-2.24*		
	Wife	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
G. Communication	Husband	(Constant)	20.75	4.54		4.57	10.64***	.23
		Purpose in Life	3.23	0.99	0.37	3.26**		
		Religious commitment	0.18	0.08	0.26	2.29*		
	Wife	(Constant)	28.11	4.90		5.74	9.28***	.21
		Self-Acceptance	3.49	1.03	0.38	3.37***		
		Length of marriage	-0.20	0.08	-0.28	-2.51*		
H. Satisfaction	Husband	(Constant)	21.36	4.78		4.47	16.33***	.19
		Personal Growth	4.35	1.08	0.45	4.04***		
	Wife	(Constant)	23.10	5.60		4.13	13.34***	.28
		Positive Relations with Others	4.31	1.11	0.43	3.89***		
		Length of marriage	-0.18	0.07	-0.26	-2.38*		
SOR cohesion	Husband	(Constant)	-0.21	0.44		-0.48	9.41***	.11
		Positive Relations with Others	0.29	0.10	0.36	3.07***		
	Wife	(Constant)	-0.05	0.49		-0.10	6.61*	.08
		Purpose in Life	0.28	0.11	0.31	2.57**		
SOR flexibility	Husband	(Constant)	0.20	0.33		0.60	6.65**	.08
		Positive Relations with Others	0.18	0.07	0.31	2.58**		
	Wife	(Constant)	0.16	0.28		0.57	10.10***	.12
		Self-Acceptance	0.19	0.06	0.37	3.18***		
SOR overall	Husband	(Constant)	-0.20	0.33		-0.61	14.51***	.17
		Positive Relations with Others	0.27	0.07	0.43	3.81***		
	Wife	(Constant)	0.01	0.35		0.02	9.90**	.12
		Self-Acceptance	0.24	0.08	0.37	3.15***		

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE* = *B* standard error; *beta* = standardized regression coefficient; *t* = *t*-test statistic; *F* = *ANOVA* statistic; *R*2 = adjusted coefficient of determination
*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Table 10. Predictors of psychological well-being in the groups of men and women

Explained variable	Gender	Explanatory variable	*B*	*SE*	*Beta*	*t*	*F*	R^2
Autonomy	Husband	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Wife	(Constant)	3.20	0.58		5.55	4.26*	.05
		H. Satisfaction	0.03	0.01	0.25	2.06*		
Environmental Mastery	Husband	(Constant)	2.83	0.46		6.18	12.62***	.15
		H. Satisfaction	0.04	0.01	0.41	3.55***		
	Wife	(Constant)	2.79	0.48		5.77	12.46***	.15
		H. Satisfaction	0.04	0.01	0.41	3.53***		
Personal Growth	Husband	(Constant)	2.46	0.48		5.12	16.33***	.19
		H. Satisfaction	0.05	0.01	0.45	4.04***		
	Wife	(Constant)	2.74	0.54		5.04	9.47***	.12
		A. Balanced cohesion	0.06	0.02	0.36	3.08***		
Positive Relations with Others	Husband	(Constant)	2.84	0.48		5.97	13.64***	.17
		H. Satisfaction	0.04	0.01	0.42	3.69***		
	Wife	(Constant)	2.29	0.49		4.63	24.54***	.27
		A. Balanced cohesion	0.08	0.02	0.53	4.95***		
Purpose in Life	Husband	(Constant)	2.48	0.54		4.63	15.01***	.18
		G. Communication	0.05	0.01	0.44	3.87***		
	Wife	(Constant)	2.59	0.53		4.86	12.88***	.16
		H. Satisfaction	0.05	0.01	0.41	3.59***		
Self-Acceptance	Husband	(Constant)	2.87	0.45		6.32	13.52***	.16
		H. Satisfaction	0.04	0.01	0.42	3.68***		
	Wife	(Constant)	1.77	0.56		3.18	24.57***	.27
		A. Balanced cohesion	0.09	0.02	0.53	4.96***		

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE* = *B* standard error; *beta* = standardized regression coefficient; *t* = *t*-test statistic; *F* = *ANOVA* statistic; *R2* = adjusted coefficient of determination
*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

lations with others (*beta* = 0.53) and higher self-acceptance (*beta* = 0.53). Communication turned out to be significant only in men, and its higher level significantly determined stronger belief in having a purpose in life (*beta* = 0.44).

Concluding the analyses explaining the relations between family functioning and dimensions of psychological well-being, it is not possible to unambiguously specify which variable is the most important predictor, because the evaluation of family functioning significantly explains a percentage of the variance similar to that which well-being explains in the reverse relationship. These relations are probably circular, which means that, to some extent, the psychological well-being experienced by the husband and wife influences the functioning of the family system, but the way this system functions is determined by the perceived level of well-being. It is possible, however, to identify the determinants that significantly contribute to a "healthy" family system, and these are: high self-acceptance, the possibility of personal growth, and having positive relations with others. For spouses' psychological well-being, the most important determinants turned out to be balanced family cohesion, family life satisfaction, and positive family communication. Sociodemographic variables turned out to be weak or non-significant predictors of the naalyzed variables, the exception being length of marriage. Additionally, a significant though weak predictor of family communication was men's religious commitment.

Conclusion

The healthy functioning of the entire family system largely depends on marriage quality (Braun-Gałkowska, 2007). Relations between the spouses have an effect on their satisfaction with family life, which is frequently accompanied by a sense of well-being (Krok, 2015, Niśkiewicz, 2016), and well-being itself, as observed by Ryff (1989), should be approached broadly and comprehensively as a permanent element of human mental health and normal development. Efficient family functioning results in a healthy developmental environment for all family members (de Barbaro, 1999).

The results of the present study characterize family systems in which a man and a woman are formally married and are bringing up preschool-age or school-age children together, making up a complete family for many years (Table 1). Thus defined, families constitute a balanced system in which the spouses feel a moderate bond with each other and flexibly react to changes (of roles, rules, or relations), problem situations, and developmental stress. The families examined in this study are characterized by average levels of balanced cohesion and flexibility, which means not only their emotional bond but also their individual autonomy and their capacity for coping with stress and with changes are adequate. At the same time, the spouses in the sample tend to be high in disengagement and rigidity, which indicates high autonomy perceived by the spouses, with husbands and wives having their own psychological territory that other family members do not interfere with, combined with resistance – small but noticeable – when changes are made regarding leadership or regarding the rules to follow in mutual relations. This model of relations seems to be beneficial for the spouses, as shown by their experience of high family satisfaction, additionally supported by the ability to communicate efficiently in the marital subsystem.

Comparing the functioning of husbands and wives in the family system, one can conclude that, with the increasing number of years they have lived in marriage, men move emotionally away from their wives and devote a growing amount of time to their own affairs, while in women the experience of weakening emotional bond with the husband induces greater religious commitment. Moreover, older women who have numerous siblings report worse communication with their spouse than younger wives. With age, the sense of happiness and fulfillment in marriage also decreases in women. No statistically significant relationships of this kind were found in men. More religiously committed husbands experienced higher relationship satisfaction and reported more effective communication with their spouse.

The present study indicates that the more balanced the family system is, the higher psychological well-being the spouses experience. The investigated correlates of well-being are positively related to family life satisfaction and marital communication. Similar results were reported by Krok (2015) for life satisfaction. In his research, the explanatory variables turned out to be intimacy and self-realization, which together explained 12% of the variance. This means that spouses' life satisfaction grows with an increase in their satisfaction with being in an intimate relationship with their partner and with increasing possibilities of self-fulfillment and the realization of their values and life tasks. Krok's results indicate, moreover, that marital satisfaction not only has an effect on the general experience of happiness understood as pleasure, but also enriches the global perspective of happiness conceptualized in terms of values and goal. Positive relations between the spouses will thus translate into the development of their sphere of values, their sense of meaning and purpose, and the perception of their life as offering self-realization and fulfillment. These results are also consistent with previous studies (Argyle, 2008; Kamp et al., 2005).

The present study was an attempt to identify the determinants of the analyzed variables: family functioning and spouses' psychological well-being. A series of stepwise multiple regression analyses allowed for identifying the main predictors of healthy family systems, including three dimensions of psychological well-being: high self-acceptance, personal growth, and positive relations with others. Spouses' psychological well-being is determined by balanced cohesion in the family, family satisfaction, and effective family communication. Of the socio-

demographic variables, only length of marriage turned out to be a significant predictor of family functioning; the quality of family functioning decreased with the growing number of years in marriage only in the case of women. Additionally analyzed, religious commitment proved to be a weak predictor explaining marital communication only in men.

A detailed analysis of predictors reveals interesting differences between husbands and wives. For men, the most significant determinant of family satisfaction is the possibility of personal growth (this predictor explains 19% of the variance in family satisfaction), whereas in the case of women the significant predictor is self-acceptance, explaining 27% of balanced family cohesion. The results of our study show that a man satisfied with his family life has the chance to achieve personal growth – to improve his skills and realize his potential – also outside the family, whereas for a woman the most important thing is the emotional bond between the members of the family in which she accepts herself, being fully aware of her potential, accepting her vices and virtues, and maintaining her mental health in order to function in an optimal and mature way. A significant predictor of normal family functioning that turned out to be common to both spouses is positive relations with others; for husbands these relations are important in the global context and concern the family in general, while for their wives they determine satisfaction with family life. In other words, the women satisfied with family life are those who have positive relations with others – those who experience warm and deep relations based on love, trust, empathy, friendship, and intimacy, which probably also concerns family relations with the spouse.

What is also worth noting is the relations of husbands' and wives' religious commitment to family functioning and psychological well-being. More specifically, religious commitment is positively correlated with communication and marital satisfaction in men and with disengagement in women. It is reasonable to suppose that husbands who are high in religious commitment communicate with their wives better, whereas for wives, religiosity may be a mechanism compensating for the lack of cohesion in their relationship with their husbands. There were also not very strong positive correlations between religious commitment and well-being (personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, self-acceptance), which is consistent with the results reported by Krok (2012). The nature of these relations is probably circular. Religious commitment turned out to be a statistically significant predictor only for the Communication scale in the case of husbands.

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Cultural education of children and teenagers and the challenges ahead of cultural institutions

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Renata Pater[a], Joanna Olszewska-Gniadek[b]

[a] *Renata Pater, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9450-3690, Institute of Pedagogy, Jagiellonian University in Cracov*
[b] *Joanna Olszewska-Gniadek, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3853-6615, Institute of Pedagogy, Jagiellonian University in Cracov*

Abstract: Development of talents and competence in the contemporary culture and aesthetic education of children and adolescents occupy a special place in the educational research of the twenty-first century. Recommendations for how to best shape these competence from early childhood have become a driving force behind the designing and implementation of various educational initiatives at schools and in non-formal educational settings. In the difficult time of the new pandemic (2020), activities aimed at developing social skills in young audiences have become particularly relevant. Even though, due to spreading restrictions, these were mostly transferred to the Internet, many cultural institutions have tried to re-establish and maintain effective relationship with their audiences. Recent years have shown how important it has become to build relationship and develop social skills in direct contact with culture, art and other people. In their research analyses, the authors of this paper have focused primarily on the programs of leisure activities addressed to children and adolescents. The research involved the analysis of the websites of selected cultural institutions (programs), educational websites (reviews) and community portals (comments), with a particular emphasis on the competition for the most development-enhancing initiative for children. Data were also obtained via interviews with program organizers. Analysis of cultural institutions' programs show their involvement in the cultural education of children and youth. Non-formal education in cultural institutions is focused on the development of creativity and cultural and social competence.
Keywords: cultural institutions, cultural competence, children and youth, children creativity, cultural education, challenges, leisure time, museum education, theatre pedagogy

1. Contemporary cultural education of children and young people

Cultural education can be defined as all-purpose humanistic education, teaching and learning in the contexts of diverse environments, changing the conditions of life and of entire cultures dominated by new technologies. Accelerated civilizational progress and the associated rapid information flow enable human-to-human contact in a network of communities dispersed across the real or virtual world. Cultural education supports the development of children's and young people's creativity (Cropley, 2001; Lewartowicz, 2019). Cultural education as a "common good" leads to actions taken by cultural and educational institutions, among others, in the spirit of synergy, addressing children and youth but also adults and seniors for the "common good", understood as a cognitive experience that mobilises and activates human activity (J. Gałkowski, S. Gałkowski, 2019; Olbrycht, 2019).

Culture and art are interpreted as spaces for learning and maturation into full participation in social life by some Polish pedagogues and researchers, among them Bogdan Nawroczyński (1947), Sergiusz Hessen (1973), Stefan Szuman (1961), Irena Wojnar (1984) and Katarzyna Olbrycht (2019), who study the relationship between pedagogy and culture/art in the development of spirituality, aesthetics and holistically understood personality. Education through art and culture, as broadly defined by these authors, determines the main ideas and methodology of pedagogical interventions addressed at children, adolescents and adults alike. The holistic views represented by these authors, who of course vary in their theories and practice, still emphasise education and the quality of its impact – in fact, what they share is an interest in the ways in which "quality

of life" is created, whether on the individual or community level, in and through culture, art and science (Olbrycht, 2018).

The flourishing of various initiatives in cultural education in Poland post-1989 is clear evidence that it stemmed not only from the systemic changes that took place at that time but is also due to the new possibilities and new determining factors that appeared and had to be faced.

In the context of theoretical deliberations, the practical dimension of formal and non-formal education through "lifelong learning", the development of multiple intelligences and the formation of various competences play a crucial role. Contemporary cognitive science points to the individual capabilities and capacities of the human mind (Gardner, 2009; Bonar, 2019).

Cultural education is defined by researchers as education for cultural participation, as a process of communication-literacy through which to negotiate webs of meanings and connections (Pasikowska-Schnass, 2017). Culture is understood in its symbolic, material and non-material (spiritual) dimensions, which influence individual creativity (Bielecka-Prus, 2010; Lewartowicz, 2019). It is through various areas of art, such as theatre, music, dance or the visual arts that culture stimulates the formation of attitudes, lifestyle choices (through choice of values) and creative development of personality (Olbrycht, 2018; Szuman, 1990). The personalistic approach in cultural education is reflected in thinking and acting, which translate into the working methods proposed as being adequate to content. Values and the interaction between them are manifested in qualitative actions (Denek, 2011; Pater, 2017).

When researching and conveying her theoretical account of cultural education, Katarzyna Olbrycht points to the category of 'finding delight' as a natural need that gives shape to the process of human growth and development (Olbrycht, 2019).

2. Leisure and non-formal education in cultural institutions

When analysing the issue of aesthetic and cultural education in the social development of children and young people, it is necessary to mention the leisure culture that had developed throughout the previous century.

The notion of time is linked to purposeful activity and all kinds of doings performed "in time" and "on time". One can say that time determines our lives. By performing various activities in time we create reality, and at the same time exert influence on ourselves by shaping our selves "in time" and "through time". The quality of how we spend our time is reflected in the "quality of life" and "lifeworld" of generations; it is reflected in everyday life and in our culture of leisure time (Łukaszewski, 2020; Mroczkowska, 2020; Pater, 2015; Siwiński, 2010). The cultural activity of a child realized in leisure time is gradually transposed to the professional and social domain of adult life, still impacting the quality of life in its many dimensions. Nowadays, the activities of cultural institutions ensure the quality of participation in culture by disabled and socially excluded people (Gaweł, Opozda-Suder, 2020; Pluszyńska, Kopeć, Laberschek, 2022).

Today, the various forms of leisure and the ways in which children spend their free time are similar across the European countries, particularly against the background of fast-growing new technologies and their use by the young. An important role in engaging in leisure time is played by extracurricular activities which develop and support children's abilities, as part of extra-curricular programmes, groups and sports clubs (Cynoweth, Lynch, Petersen, Smed, 2020; Holden, 2008). Various initiatives are undertaken in cooperation with NGOs, community centres and other recreational, educational or sporting institutions and facilities (Pater, 2015; Pufal-Struzik 2018).

Cultural institutions currently play an important role in the education of children and youth. In Poland, among the institutions focused on realizing objectives in leisure-time culture an important place is occupied by the culture of youth centres, the role of which is to disseminate culture and make

culture and art accessible to all (Skowron, 2019; Świętochowska, Dobiasz-Krysiak, 2019). These are usually the institutions that introduce the youngest children to the world of creativity and inspiration (Kosno, Spodaryk, 2021). For various political and financial reasons, these community-based centres have undergone a considerable metamorphosis since the political transformation of 1989 (Pater, Karamanov, 2020; Szeląg, 2015). In fact, in the new reality that followed Poland's accession to the European Union structures, the financing of various programs in culture and leisure has changed, being now partially funded from the various EU funds. Many new organisational units and initiatives working for the cultural involvement of the youngest audiences have come into being. Innovative projects are initiated in various cultural institutions including museums, theatres and philharmonic halls, which, by following the demands of the market and the growing need for an increasingly democratised public for social and cultural education, have also targeted the youngest children (Grajewska, 2019).

3. Cultural institutions and their educational activities

The message of finding delight in beauty as an inspiration for work" and the need for work as a reviving force seems particularly relevant since the beginning of 2020, when we were first faced with the new global pandemic. After 12 March 2020 when the decision was made in Poland to close the culture sector to the public. As a result of numerous lockdowns, many people lost their jobs, and formal education was diverted into the digital space. Employees of cultural institutions tried to maintain relationships with their audiences. The need for social distancing has resulted in severed links with loved ones, while the traumatic experiences of strenuous situations has produced social effects whose consequences will be felt for a long time to come. "The Great Standstill" has not only shaken the world in its social and economic aspects, but has also caused a turn in social attitudes. Social life has been moved to the Internet, which generated new needs for formal and informal educational content. Cultural institutions had to re-establish contact with their audiences by offering work that would meet the new needs and take advantage of new possibilities (Górajec, Pasternak-Zabielska, 2021; Kamińska, 2021; Wiśniewski, Pol, Pląska, Bąk, 2021).

As our research analysis shows, despite the ongoing constraints many institutions did not cease their work but mobilised their forces to establish an effective relationship with the public. They reflected on the need to open up to local communities which were isolated and deprived of opportunities of contact (Kamińska, 2021). New rules of participation were introduced through applications for young audiences available through the Internet. In Poland, especially in large cities, cultural institutions took action to support parents and teachers in home education.[1] Many of these initiatives were highly professional, setting new standards for cultural and educational work. At the time cultural education of children and young people took place primarily in the family and at school, while "leisure time" also opened up as the main space for new educational activities and *outdoor education* (Wiśniewski, Pol, Pląska, Bąk, 2021).

Theatre commands a pivotal role within the framework of leisure institutions, serving for centuries as an efficacious means of fulfilling both individual and communal needs. It stands as an integral component of social life and a distinct tool for interpersonal communication, emphasising a human perspective, which is enacted in man (expressed via the actor's performance) and towards man (realised through the audience's perception).

Polish theatrologist, Andrzej Hausbrandt, in his contemplations on the societal functions of theatre, identifies four principal categories: educational-cognitive, cathartic (purifying), entertainment, and ceremonial functions (Hausbrandt, 1983). These roles are notably crucial for the lifelong development of an individual, wherein, through engagement with the arts, one may not only augment knowledge, cultivate

1 https://www.polin.pl/pl/aktualnosci/2021/07/19/emocje-i-edukacja-o-pandemii-muzeum-i-idei-uwaznej-szkoly-dyskusja-online, (access: 09.10.2023);
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRPLH0OuINQ (access: 09.10.2023).

skills, interests, and talents, but also sustain mental health and internal equilibrium, thereby enhancing quality of life.

Despite temporal changes, the expressive potency and syncretic nature of theatrical art ensure its continued relevance and significant role in education through the arts in its most expansive sense (Miller, 2017). This process, bifurcated in nature, encompasses two distinct paradigms: education through art and education for art. It primarily aims to utilise art in the formation of a comprehensive, integral human personality, enriching one's worldview, instilling moral norms, fostering imagination, liberating creative ambitions, and cultivating the aesthetic culture of individuals, i.e., the knowledge and sensitivity requisite for engaging with art, experiencing aesthetic impressions, and appreciating the value of artistic works. Such perceived education simultaneously embodies education through theatre and education for the reception of theatrical art (Olszewska-Gniadek, 2017; Szulborska-Łukaszewicz, 2017). A third facet of upbringing through theatre is discerned by another Polish theatre educator, Józef Górniewicz. In addition to educating to and through theatre, he delineates "upbringing in a theatre team". He posits, "these are spontaneous, and sometimes deliberately organised processes of integrated artistic, social, and moral education in a small social group" (Górniewicz, 1990, p. 8). To underline the coherence of these three approaches towards theatre, Górniewicz introduces the collective term "theatrical education". This process culminates in an augmentation of an individual's understanding of theatre's complexities, an appreciation of its language, a deepening of aesthetic and moral sensitivity, and an amplification in the level of involvement in the creation and reception of theatrical art's values.

Notably, after two years of lockdown engendered by the Covid-19 pandemic, theatres have sought to reconstruct relationships with children and adolescents. In addition to resuming performances for youthful audiences, numerous theatres have reintroduced workshops. Daniel Arbaczewski, a theatre educator from Krakow, highlights the current acute deficit in students' social skills: "After the pandemic, we entered a ploughed field where immediate sowing is impossible. (...) When a group was assigned a task requiring collective action and thinking, they were either paralysed or an immediate conflict ensued. Consequently, we quickly shifted from 'knowledge' workshops to 'skills' workshops, employing paratheatrical, performative tools."[2] As observed, the deleterious effects of children's social isolation predominantly impacted interpersonal relationships – communication difficulties directly translated into an absence of team cooperation, further intensifying the individual's sense of solitude within the group. This scenario demands swift remedial measures, wherein theatre – as a secure place to acquire and practice these deficient skills – can perform a pivotal role (Denkowicz, 2022; Sanecka, 2022; Szczepska-Pustkowska, 2020).

In response to these challenges, the Theatre Institute for Young People (TIM) was inaugurated in the newest district of Krakow – Nowa Huta, providing a fresh space of the Teatr Ludowy (People's Theatre) dedicated to engaging with a youthful audience. In a contemporary setting and under expert supervision, various theatrical and educational activities are conducted, targeting children, adolescents, and their parents and teachers alike. The organisers express, "We aspire to accompany the young audience in their natural quest to explore and comprehend the world, thus we intend to persistently investigate new artistic spaces, alter perspectives on theatre, and remain perpetually open to new experiences. We will fabricate modern performances for young audiences, utilising new technologies and divergent forms of narration."[3]

2 Daniel Arbaczewski – theatre pedagogue, conducting workshop activities for children and youth at the Old Theatre (Stary Teatr) in Krakow.

3 *Theatre pedagogy after the pandemic*, Marta Bryś converses with Daniel Arbaczewski and Łukasz Zaleski, "Didaskalia. Gazeta Teatralna", 2022, no. 172: https://didaskalia.pl/pl/artykul/pedagogika-teatralna-po-pandemii (access: 09.10.2023).

4. Aesthetic education in leisure and culture institutions

Aesthetic education is linked to artistic education, and in a special way to culture institution and musical education. Polish artist and educator Irena Popiołek in text *Aesthetic Education and Education Through Art*, looking at the past, explained their value and function in creating human identity, in human pursuit to Got and exploring the sense of one's own life, emphasizing the necessity of bigger share of art in pedagogical practice (Popiołek, 2014).

The social and cultural skills of children and young people are developed in the context of institutional activities (museum, theatre, opera and the philharmonic, etc.). Social competence are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes considered essential for personal fulfilment and development. The formation of key competence as a result of cooperation between different learning structures is recommended, as is the promotion of multiple and diverse approaches to learning (Brzezińska, 2019; Cropley, 2001; Pitts, 2018). Initiated by cultural institutions, innovative programs addressing children and young people provide much-needed support to school education, offer ways of spending free time in their locality and in the global space of the Internet. Institutions of high culture, along with NGO organisations, offer artistic education and education through art, in this way encouraging the development of social and cultural skills of children and young people. Today's emphasis rests on the learner's ability to activate (Laurent, 2010; Pater, Olszewska-Gniadek, 2021; Robinson, 2021).

When analysing educational activities in the light of the theory of aesthetic education, and the concept of cultural education as the forming of social skills, one must certainly look into museology. The museum as an institution of culture that has existed for over two hundred years is now undergoing dynamic development and transformation, particularly in the sphere of its social involvement and educational role (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007; Meier, 2000; Macdonald, 2016). In the twenty-first century, and especially in recent years, education in the museum, from the museum and through the museum has become particularly vigorous. The engagement of museum educators in the particular deserves a mention as they initiated many research and educational projects in cooperation with numerous institutions of formal and informal education (Robinson, 2021; Szeląg, 2015).

In recent years has shown how fast museum educators are capable of responding to critical situations by proposing programs in support of communities, addressing the public with much kindness and an invitation to cooperate, which has resulted in new proposals for innovative projects involving children and adolescents but also, via the Internet, entire families (Kamińska, 2021).

Simultaneously, the digitisation process of many Polish museum collections, which began in the twenty-first century, was accelerated in the last years (Jagodzińska, 2021; Pater, Karamanov, 2020). With the appropriate software and tools, museums were capable of responding even faster to the situation of lockdowns and truncated chances for on-site educational work. The need for online museum education proved to be helpful and relevant both to parents in home-education and to teachers implementing curricula in cultural education and education through art (Buchner, Urbańska, Wierzbicka, Janus, Cetera, 2021). Analysing the websites of Polish museums, it is notable that their programmes have been strongly oriented towards addressing socially relevant and topical issues, including ecology, local environment, climate change, the need for communication and the development of social and cultural skills (Kamińska, 2021).[4]

Various methods have been used to engage diverse groups emotionally and intellectually, and in this way affect their quality of life. The "Accessible Museum" programme has proven helpful to people with visual or hearing impairments. It has resulted in audio podcasts, films with sign language interpreters, and audio-descriptions, which make it possible for new social groups, which were absent from this space before, to become

4 The Art of Education: https://sztukaedukacji.zacheta.art.pl/#konferencja2018 (access: 09.10.2023).

involved in education.[5] Cultural education is one of the important pillars of cultural involvement for the benefit of cultural heritage and of the social function of the institution and its environment as reflected in intergenerational and intercultural communication.[6]

In modern pedagogical concepts, education through theatre is considered in the process of forming a full, integral personality, expanding on our knowledge of the world, shaping moral norms, developing imagination and releasing creative ambitions as well as moulding our aesthetic culture, which amounts to the knowledge and sensitivity necessary for contact with art, experiences of an aesthetic nature and appreciation of the value of artistic work and reception of theatrical art (Rochowska, 2019).

5. Participatory activities in cultural institutions

Cultural initiatives of a participatory nature involving children and young people deserve special analysis. Workshops that develop creativity and introduce children to culture and art (local, regional, national and multicultural) contribute to the formation of their cultural identity from an early age. These cultural provisions also support parents, guardians and educators in the cultural education of children about and in culture, and in the development of their aesthetic potential. Participation in culture influence human well-being, reduce stress, counteract loneliness, serve socialization and enculturation, shape identity, promote integral human development in the variable quality of life (Lipińska-Grobelny, Ozga, 2023; Ryś, 2020).

Among the socially recognised forms of evaluating the quality of work in aesthetic and cultural education are competitions and plebiscites, which are among the most important events in the cultural calendar and development of cultural education (Świętochowska, Dobiasz-Krysiak, 2019).

A good example is the "Sunflowers" competition, founded in 2011 in Krakow by the *Czas Dzieci* Foundation, which stands out among the cultural initiatives for children and teenagers, having consistently a enjoyed high reputation. The plebiscite is held every year in Krakow, Warsaw and Silesia.[7]

In Warsaw, for example, the Syrena Theatre has been very successful in working with young audiences during the pandemic. Particularly appreciated by the jury were the "Summer dubbing workshops" (Statuette 2021 in the language category) which provided an opportunity for individual voice work, but also teamwork (joint creation of a radio play). Among the prize-winners we also find the "Online meloconcert for children and babies". (Organiser: Impresariat Barbara Jagodzińska-Habisiak) involving musical classes and concerts based on Edwin Elias Gordon's theory. In Silesia, there were classes that developed language competences, such as "It's easy with Tosia! Fun ways with speech therapy" (organised by the Jan Dorman Zagłębie Children's Theatre in Będzin). The project was designed to provide the youngest children with a continuation of their work on speech development in an interesting and encouraging artistic setting, e.g. using puppets. The "Baytel on-line" project was also awarded by the jury (Zabrze Philharmonic). This was a cycle of weekly mini-music shows aimed at inspiring musical sensitivity in school-age children. The "Tiny Festival" (Teatr Mały Tychy) was awarded for an interdisciplinary programme of theatre, visual arts, music and movement addressed to families with young children (0-5 years old). As the jury stressed in the nomination, the initiative has successfully encouraged whole families to explore new

5 The Museum of Engineering and Technology is a cultural institution of the City of Cracow, and started the adventure with podcasts: https://www.mim.krakow.pl/aktualnosci/podcasty (access: 5.10.2023). Mimcast. Miasto i my: https://mimcast.pl/, https://www.mit.krakow.pl/ (access: 09.10.2023).

6 In 2019, 97.8% of museums had educational activities and the median attendance was 10,359. NIMOZ Museum Statistics, Museums in 2019: https://nimoz.pl/dzialalnosc/projekty/statystyka-muzeow (access: 09.10.2023).

7 The competition is organised by the Czas Dzieci Foundation, the owner of the czasdzieci.pl website.

artistic experiences, but above all, to consolidate the parent-child relationship through theatre and artistic activities of an interdisciplinary nature.[8]

Among the winners of the 2022 and 2023 competition we also find museums with programs full of well-received educational activities, many of which have been awarded more than once. The pandemic period has been a challenge for museum educators, who had to focus their work on digital space and also outdoors, in the space around the museum. The activities submitted to the competition are an example of the multi-directional development of cultural education of children and young people carried out in cultural institutions, such as museums, theatres, philharmonic orchestras, public libraries, community centres, and NGOs.[9]

The growing interest of parents in educational forms of spending leisure time with their children shows how necessary such projects are to support the considered selection of the highest quality offers. Parents' see the value of these types of initiative and show appreciation of the organizing institutions on a national forum. The organisers of the "Sunflowers" competitions encourage the support of local governments and state funds in order to encourage the education provided and to appreciate the organisers who ensure the high quality of the events and the competitions (Pater, Olszewska-Gniadek, 2022).

6. New challenges in cultural education and cultural Institution

Our analyses of the work done by the cultural animators and educators discussed in this paper allow for the conclusion that art has proven to be an excellent educational tool when employed through processes facilitating real, authentic encounter with human beings. In fact, team activities spontaneously activate in children the natural processes of competence acquisition, such as learning content from different spheres of knowledge and acquiring skills (including communication, teamwork, logical thinking, creativity, negotiation and decision-making). Participation in various classes also helps children identify with their system of values, which often translates into empathy and tolerance in the various dimensions of social life. Besides cultural education of children and adolescents is only the beginning of the process which extends across one's adult life, both in its professional and leisure dimensions.

The activities initiated by various institutions and organizations for cultural education not only support parents and educators but, even more so, target development and growth in the environment of meanings and symbols inherent in the world of art and culture. Developing cultural competence requires not only space and material resources, but also the close relationships necessary to enable growth in safe surroundings, people's sharing of each other's admiration for the world, exploring the beauty of nature and art, finding pleasure and delight in artistic endeavours and daily participation in culture.

8 In Warsaw 2023: https://sloneczniki.czasdzieci.pl/aktualnosci/id,185-sloneczniki_2023_rozdane.html; In Silesia: https://sloneczniki.czasdzieci.pl/aktualnosci/id,191-sloneczniki_2023_rozdane.html (access: 09.10.2023).

9 In Kracow: https://sloneczniki.czasdzieci.pl/; https://sloneczniki.czasdzieci.pl/aktualnosci/id,190-sloneczniki_2023_rozdane.html (access: 09.10.2023).

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Logoprophylaxis in the face of the crisis of adolescence[1]

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Piotr Szczukiewicz[a], Roman Solecki[b]

[a] *Piotr Szczukiewicz, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6220-682Xy, Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce ORCID: 0000-0001-6220-682Xy*
[b] *Roman Solecki, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9424-0675 Pedagogical University in Cracow*

Abstract: This study addresses the problem of the adolescent crisis from the perspective of logoprophylaxis, i.e. preventive actions referring to logotherapy and existential analysis of V. E. Frankl. The concept of this Viennese researcher and physician, due to its anchoring in philosophy and due to Frankl's own traumatic experiences, is nowadays applied to the understanding of various phenomena of human life or crises of contemporary culture. The authors – referring to logotherapy – argue that adolescence generally has a crisis course and that this is a phenomenon characteristic of every family system and upbringing environment, but that this crisis is also related to the social potential of values and ideals expressed, for example, through religion or culture. This poses a challenge for educators, pedagogues or psychologists working with young people, as many educational problems and disorders are linked to the crisis nature of adolescence and thus to the social ways in which values are transmitted. An understanding of crisis in logotherapy terms is discussed, with a particular focus on the role of existential frustration. The authors argue that adolescent crisis can also be understood as a kind of existential crisis. Thus, a crisis relating to problems concerning life goals, value conflicts, choices made, or experiencing the meaning of life. It has been reasoned that logoprophylaxis provides a good conceptual apparatus for understanding this type of crisis and can make use of one of the main protective factors against the adverse course of an adolescent crisis – a sense of meaning. The application of logoprophylaxis to problems of adolescence has been demonstrated, as a developmental period associated with the search for worldview resolution and the definition of personal values. The strategy of providing existentially meaningful experiences was presented as an example of logoprophylactic strategies. The article also argues that logoprophylactic measures can support the process of upbringing, since a crisis in the life of an adolescent is usually associated with problematic experiences of the meaning of life and disorientation in the sphere of values.
Keywords: Adolescent crisis, logoprophylaxis, logotherapy, existential frustration, existentially meaningful experience.

Introduction

The age of adolescence has a crisis character and this phenomenon is characteristic of every family system and educational environment. The adolescent at this time aspires to be an adult and the identifications he or she achieved in childhood play an increasingly smaller role in his or her development (Erikson, 2004; Jankowska, 2017; Witkowski, 2015). This poses a challenge for educators, pedagogues or psychologists working with young people . Most of the typical parenting problems such as reluctance to learn, avoidance of school, rebellion towards parents, disobedience, may be symptoms of a crisis in an adolescent (Elliot, Place, 2010). Such a crisis may be both developmental-related to the natural processes of gaining autonomy and building one's own identity, as well as situational – resulting from a reaction to a difficult situation in the family system or school (Szczukiewicz, 2015).

Natural developmental processes can give rise to many internal conflicts and difficult situations in relationships with adults at this age. At times this will clearly interfere with the adolescent's functioning and the fulfilment of developmental tasks. In this article, the crisis nature of adolescence is assessed from the perspective of Viktor E. Frankl's existential analysis and logotherapy. For this developmental period is inextricably linked to the search for a worldview resolution and the definition of personal values. It is

1 Article in polish language: Logoprofilaktyka wobec kryzysu wieku dorastania, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Szcz.pdf

also sometimes rebellious and violent in character, and at the same time the crisis in the life of an adolescent is usually connected with problematic experiences of the meaning of life and disorientation in the sphere of values. Therefore, consideration of experiencing a crisis and helping a young person in crisis requires reference to the concept of the meaning of life and consideration of the phenomenon of so-called existential frustration (Frankl, 1998, 2010).

Viktor Frankl's concept can be useful for understanding the crisis of adolescence because of the broad perspective its author takes towards individual and social problems. Existential analysis and logotherapy looks at individual difficulties not only through the prism of psychopathology and psychotherapy, but also from the perspective of philosophical anthropology and the „spirit of the times". For, among other things, this broad reflection on the contemporary human condition, logotherapy is so highly regarded internationally (cf. Costello, 2019; Guttman, 2008; Maddox, 2002). New publications on its application to mental health disorders in the broadest sense are also constantly emerging (Lukas, Schönfeld, 2021). Thus, the adolescent crisis seen from the perspective of logotherapy is not a phenomenon that can simply be looked at through the lens of developmental psychology, but is a reflection of important socio-cultural processes that underlie the choices made by young people.

Preventive measures referring to the concept of V. E. Frankl and aimed at problems of this type of aetiology, have been referred to as logoprophylaxis (Solecki, 2022). Logoprophylaxis is based on a multidimensional, integral and personalistic vision of the human being and opposes the various reductionisms present in the human sciences (e.g. psychologism or nihilism). The human person is not determined by drives, but oriented towards meaning, possesses an inalienable dignity, and can only understand himself or herself from the level of transcendence (Frankl, 2017). The most important factor in the logoprophylactic approach is the sense of meaning in life, which protects a person from phenomena such as depression, suicidal thoughts, self-destructive behaviour, addictions or existential emptiness (Kmiecik-Jusięga, 2022; Solecki, Hreciński, 2022).

1. Typology of crises and the crisis of adolescence

The terminology for crisis phenomena is very diverse. There are terms related to the concept of crisis such as psychological trauma, traumatic experience, post-traumatic stress, traumatic stress, trauma, traumatic event, emotional crisis, psychological crisis, critical life event, personality crisis, existential crisis, normative crisis, developmental crisis, identity crisis (Bronowski et al., 2019; Jacyniak, Płużek, 1998; Kubacka-Jasiecka, 2010, 2016; Oleś, 1992; Szczukiewicz, 1998). Some of the terms mentioned are close in nature, but some differ significantly in their scope of application. In the following, some of the terms mentioned will be taken into account with the assumption that, in general, the issue of mental crises can be organised by adopting a division into their two basic categories: developmental crises and traumatic crises (Szczukiewicz, 2015).

Developmental crises (natural, normative) are crises associated with developmental periods, especially with breakthroughs occurring in development. Their occurrence can be predicted, especially as to the time of occurrence and the nature or character of the crisis. Developmental crises are associated with developmental processes, i.e. e.g. transformations in the system of needs, value processes, etc. As a rule, the crisis shows a strong polarity or polarity, which is associated with a possible positive or negative resolution. One of the best-known developmental crises is the identity crisis typical of adolescence (Erikson, 1997; Szczukiewicz, 1998).

Trauma crises (situational crises, traumatic events, critical life events) occur randomly and rather unexpectedly and include so-called difficult situations. As a rule, they are impossible to foresee and prepare for, survive or apply appropriate countermeasures to (e.g. death of a loved one, serious illness, disability, loss of property, divorce). During trauma crises, the individual's normal activities and social interactions are disrupted or even completely interrupted. There are very strong negative emotions associated with the inability to reduce the traumatic situation

to routine ways of behaving or habitual ways of adapting. Such situations, as far as the problems of schoolchildren are concerned, lead to so-called adaptation disorders, which are the most common diagnostic diagnosis in adolescence. They very often concern problems related to a new stage of learning, high demands in a new school environment or rapid changes in the family system (e.g. divorce) (Szczukiewicz, 2015).

It is often assumed that psychological crises have a bivalent, dual nature – on the one hand, they contain a risk, the possibility of pathologising the individual, and on the other hand, they bring an opportunity for further development and growth, and thus a positive passage of the crisis (Kubacka-Jasiecka, 2016). The positive potential of a crisis (the emergence of positive effects as a result of overcoming it) is much greater in developmental crises. The strength and extent of the impact of situational crises on health and mental functioning vary widely, but they generally pose a greater risk than developmental crises. What trauma crises and developmental crises have in common is that they require an increased adaptive effort on the part of the individual. In both cases, we can speak of a disruption of the previous life line, although, as a rule, traumatic events have a more disruptive effect on its course. Moreover, in both cases we will also be able to speak, for example, of threats to internal integration, major changes in life space and sense of personal identity (Erikson, 1997; Kubacka-Jasiecka, 2016).

In the light of the above observations, the crisis of adolescence, as related to developmental processes, is primarily normative and developmental, i.e. it represents a developmental norm and contains positive potential. The resolution of such a crisis opens up new possibilities for the young person and leads to greater maturity. However, it is important to bear in mind adolescent mental crises that are not developmental in nature but are related to difficult life situations, psychological trauma or illness. Such crises form the basis for the diagnosis of mental health disorders (e.g. adaptive disorders) and require a different type of help than developmental crises (Elliot, Place 2010; Szczukiewicz, 2015).

2. Crisis from the perspective of logotherapy V.E. Frankl

Logotherapy provides a theoretical basis and concepts to better understand the nature of crisis experiences in adolescence. Terms such as ‚meaning of life', ‚existential frustration' and ‚existential emptiness' are among the most characteristic of this strand. The importance of the meaning of life for maturity and mental health was recognised very early in psychology, thanks to Alfred Adler, a Viennese physician and psychotherapist and personality theorist, the founder of individual psychology (Adler, 1986; Campbell, Hall, Lindzey, 2023). However, it was not until the emergence of the existential-humanist trend in psychology and especially Viktor E. Frankl's logotherapy that the concept of the meaning of life was developed and treated as a leading idea for therapeutic activities (cf. Frankl, 1978, 1998, 2010).

Viktor Frankl, a Viennese neurologist and psychiatrist and psychotherapist, was the founder of the third Viennese school of psychotherapy, after Z. Freud and A. Adler (Szykuła, 2022). This thinker was inspired in his youth by Adler's views and existential psychotherapy, but soon developed his own coherent theory of human functioning and psychotherapy referred to as existential analysis and logotherapy. Frankl distinguished between ‚existential analysis' as the theoretical basis, the anthropological foundation for his thinking, and ‚logotherapy' as the psychotherapeutic approach he derived from existential analysis (Szykuła, 2022). As a mental shortcut, Frankl himself and his students often apply the term ‚logotherapy' collectively to both philosophical anthropology and the school of psychotherapy itself. The name ‚logotherapy' is a combination of the Greek words *logos* (word, meaning, explanation) and *therapeo* (I care, I treat, I care) and is meant to express the essence of this school of psychotherapy as: caring for the meaning and explanation of life and healing by helping people find meaning (Frankl, 1998, 2010.

In his conception, V.E. Frankl referred to the specifically human properties of existence and emphasised the multidimensionality of human existence. This is why he paid so much attention to the spiritual sphere, the experiencing of values and the discovery of the meaning of life (cf. 1998). He emphasised that

determinism exists in the somatic and psychological dimensions of our existence, but that the spiritual dimension is characterised by freedom. This freedom determines man's capacity to overcome his own limitations – referred to by Frankl as the capacity for self-transcendence (cf. 1978). „The striving for meaning" constitutes for this researcher a fundamental property of human existence, just as for Freud the „striving for pleasure" and for Adler the „striving for power". At the same time, the discovery of the meaning of one's existence always means, at least in part, for man to go beyond his own self and beyond his biological and psychological needs. „Human being indeed always transcends itself, always points to a certain sense. In this sense, man's being is not about pleasure or power, but neither is it about self-realisation. Rather, he is concerned with the fulfilment of meaning. In logotherapy we speak here of the *will to meaning*" (Frankl, 1978, p. 80).

To understand the nature of the adolescent crisis, the concepts of emptiness and existential frustration are important. It was the founder of logotherapy who introduced these concepts into psychology (Frankl. 1978, 2010). He believed that if a person's striving for meaning is somehow thwarted or this type of striving is pushed out of consciousness (e.g. as a result of a process of displacement when one is too absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure), one can speak of a state of frustration of the will to meaning. This term is used in logotherapy to describe the inability to satisfy the need for the meaning of life, which implies a kind of existential emptiness. Such a state pathologises human functioning and leads to neurosis, which, due to its genesis, Frankl called noogenic neurosis (Gr *nous* – mind, spirit). A sense of meaning in life is therefore not only a signal of a person's existential condition, but takes on significance as an indicator of mental health. Existential frustration arises when a person loses a sense of the meaning of his or her existence and cannot discover and realise it. Existential frustration occurs in situations of overload, lack, demands, obligations and stress (Frankl, 2010). Symptoms of boredom, dissatisfaction, emptiness and a sense of meaninglessness then appear. Consequently, the individual begins to look for other ways to fill the perceived emptiness. These include seeking entertainment and fun, immersing oneself in a whirlwind of responsibilities, and behaviour that leads to addictions.

A situation of existential emptiness, and therefore frustration, can be an important component of adolescence, as this developmental period is marked by many acts of self-awareness on the part of the young person – especially the search for worldview resolutions and the definition of personal values (Szczukiewicz, 2015). Frankl himself wrote that it is ‚the privilege of youth not to assume in advance that there is a fixed meaning to life, but to challenge it boldly' (Frankl, 1978, p.169). However, Frankl notes in the same place that young people, with this courage, lack patience. He stresses that in order to find meaning sooner or later, it is necessary to wait, to be patient. And this is precisely what people should do, and not take their own lives or seek oblivion in various types of stimulants or drugs (Frankl, 1978). The impatient search for a solution, the search for meaning ‚by shortcuts', sometimes stems from what Frankl calls the pursuit of pleasure and which he contrasts with the pursuit of meaning. He recognises that in moments of existential frustration, when the pursuit of meaning is blocked and meaning is no longer realised, the pursuit of pleasure prevails. It gives man the illusion of meaningfulness, serves to drown out his life's unfulfilment, and man's unconscious hides this unfulfilment from his conscience. In neurotic people, the original striving – the striving for meaning – is transformed into a direct striving for happiness, for pleasure. It becomes so that joy and happiness are the goal of man's exerted intention, the purpose of his life, and this is what is pathological. Because these states should be a side effect of the meaning given to life, rather than meaning itself (Frankl, 1978).

3. Logoprophylaxis as the provision of existentially meaningful experiences

In view of the above findings, the adolescent crisis can also be understood as a kind of existential crisis. Existential crises are not only typical of adolescence. They can occur at any period of life. They refer to conflicts and anxieties accompanying problems that

are significant for the quality of existence, especially the spiritual dimension of our lives (Szczukiewicz, 2015). They relate to life goals, value conflicts, choices made, taking responsibility, experiencing the meaning of life. They are associated with a sense of irreversible change, loss of time or life opportunities and existential frustration. They are accompanied by questions such as: *why live? how to live now? what's next for me? what's the point?* An existential crisis results from a person's confrontation with the basic hardships of human existence, such as human mortality, loneliness, the search for the meaning of life, making irrevocable choices, etc. The specificity of adolescence makes the search for the meaning of one's own existence and reflection on the values for which „life is worth living" a progressively more pronounced developmental regularity for the young person (cf. Chłopkiewicz, 1987; Obuchowska, 2000; Szymański, 2000; Wojciechowska, 2018). The older the adolescent, the more worldview references and the definition of one's own hierarchy of values are embedded in his or her development. These are closely linked to the search for psychological autonomy and the formation of an individual identity.

Logoprophylaxis – starting from the assumptions of logotherapy – provides behavioural strategies to overcome existential frustration. One strategy is to create so-called existentially meaningful experiences for young people. In existential analysis and logotherapy, this refers to the state when a person experiences his or her existence most strongly and experiences the very essence of his or her own existence most powerfully (cf. Szczukiewicz 2011). It refers to the experience of typically human attributes of existence, such as, for example, subjectivity, self-awareness, tragedy, freedom or responsibility. Existentially meaningful experience can be understood as such an experience of something, someone and oneself that allows a person to define and project their own existence. Existentially meaningful experience is most often a low-reflective but profound experience of meaning in a specific situation. Through this kind of experience, a young person can give meaning to his or her existence and function in a world that „makes sense".

The educator or preventionist will arrange the group activity and direct the discussion to take into account two important tendencies in young people: the need for good experiences and the first worldview interests. The idea is that the pupil will link important human values in his or her own life with an experience of meaning and a sense of significance. The adolescent is then able to reflect on what it means to have a ‚meaningful life' and may feel that he or she has a chance to have such a life. A good existentially meaningful experience involves not only experiencing the meaning of life, but also the ability to prioritise values. Through an existentially meaningful experience, hedonistic values can be subordinated to higher values. The search for such experiences can be linked to a situation or event arranged in the course of preventive work. An already existing situation can be used or a new situation can be created. The young person can, for example, become involved as a volunteer in a nursing home or day care centre, or they can organise a school Caritas circle or get involved in collecting things for victims of war or refugees. The prophylactic meaning of such situations as ‚existentially meaningful' will be brought out by an adult moderating the situation, e.g. through an exchange of thoughts and feelings between people who have undertaken some kind of helping activity. To this end, the logopreventor will pose philosophically-tinged questions aimed at reflecting on the meaning of the activities undertaken. It would be particularly valuable to apply this logoprophylactic strategy to programmed prevention activities. School prevention programmes can provide a basis for this type of strategy (Poleszak, 2004). However, this requires well-considered activities, especially those supported by a diagnosis of problems and needs in a specific environment and axiological reflection of the implementers. An example of the implementation of such solutions is the first logoprophylaxis programme in Poland, ‚Live with meaning' (Gubala, 2022). It aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills to cope with developmental and situational crises, so that young people look at difficult situations as challenges and opportunities to change their existing attitudes or behaviours. In addition, the programme aims to trigger reflection in young people about their spiritual and moral potential.

4. The importance of logoprophylaxis for education – a pedagogy of meaning

Activities that create existentially meaningful experiences not only have a preventive potential, but are part of broadly understood upbringing processes. This is because they support the upbringing functions of adults responsible for the upbringing and development of young people. This is in line with the understanding of prevention as specialised and professional activities supporting upbringing (Gaś, 2006; Grzelak et al., 2015). Logoprophylactic strategies can furthermore have a compensatory function towards the upbringing tasks of adults. This is the case when some adults, called upon in the first instance to give the child a chance for „meaning-making" activity, are not always able to provide such experiences, sensations and reflections, either because they themselves no longer care about them (absorbed, for example, in the pursuit of success) or because they outright renounce their opportunities (e.g. justifying this with a model of liberal upbringing).

From the perspective of logoprophylaxis, it is easy to understand that a young person is searching for his or her own path in life, but this does not only refer to the choice of profession or to fulfilling social roles. It is also about being open to seeking and defining the values that order human life. At this time, the ideological potential of society appeals to the young. Ideological commitment can vary greatly, depending, for example, on the environment and intellectual level of the adolescent boy or girl. Life philosophies built on the values available in society will sometimes be of a very simple nature, e.g. the ideology of punks or skinheads or a certain genre of music, at other times they may express the full depth of philosophical and religious search. If the social potential for values and ideals is too weak or the generational transmission of values fails, youth worldviews will be very simple and superficial (Erikson, 1997).

Reflecting from the perspective of logoprophylaxis, it can be concluded that, unfortunately, the „ideological potential of society" is increasingly underrepresented by significant figures and authorities, drawing on timeless and universal values. Instead, we are rather confronted with a „pop-culture ideology", i.e. a mass ideological product, giving young people the illusion of communing with real values, which is in fact rather a media „commodity". If young people's life ideas are built, for example, only around the music a particular group listens to, or a few slogans that they try to apply to all situations in life (e.g.: „freedom of choice", „laid-back", „tolerance", „being yourself"), we can worry that the generational continuity of values is being seriously violated (Szczukiewicz, 2019). The more difficult it is for young people to assimilate positive cultural role models, the more disturbed personal relationships are in various areas of social life (e.g. family, school, local community) (Wojcieszek, 2005).

Being aware of the above dependencies and typical developmental regularities of adolescence, logoprophylaxis postulates actions from the perspective of a „pedagogy of meaning" (Solecki, 2022). Such pedagogy makes one of the main goals of educational and psycho-preventive activities the use of the potential of values existing in social and individual life, in order to enable the young person to experience the meaning of life. At the same time, it is based on anthropological foundations that provide a non-reductionist vision of the human being, especially those defined by the logotherapy of V. Frankl or personalist philosophy (cf. Kraśniewska, 2021, 2022). The pedagogy of meaning postulates that those responsible for upbringing and development should create space for young people to experience meaning and for ‚meaning-making' activity. It is teachers and educators who, with their attitude, skills and personality, create the right conditions at school for the full development of adolescents (Gaś, 2006). Therefore, school educational-preventive programmes should give young people a chance to encounter the social potential of values, and thus should enable them to experience the meaning of life and mitigate the crisis nature of adolescence.

Conclusions

The view of the adolescent crisis presented in this article from the perspective of logoprophylaxis allows some concluding remarks to be made. The authors

believe that Viktor Frankl's existential analysis and logotherapy helps to formulate a preventive response to the phenomenon of existential frustration, which may be an important component of the adolescent crisis. Arguments are presented that logoprophylaxis – understood as prevention based on the theory and practice of logotherapy – has the potential to make a significant contribution to countering the disadvantages of adolescence. The proposed logoprophylactic strategy of providing existentially meaningful experiences can inspire professionals involved in supporting adolescent development to create appropriate situations and build prevention programmes. Existentially meaningful experiences can support the personal development of students and pupils, responding to the developmental needs of adolescence – the search for meaning and one's place in life, the definition of personal identity. It should be emphasised that the possibility of creating situations that enable existentially meaningful experiences depends not only on the inventiveness and creativity of the educator, but also on his or her qualities as a person (including personal reflection on meaning and values). Axiological reflection should therefore precede the design of preventive actions based on the creation of such experiences. Logoprophylaxis aims to support young people in building a mature world of values and the realisation of their existential needs, desires, dreams and life goals, the responsible use of freedom, perceiving the meaning of life and happiness understood as the result of doing good and realising values that have a meaning-making potential.

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Emotional knowledge – the missing link of emotional intelligence[1]

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Katarzyna A. Knopp[a] ✉

[a] *Katarzyna A. Knopp, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7103-7132, Institute of Applied Psychology, The Maria Grzegorzewska University*
✉ *kknopp@aps.edu.pl*

Abstract: The paper is of a review nature. It revisits the existing definitions of emotional intelligence and emotional knowledge. While the constructs of emotional intelligence and emotional knowledge have existed in parallel in the literature for quite some time, researchers studying emotional intelligence seem to take little, if any, note of emotional knowledge, and those focusing on emotional knowledge rarely relate it to emotional intelligence. It should be noted that the definitions of both emotional intelligence and emotional knowledge refer to emotional information processing, and a comparison of the elements of the two constructs and their operationalizations reveals significant similarities. Indeed, different researchers have included the same elements in the scope of either emotional intelligence or emotional knowledge. The paper indicates the need to clarifying the relationship between the two constructs and determining the degree of their interdependence and autonomy. Based on the literature review, a new definition of emotional intelligence was proposed. Emotional intelligence has been defined as a set of abilities used to acquire emotional knowledge, that is, to assimilate and analyze emotional information, to incorporate it into one's cognitive system, as well as to efficiently apply it in understanding and solving emotional problems. The proposed definition emphasizes the cognitive nature of emotional intelligence. It does not go beyond the generally accepted understanding of abilities, in contrast to some models. The definition also clarifies the relationship between emotional abilities and emotional knowledge. Adoption of the proposed definition of emotional intelligence has several major ramifications for an understanding of the development of emotional intelligence, its role in human functioning, as well as the operationalization of the construct. All these issues are discussed in the last part of the article.
Keywords: development, emotional intelligence, emotional knowledge, functioning effectiveness, measurement

1. Defining emotional intelligence

Despite the unabated interest of both academics and psychology practitioners, many aspects of emotional intelligence (EI) remain unclear. Even such a fundamental issue as its definition is subject to debate between two opposing paradigms. Some authors, such as Bar-On and Goleman, define EI very broadly as "an array of noncognitive capabilities, competences, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in the coping with environmental demands and pressures" (Bar-On, 1997, p. 16) or a different kind of wisdom (Goleman, 2020). EI is understood by them as a conglomerate of various qualities contributing to effective human functioning. For instance, the EI components distinguished by Bar-On (1997) are interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, adaptability, stress management, and general mood, while those listed by Goleman (2020) include self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy and motivation. As can be seen, the proposals of Bar-On and Goleman, labeled as "mixed models" by other scholars (see e.g. Sfetcu, 2023), go far beyond the traditional meaning of the term "intelligence." As such, they are likely to stir controversy and have indeed come under sharp criticism (see e.g. Kanesan, Fauzan, 2019). This is little wonder as the incorporation of diverse abilities, traits, as well as other emotional and non-emotional qualities in one construct gives rise to questions as to its boundaries and the legitimacy of using the term "intelligence" to describe it (see Matczak, Knopp, 2013). Therefore, in the opinion of the present author, the models of

1 Article in polish language: Wiedza emocjonalna – niedoceniane ogniwo inteligencji emocjonalnej, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Knop.pdf

Bar-On and Goleman, while undoubtedly useful in explaining effective human performance, do not in fact represent EI (or even emotional competence), but rather broadly defined social competence.

Proponents of the other research tradition view EI as a certain set of abilities (instrumental dispositions) enabling emotional information processing. Notable representatives of this approach, Mayer and Salovey (Mayer, Caruso, Salovey, 2016), listed the following emotional abilities: perception, appraisal, and expression of emotions, emotional facilitation of thinking, understanding and analyzing emotions, and regulating emotions, with each ability being further subdivided into more specific categories. This understanding of EI as a set of abilities is closer to the traditional way of defining intelligence and falls within the scope of an instrumental disposition.

Unfortunately, the avid interest in the EI construct has not been accompanied by sufficient efforts to broaden its theoretical underpinnings. The only major EI model meeting scientific criteria, proposed by Salovey and Mayer, has not been corroborated by empirical data, as some studies have produced two- or three-factor structures rather than a four-factor one. Also interrelationships between the various EI components remain obscure, and the autonomy of EI with respect to other constructs is yet to be established (see e.g. Matczak, Knopp, 2013).

Regrettably, a review of literature shows that researchers primarily focus on application studies, EI training, and vindication of its importance for different aspects of human functioning, paying much less attention to developing its theoretical foundations, such as a comprehensive definition or an accurate model. Indeed, the current theoretical status of the construct is far from clear. The following section presents a new definition of EI, which is largely based on the concept of emotional knowledge (EK), and discusses the implications of such an understanding of the construct for further studies.

2. Defining emotional knowledge

While the constructs of emotional intelligence (EI) and emotional knowledge (EK) have existed in parallel in the literature for quite some time, researchers studying EI seem to take little, if any, note of EK, and those focusing on EK rarely relate it to EI. In light of the scarcity of information about the relationship between these two concepts, it seems necessary to elucidate their mutual position, and also to include EK in an understanding of EI and incorporate it in research on the latter.

The history of the concept of EK is somewhat longer than that of EI. The former first emerged in the psychological literature on emotional development in the 1970s (see Izard, 2001). A review of the latest works on EK shows that definitions of that construct, similarly to those of EI, are highly varied. Knowledge can be most broadly described as "information and understanding of a specific topic or of the world in general, usually acquired by existence or by learning; an awareness of the existence of something" (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2023). This definition emphasizes two aspects: information and understanding, and it seems that EK should be defined in a similar way in reference to information concerning emotions. However, it seems that many authors investigating EK go far beyond such an interpretation. While Izard's definition (1971) of EK as the result of the process of acquisition of emotional experiences and their incorporation into the cognitive system is consistent with the general conceptualization of knowledge, some scholars have largely departed from that line. For instance, EK has been characterized as "the capacity to understand emotion in facial expressions, behavioral cues, and social contexts" (Trentacosta, Fine, 2009, p. 1), "the capacity to identify and articulate feeling states in others" (Berzenski, Yates, 2013, p. 464), or "a multifaceted construct that includes skills such as labeling emotions, recognizing emotion expression in others, and correctly attributing emotion states to a particular situation" (Heinze, Miller, Seifer, Locke, 2015, p. 241), "ability to identify and label emotions" (Brock, Kim, Kelly, Mashburn, Grissmer, 2019, p. 179), construct "comprises two distinct dimensions, namely emotion recognition and emotion situation knowledge" (Conte, Ornaghi, Grazzani, Pepe, Cavioni, 2019, p. 2; see also Sette, Bassett, Baumgartner, Denham, 2015). Some of these definitions actually mention specific components of EK. While there is still an ongoing discussion as to the structure of

EK at different stages of human development, the generally accepted elements of EK, usually described in terms of abilities or skills, include: the recognition and comprehension of emotions, the identification of emotion-eliciting situations as well as of the causes and effects of emotions, the use of emotional language, the knowledge of emotion regulation strategies, and the knowledge of display rules (cf. Izard, 2001; Ornaghi, Brazzelli, Grazzani, Agliati, Lucarelli, 2016; Sette et al., 2015). These components are most often written about in terms of *abilities* or *skills* (in fact, the concept of „*ability*" also appears in some general definitions of emotional knowledge; see above). Based on the definitions mentioned earlier, it can be concluded that some researchers dealing with emotional knowledge are inclined to consider it in terms of abilities or skills.

It should be noted that the definitions of both EI and EK refer to emotional information processing, and a comparison of the elements of the two constructs and their operationalizations (discussed in the subsequent paragraph) reveals significant similarities. Indeed, different researchers have included the same elements in the scope of either EI or EK. Therefore, the question arises as to whether these constructs are entirely autonomous of each other, and, if not, then to what extent they overlap? It appears that the existing terminological confusion is attributable to the fact that many definitions of EK, overly departing from the general understanding of the term "knowledge," foray into the domain of EI, while the definitions of EI do not appreciate the significance of EK.

3. Emotional intelligence vs. emotional knowledge

One of the few researchers who have explored the relationship between EK and EI is Izard (2001), who seems to treat EK and EI as competing concepts with the former more aptly describing the adaptive functions of emotions in light of the current state of research.

Regardless of what EK structure one adopts, it appears to be inextricably intertwined with EI defined as a set of abilities to process emotional information. The authors of the term "emotional intelligence," Salovey and Mayer, have not given much attention to EK, suggesting that it is a set of emotional information, with EI being the ability to apply it (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, 2004). While this approach seems perfectly legitimate, for some reason Mayer and Salovey place EK only in the third branch of their EI model, that is, the ability to understand and label emotions (Mayer, Caruso, Salovey, 2016), which could be taken to imply that they refuse to acknowledge that the other emotional abilities are also underpinned by processing emotional knowledge.

In Poland, the relationship between EK and EI has been studied by Matczak and Piekarska (2011), who argue that EK is the "material" processed by EI, while EI contributes to the assimilation of emotional information, its analysis, and integration, and by the same token, to the acquisition of EK. Thus, according to them, EK is not only an input for EI, but also its output, which can be used as a reliable indicator for assessing the latter. Interestingly, similarly to Salovey and Mayer, Matczak and Piekarska consider EK mostly in the context of the third EI component of the ability model (the ability to understand emotions).

Notwithstanding, analysis of the literature on EK and EI, as well as on general intelligence, affords a perspective on EI that somewhat differs from the ability model and enables its closer integration with EK. In light of what is already known about EK and EI, it does not seem possible to separate the two constructs.

The approach to EI from the perspective of EK, which is postulated in this paper, stems from the tradition of research into general intelligence understood as the ability to learn and to use the acquired knowledge for adaptive purposes (see Sternberg, Detterman, 1986). Many definitions of general intelligence underline the aspect of learning, the acquisition of knowledge, and its use for adaptive purposes. For instance, Anderson (2006) defined intelligence as "that facet of mind underlying our capacity to think, to solve novel problems, to reason and to have knowledge of the world". Also in the triarchic model of Sternberg (2000), the cognitive process subtheory contains a component of knowledge acquisition. Some concepts of intelligence practically equate intelligence with knowledge. An example is the theory of social intelligence by Cantor and Kihlstrom (1987).

If we analyze the ability model of EI and its components listed there, it turns out that they largely refer to EK. This applies not only to the previously mentioned third branch of the model, but also to all the others. The first component of EI described by Mayer and Salovey (Mayer, Caruso, Salovey, 2016) is the ability to perceive and express emotions. However, don't these abilities rely on emotional knowledge? After all, in order to notice and recognize a given emotion, first of all, it is necessary to be aware of its existence, and secondly, to know its expression. This is nothing else than emotional knowledge. Indeed, to express emotions in a way that can be understood by others, one needs to know emotion displays as well as the social rules and norms concerning emotional expression. Similarly, in order to name emotions, one has to know their linguistic labels. Also numerous studies show that emotional regulation would not be possible if the individual did not have adequate knowledge of the ways to cope with emotions (cf. Lucas-Molina, Quintanilla, Sarmento-Henrique, Martín Babarro, Giménez-Dasí, 2020). The least closely associated with EK seem to be the second branch of the model, namely, emotional facilitation of thinking. Nevertheless, it is rather clear that most of the emotional abilities postulated by Mayer and Salovey are based on the individual's awareness and knowledge of emotions. Thus, the assertion that EK belongs to only one component of EI, seems to be unsubstantiated.

Although the present work was largely inspired by the aforementioned paper by Matczak and Piekarska (2011), here the relationship between EI and EK is understood much more broadly, with the two concepts overlapping to a considerable degree. It is proposed that emotional intelligence is a set of abilities used to acquire emotional knowledge, that is, to assimilate and analyze emotional information, to incorporate it into one's cognitive system, as well as to efficiently apply it in understanding and solving emotional problems. At the same time, emotional knowledge is understood in line with the general knowledge definition given above (see APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2023). Thus, EK stands for awareness of emotions and information about them. EK is not an ability or a set of abilities, although it is a prerequisite for them. On the other hand, the set of abilities known as EI contributes to the acquisition of EK, which it subsequently processes.

The proposed definition emphasizes the cognitive nature of EI. It does not go beyond the generally accepted understanding of abilities, in contrast to the mixed models. The definition also clarifies the relationship between emotional abilities and EK and has several major ramifications for an understanding of the development of EI, its role in human functioning, as well as the operationalization of the construct.

4. The development and structure of emotional intelligence

There is a general consensus among researchers that EI is not a monolithic construct, but rather a configuration of emotional abilities (in ability models) or of emotional abilities in conjunction with personality traits, competences, etc. (in mixed models). The EI definition proposed herein implies approaching its structure from the perspective of applying EK to emotional problems rather than from the viewpoint of EK structure alone, as EK is a very broad and somewhat nebulous construct without clear-cut boundaries between its various components. Knowledge about different aspects of emotions is not well differentiated, with blurred demarcation lines between its various segments. At the same time, EK is primarily of procedural nature: it manifests itself in solving emotional problems and determines the effectiveness of that process. Importantly, one EK component may be used to address different kinds of emotional problems, while different EK components may be applied to the same problem. Therefore, in considering EK, its procedural nature should take precedence over its structure. One should focus on types of emotional problems requiring different levels of EK and different methods of its deployment. Due to the great diversity of such problems, an exhaustive list cannot be provided, but the main types include: problems requiring an understanding

of emotional situations, labeling emotions, emotional regulation, recognition of emotional expression, comprehension of the function and significance of emotions in human actions, etc. (cf. Matczak, Knopp, 2013). Thus, for every emotional problem there is a corresponding ability which can be applied to cope with it, and so a classification of those abilities (which are EI components) cannot be complete, either.

In the opinion of the present author, it would be more important to identify developmental changes in the structure of EI rather than merely determine the number and nature of its components. There is a consensus among EI researchers that emotional intelligence is not an innate disposition and that it changes throughout one's lifetime (see e.g. Dolev, Leshem, 2017; Kuk, Guszkowska, Gala-Kwiatkowska, 2019; Matczak, Knopp, 2019; Serrat, 2017; Zeidner, Matthews, Roberts, MacCann, 2003). However, the question as to the pathways and determinants of EI development remains open. Few empirical studies have explored the hierarchical structure of EI within the ability model, including the assumption that its braches can be further subdivided. Moreover, most research concerns EI in adults, with children receiving much less attention (e.g., Izard, 2001; Matczak, Knopp, 2013). Thus, it may be argued that EI research lacks a developmental perspective. It seems that initially one's knowledge of emotions is very incidental, fluid, and poorly specialized, and that with age it not only broadens, but also becomes more structured. Therefore, it may be expected that in children EI may have, e.g., a one-factor structure with more factors gradually developing over time, increasing the complexity of the construct.

The proposed definition linking EI to EK implies a certain way of understanding EI development. Humans are not born with EK, but, in accordance with Aristotle's notion, they are *"blank slates"* to be filled with EK. However, EK expands not only in terms of quantity, but also quality, as it gets incorporated into increasingly complex cognitive structures, becoming more structured and general. With age, EK may also be more effectively deployed, which is largely enabled by the process of gaining new emotional experiences. This entails a number of assumptions.

First, experiences are gained throughout one's lifetime, causing EI to evolve continuously. Obviously, in adulthood EI development is not as dynamic as in childhood, but further enhancement of emotional abilities is normal.

Second, EI levels may be expected to be positively correlated with the intensity and quality of emotional experience acquisition. It should be noted that one's emotional experiences are gained due to one's activities (mostly social and task-related, as these tend to elicit most emotions; see Matczak, Knopp, 2013), as part of what could be termed "development drive." Therefore, of the essence are those psychological qualities which motivate (or discourage) and drive (or inhibit) individuals with respect to acquiring emotional experiences. However, people do not exist in a vacuum as they always act in a certain context, including living conditions, culture, and the environment, which affect the intensity and quality of emotional experiences, and in this way shape EI development. Of particular importance is temperament, which determines how actively one seeks emotional experiences (high/low need for stimulation influences one's predisposition for certain types and intensity of experiences; see e.g. Strelau, 2016). The role of temperament in EI development has been noted by many researchers (see e.g., Matczak, Knopp, 2013, 2019; Sękowski, Berej, 2019; Zeidner et al., 2003).

Third, EI is affected not only by the intensity and quality of acquisition of emotional experiences, but also by the ability to assimilate and apply emotional knowledge. Especially important here are internal qualities, such as general intelligence (mostly fluid), which serves as a foundation for EI. It may be therefore argued that the effectiveness of application of one's emotional experiences varies depending on one's psychological makeup (see Matczak, Knopp, 2013).

Fourth, EI does not exist in isolation from other developmental aspects (in particular cognitive and linguistic; see Izard, 2001). Thus, certain levels of cognitive and linguistic abilities are prerequisite for reaching certain levels of emotional intelligence.

5. Measuring emotional intelligence

The assumption that EI is associated with the levels, structure, and application of emotional knowledge has serious ramifications for how it is operationalized. Indeed, there are two major conflicting operationalizations of this construct, represented by self-report questionnaires and performance tests, respectively (some other, experimental measures have also been developed, but have not gained wide acceptance). The former method is recommended for EI as defined by the mixed models, while the latter has been advocated for EI understood as a set of abilities (cf. Mayer, Caruso, Salovey, 2016).

Similarly to some other researchers, the present author believes that questionnaire instruments are not well suited for measuring any kind of intelligence whatsoever, irrespective of the definition adopted. First, such tools by nature produce a description of one's competences rather than abilities. They primarily concern *typical* rather than *maximal performance* as the respondents are asked how successful they are in everyday situations, and not how well they would perform given optimal motivation and conditions (for more on typical and maximal performance see, e.g. Petrides, Furnham, 2001). Second, being self-report instruments, questionnaires naturally draw on the subjective perspective of the respondents, and so in fact they do not even measure one's competences, but rather one's appraisal of them. In the case of EI, they evaluate one's perception of one's emotional competence; while that perception may be strongly correlated with EI, the two are not identical.

The above concerns notwithstanding, EI as defined in this paper does not lend itself to questionnaire measurement for yet other reasons. Human knowledge of any kind can be both of declarative and procedural nature (see, e.g. Cantor, Kihlstrom, 1987), and so it may be measured either by tasks referring directly to that knowledge (subjects replicate the required information) or by tasks in which subjects need to use that information to solve problems. The EI definition adopted herein strongly emphasizes the procedural nature of EK. To give an example, a test should evaluate not only whether a subject knows the different aspects of anger display, but also whether he or she can deploy that knowledge to solve an emotion-related problem, such as recognizing anger in another person. Intelligence, as understood in this paper, primarily manifests itself in solving new, previously unknown problems, while self-report measures deal with known and typical situations.

Therefore, emotional intelligence should be measured by means of performance tests, just as traditional intelligence. This does not mean that one should discard the existing, quite successful, instruments. Analysis of those tests shows that they actually refer to emotional knowledge and its applications in solving emotional problems, and so they already measure the construct postulated herein. For instance, in the emotion recognition tasks included in the SIE-T test, the subject is shown a photograph of a person experiencing an emotion and asked to identify that emotion. Indeed, the completion of this task would not be possible without knowledge of emotion expression and its linguistic equivalents, and without appropriate application of that knowledge.

In this context, one should pay attention to yet another issue. As it was mentioned before, the definition of EI proposed in this paper affects the choice of determinants of its development. EK develops as a result of gaining emotional experiences by individuals finding themselves in different social and environmental conditions. By nature, EI is not and cannot be isolated from the cultural context, and so it must not be measured with culturally reduced tests. Obviously, it is true that some EI tests, have been adapted and successfully used across many countries. Indeed, a good instrument adaptation is characterized by the adjustment of its tasks to the local culture or by the removal of culturally confounding factors. However, it should be noted that despite the great popularity of the MSCEIT and its numerous adaptations, there are still insufficient data on the cultural invariance of its results. Therefore, one cannot conduct intercultural comparisons and it is not known whether the tasks are understood in the same way by members of different cultures. Second, one should bear in mind that culturally universal instruments can measure only that part of EI which is relatively independent of cultural factors,

without the possibility to operationalize the aspect of EI associated with a given cultural identity and culture-specific experiences. By striving to universalize EI (which is not necessarily empirically legitimate, as mentioned above) and divorce it from the cultural context, one runs the risk of missing insights into some of its main aspects, its complexity and diversity, as well as into culturally salient factors. Thus, the question arises as to whether one should entirely refrain from using culturally universal EI measures. In the opinion of the present author, this is not the case as some of them have been shown to be valid and reliable. However, EI measurement ought to be more sensitive to intercultural differences and culture-specific experiences shaping EI, as well as to its developmental paths, which calls for the development of tools that would take into account and emphasize the cultural context.

6. Emotional intelligence and human functioning

Claims made by some authors (see, e.g. Goleman, 2020) to the effect that EI is responsible for 80% of life success , or that it makes the greatest contribution to scholastic, professional, and interpersonal performance out of all human dispositions, are not borne out by the facts. While some significant correlations between EI and various indicators of performance effectiveness have been found (see e.g. Cajachagua Castro, Miranda Limachi, Chávez Sosa, Huancahuire-Vega, 2023; Drigas, Papoutsi, 2020; Guerra-Bustamante, León-Del-Barco, Yuste-Tosina, López-Ramos, Mendo-Lázaro, 2019; Jung, Yoon, 2016; MacCann, Jiang, Brown, Double, Bucich, Minbashian, 2020), they tend to be weaker than expected (see Matczak, Knopp, 2013).

The proposed definition of EI also has some implications for its relationship with the effectiveness of human functioning. In reference to the distinction made by Petrides and Furnham (2001), EI appears to be an instrumental disposition determining maximal rather than typical performance. Within this paradigm, EI is a necessary, but not the only, prerequisite for effective functioning. Individuals with adequate EK and ability to apply it possess an effective instrument for coping with emotional distress. However, whether and how those individuals will in fact use that instrument depends on a range of other internal and external factors, such as motivation, personality traits, as well as the situations and conditions to which they are exposed. Consequently, although abilities to process emotional information are needed for effective functioning, they cannot guarantee it on their own. It follows from the above that expectations of very strong correlations between EI defined as the ability to acquire and deploy emotional knowledge in dealing with emotional problems and actual performance effectiveness is in principle unfounded.

Conclusion

Scientific endeavors are typically underpinned by theories verifiable by empirical studies. However, the great interest in the construct of EI and the considerable body of empirical investigations have not been accompanied by satisfactory theoretical efforts. Most researchers adhere to the few existing theoretical proposals, which either fail to meet the criteria of scientific rigor (as is the case with mixed models) or require refinement (as is the case with the ability model). While it may be worthwhile to subject the existing models to further empirical scrutiny, one should also seek new, improved and more complete theoretical concepts of EI. Analysis of the literature on EI shows that there are still more unknowns than knowns. The proposed definition of intelligence with its implications for an understanding of the development, role, and measurement of EI is hoped to provide a useful contribution to this field.

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The mediating role of gratitude and forgiveness in the sense of coherence and values-based action[1]

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Roman Szałachowski[a], Anna Mrzygłód[b], Wioletta Tuszyńska-Bogucka[c] ✉

[a] *Roman Szałachowski, PhD, https://orcid.org/000-0002-4864-8717, Department of Social Sciences, University of Szczecin, Poland*
[b] *Anna Mrzygłód, MA, https://orcid.org/0009-0002-0460-6491, Graduate of Institute of Psychology, Department of Social Sciences, University of Szczecin, Poland*
[c] *Wioletta Tuszyńska-Bogucka, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7101-5267, Department of Human Sciences, University of Economics and Innovation, Lublin, Poland*
✉ *Corresponding author: wioletta.tuszynska-bogucka@wsei.lublin.pl*

Abstract: *Aim:* The aim of the study has been to determine the mediating value of gratitude and forgiveness in the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action. In order to answer the research question, a predictive model of mediating effects has been constructed based on the work of McCullough et al. *Material and method.* The research has been conducted among 330 individuals aged 18 to 65 years, including 284 women (86.1%) and 46 men (13.9%). The *Life Orientation Questionnaire SOC-29* has been used to measure the independent variable of sense of coherence. The mediating variables of gratitude and forgiveness have been examined using the *Gratitude Questionnaire GQ* by McCullough, Emmons and Tsang and the *Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivation Inventory (TRIM18)* by McCullough et al. The dependent variable of values-based action has been measured using the *Valuing Questionnaire (VQ)* by Smout, Davies, Burns and Christie. The analysis has used SPSS v4.2. and mediation in R and lavaan packages.
Results: Gratitude has been shown to mediate the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action: the presence of gratitude in an individual's life strengthens the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action. Also, the mediating role of forgiveness has been identified in the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based actions. The dimensions of revenge and benevolence have been shown to be mediators in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension of values-based action but have not shown a mediating effect in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the dimension of progress in values-based actions. The third factor, i.e. avoidance, has not shown a mediating role in any of the relationships examined. Benevolence strengthens the negative relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension, whereas revenge weakens this relationship. *Conclusions:* The results reflect the significant role of gratitude in the functioning of psychological mechanisms and reveal another aspect on which the presence of gratitude has a positive effect in the functioning of an individual.
Keywords: psychology of values, gratitude, forgiveness, sense of coherence, mediation analysis

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues,
but the parent of all the others."
Cicero

1. Introduction

There is a scarcity of empirical work in literature on the relationship between the sense of coherence and values. To date, only a few studies have been conducted to analyse the relationship between values and the sense of coherence (Cieciuch, 2010; Kot, Lenda, 2017). The results obtained suggest that there are not many direct relationships between the sense of coherence and preference for specific values. The correlations the researchers have identified are that the sense of coherence positively correlates with preference for the value of self-management (Cieciuch, 2010) and the sense of psychophysical harmony (Kot, Lenda, 2017). Both these factors are constructs indicative of internal coherence and autonomy in actions, as are the value-driven actions

1 Article in polish language: Mediacyjna rola wdzięczności i przebaczenia w poczuciu koherencji i działania zgodnego z wartościami, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Szal.pdf

examined for the purposes of this study. Positive correlations can also be justified by considering the arguments formulated in Antonovsky's salutogenetic model (1995) and Hayes and Smith's psychological flexibility model (2014). According to the authors, engaging in worthwhile causes, even in the face of unpleasant experiences, can be the result of seeing meaning in a particular action. It is the sense of meaningfulness – as a motivational aspect of the sense of coherence – that allows one to make effort, face difficulties and make meaning (Antonovsky, 1995; Jarmużek, 2011; Hayes, Smith, 2014). Furthermore, according to researchers (Hari, 1998; Suominen et al., 1999), the higher the level of sense of coherence, the more situationally appropriate the choice of coping strategies and the higher the level of emotional competence, which could also explain support from the process of values-based action while experiencing emotional discomfort. Based on previous research and theoretical assumptions, gratitude and forgiveness have been adopted as factors that could play the role of these mediators.

In this article, gratitude is framed in terms of a personality disposition, i.e. a trait that allows one to experience the emotion of gratitude in response to an event (McCullough et al., 2002a, p. 112; Rusk et al., 2016, p. 2191-2). According to Maslow (1962), gratitude is a characteristic of self-actualised, authentic and integrated people, i.e., in terms of the present study, also people who live their values. It may also bind one's self-regulation with those of social others (Jia et al., 2014). Emmons (2012) assumes that gratitude makes one less susceptible to such negative emotional states such as greed, jealousy, grief or frustration, all of which can cause one to move away from valued living. The assumption of a mediating role for gratitude is also motivated by research that shows its positive relationship with autonomy understood as acting in accordance with individually established rules (Wood et al., 2008) and the sense of coherence itself (Lambert et al., 2009), as well as the conclusion that it helps individuals to find meaning and coherence in life so that they can improve themselves and elevate others (Bono, Sender, 2018). The understanding of gratitude adopted in the article assumes its functional character (dispositional gratitude). This means that gratitude can serve a person as a moral barometer, motive and reinforcer (Karns et al., 2017; Mendonça, Palhares, 2018). The function of the barometer is to provide information about the type of social interaction in which one person receives a benefit from another person, and the gratitude that emerges in response is directly proportional to the gift received. Another function of gratitude has been identified as prompting reciprocity and prosocial actions, as well as preventing harmful behaviour as self-reinforcing actions (Rusk et al., 2016). The third function of gratitude is to reinforce good behaviour in the benefactor. The benefit received makes the positive pattern more likely to be repeated (McCullough et al., 2001). In this way, its adaptive and psychosocial nature becomes apparent (Bono, Sender, 2018). According to Maslow (1962), gratitude is a characteristic of self-actualised, authentic and integrated people, i.e., in terms of the present study, also people who live their values. Emmons (2012) assumes that gratitude makes one less susceptible to such negative emotional states such as greed, jealousy, grief or frustration, all of which can cause one to move away from valued living.

Forgiveness has been identified as another factor that could explain the interdependence between the sense of coherence and values-based action. Forgiveness is defined as the process of rebuilding internal order after experiencing harm, involving the reordering of the world of values, feelings and ways of responding. As argued by Wood et al. (2007, p. 49-50), it is a primary factor in the construction of values and the experience of peace, compassion, love and benevolent thinking and motivation (Kaleta, Mróz, 2020). Although contemporary psychology treats forgiveness as a multidimensional construct (Ho, Fung, 2011; Kaleta, Frost, 2018), it has been assumed, following McCullough et al. (1998, 2006), that it is a suite of motivational changes occurring as a consequence of experiencing harm. Quite importantly, forgiveness is understood as a process of transformation of a motivation, rather than as motivation itself. In the original version of the model, McCullough et al. (1998) distinguished two basic motivations in response to being hurt: to seek revenge and to avoid contact. However, this proved insufficient and the

final version of the model (McCullough et al., 2006) includes a third motivation: a desire for goodness and benevolence towards the offender. According to this concept, the process of forgiveness involves weakening the negative motivations (revenge and avoidance) and strengthening the positive motivation (benevolence and desire for goodness). It aims to restore the harmony in the relationship with the perpetrator that has been disturbed by the harm. The model developed by McCullough et al. (1998, 2006) is based on the interpersonal component of forgiveness and concerns the willingness to act – to show empathy and compassion towards the offender.

It is assumed that forgiveness facilitates reconciliation with suffering and allows one to take action in inner freedom (Mellibruda, 1992). Both establishing an individual hierarchy of values and taking autonomous action are indispensable elements of valued living. In contrast, moving away from valued living may be caused by the desire to avoid difficult emotions, which is directly opposite to the process of forgiveness (Baran et al., 2019). Mellibruda (1992) claims that the main stages of this process are confronting fear, suffering, anger and sadness. In addition, research findings indicate that forgiveness is a factor positively related to the sense of meaning (Van Tongeren et al., 2015), with positive implications for mental health (Webb, Toussaint, 2020), the manifestations of which may include a high sense of coherence and taking values-based actions.

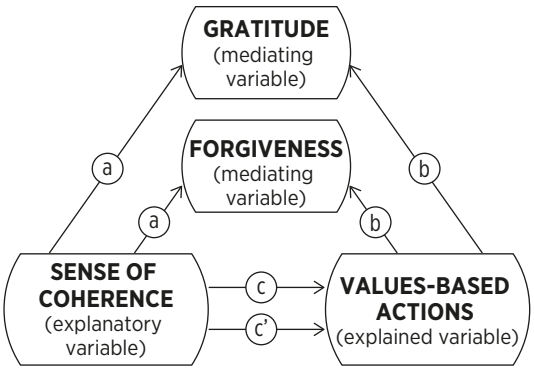

Figure. 1. Diagram of the mediating effects under analysis.

Given the identified gap in predictive research, this article answers the question of whether gratitude and forgiveness mediate the relationship between the .sense of coherence and values-based action. To answer the research question, a predictive model of mediating effects has been constructed (Figure 1).

2. Material and method

2.1. Research subjects

N=330 people aged between 18 and 65 took part in the research, including 258 individuals in the 18-35 age bracket (78.2%) and 72 individuals in the 35-65 age bracket (21%). The group comprised 284 women (86.1%) and 46 men (13.9%). The surveys took place online; the participants did not receive any reward for taking part.

2.2. Measurement of variables

The *SOC-29 Orientation to Life Questionnaire* (*The Sense of Coherence Questionnaire*) was used to measure the sense of coherence. It was developed by Antonovsky (1987) and adapted to Polish conditions by Mroziak (1994). The scale consists of 29 statements within three subscales: sense of comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. The subjects are asked to rate the relevance of each statement in relation to their own lives. Responses are given on a 7-point Likert scale, where "7" means that the attitude always occurs and "1" means that the attitude never occurs. The overall score indicates the intensity of the subject's sense of coherence. The reliability for the SOC scale is as follows: for the overall sense of coherence score – 0.86 *Cronbach's α*, for the sense of comprehensibility subscale – 0.70 *Cronbach's α*, for the sense of manageability subscale – 0.47 *Cronbach's α*, and for the sense of meaningfulness subscale – 0.86 *Cronbach's α*.

Values-based actions were measured using the *Valuing Questionnaire* by Smout, Davies, Burns and Christie (2014). It was adapted to the Polish conditions by a Polish team composed of Baran, Hyla and Kleszcz (2019). The VQ consists of ten

items to which the subjects respond on a 7-point scale, where "0" means "completely true" and "6" means "completely untrue". The questionnaire was divided into two subscales: progress, indicating the awareness of one's values and values-based actions, and obstructions, understood as avoidance of unpleasant experiences that moves one away from valued living. A high score on the progress scale indicates valued living over the past week. By contrast, a high score on the obstructions scale indicates a move away from valued living due to the avoidance of unpleasant experiences. The internal consistency of the tool is 0.82 Cronbach'sα for the progress subscale and 0.79 Cronbach's α Cronbach's for the obstruction scale.

The *Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ)* was used to measure gratitude as a psychological disposition. It was created by McCullough, Emmons and Tsang (2002a) and adapted to the Polish conditions by Kossakowska and Kwiatek (2015). The Questionnaire consists of six test items and has a univariate structure. The subjects mark their answers on a seven-point Likert scale, where "1" means "strongly disagree" , while "7" means "strongly agree". The higher the score, the higher the level of dispositional gratitude. The reliability for the gratitude scale is 0.74 Cronbach's α.

The *Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM-18)* by McCullough et al. (1998), as translated by Meisner (2017), was used to measure forgiveness in motivational terms. The questionnaire consists of 3 subscales: revenge, avoidance and benevolence. The subjects respond to statements on a five-point Likert-type scale, where "1" means "strongly disagree" and "5" means "strongly agree". The higher the score on the revenge subscale, the stronger the motivation to seek revenge for one's harm. The higher the score on the avoidance subscale, the higher the level of motivation to avoid the perpetrator of one's harm. The higher the score on the benevolence subscale, the higher the level of motivation to relate to the perpetrator in a benevolent manner and the desire to re-establish a positive relationship. The reliability for the revenge subscale is 0.87 Cronbach's α; for the avoidance subscale, it is 0.89 Cronbach's α; and for the benevolence subscale, it is 0.87 Cronbach's α.

Due to the results of the skewness and kurtosis analysis (ranging from -2 to 2), it was assumed that the results of the study group met the conditions for a correlation and linear regression analysis as well as a mediation analysis (Tab. 1). The analysis used SPSS v4.2. and Mediation in R and Lavaan packages.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the variables under study (N=330)

Variable	M	SD	Skew	Kurt	Min.	Max	S-W	p
Sense of coherence	119.22	21.23	-0.27	0.15	58	174	0.99**	0.010
Sense of comprehensibility	42.58	8.76	0.08	-0.01	18	68	0.10	0.643
Sense of manageability	38.85	6.79	-0.11	-0.08	21	57	0.99	0.103
Sense of meaningfulness	37.78	9.58	-0.47	-0.19	9	56	0.98***	0.001
Progress	19.33	5.93	-0.59	0.17	0	30	0.97***	0.001
Obstructions	16.26	6.35	-0.09	-0.65	0	30	0.99**	0.008
Gratitude	30.73	6.56	-0.71	-0.42	6	42	0.96***	0.001
Benevolence	16.45	5.97	-0.12	-0.73	6	30	0.98***	0.001
Revenge	10.19	5.24	1.03	0.16	5	25	0.87***	0.001
Avoidance	25.57	7.21	-0.66	-0.42	7	35	0.94***	0.001

** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

3. Results

3.1. Correlation analysis

The analysis of the results (Tab. 2) shows that there are statistically significant positive correlations between the dimension of progress and the overall score for the sense of coherence and its individual dimensions. A high positive correlation is found between the dimension of progress of values-based actions and the sense of meaningfulness ($r = 0.68$; $p < 0.01$) and the overall score for the sense of coherence ($r = 0.62$; $p < 0.001$). There is an average positive correlation between the dimension of progress of values-based actions and the dimensions of sense of comprehensibility ($r = 0.44$; $p < 0.01$) and the sense of manageability ($r = 0.41$; $p < 0.01$).

The analysis of the results also indicates the existence of statistically significant negative correlations between the obstruction dimension and the overall score for the sense of coherence and its individual dimensions. A high negative correlation is found between the obstruction dimension of values-based actions and the dimension of sense of meaningfulness ($r = -0.54$; $p < 0.01$) and the overall score for the sense of coherence ($r = -0.53$; $p < 0.01$). There is an average negative correlation between the obstruction dimension of values-based actions and the dimensions of sense of manageability ($r = -0.44$; $p < 0.01$) and the sense of comprehensibility ($r = -0.35$; $p < 0.01$).

Table 2. Results of linear correlation between SOC and VQ

Variable	Progress	Obstructions
Sense of coherence	0.62***	-0.53**
Sense of comprehensibility	0.44**	-0.35**
Sense of manageability	0.41**	-0.44**
Sense of meaningfulness	0.68**	-0.54**

** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

3.2. The mediating role of gratitude in shaping the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based actions

A mediation analysis was conducted to elicit responses regarding the mediating role of gratitude between the sense of coherence and values-based action (progress and obstructions). The results (Fig. 2) indicate a good fit of the model to the data ($F(2.327) = 109.40$; $p < 0.001$). The sense of coherence and gratitude variables explained 40% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R2 = 0.40$). The standardised values of the regression coefficients between the explanatory variable and the explained variable indicate a statistically significant, positive and relatively strong relationship between the sense of coherence and progress ($\beta = 0.62$; $p < 0.001$). The value also changes when the mediating variable, i.e. gratitude, is introduced into the model ($\beta = 0.54$; $p < 0.001$). The resulting effect strength value (*Indirect* = 0.02; 95%*CI*[0.01;0.04]) confirms the partial mediation phenomenon for the first mediation model analysed.

The results obtained (Fig. 3) indicate a good fit of the model to the data ($F(2.327) = 70.40$; $p < 0.001$). The sense of coherence and gratitude variables explained 30% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R2 = 0.30$). The resulting standardised values of the regression coefficients between the explanatory variable and the explained variable indicate a statistically significant, negative and relatively strong

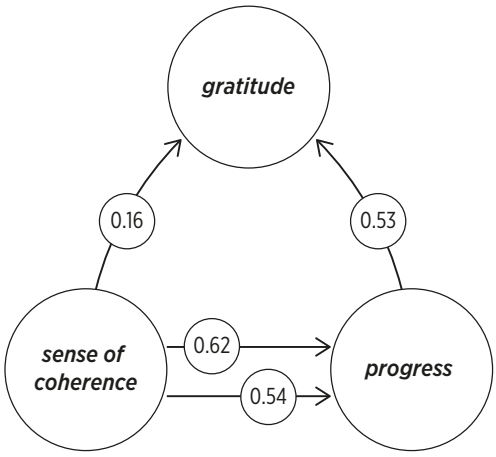

Figure 2. The mediating role of gratitude in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the progress dimension of values-based action.

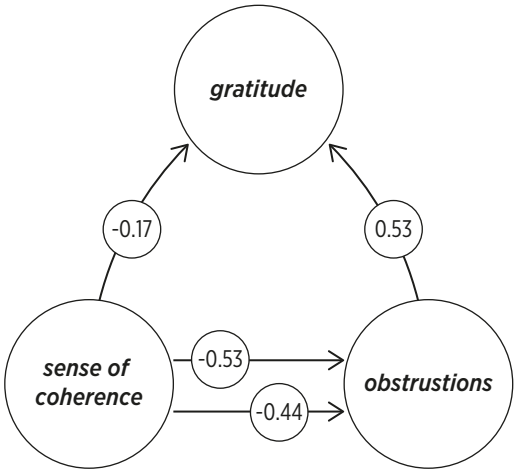

Figure 3. The mediating role of gratitude in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension of values-based action.

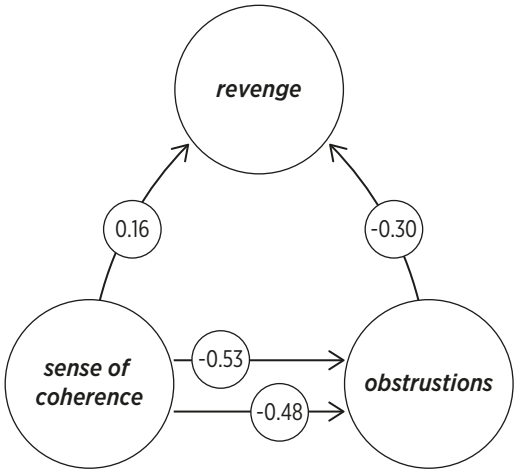

Figure 4. The mediating role of revenge in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension of values-based action.

relationship between the sense of coherence and obstructions (β = -0.53; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, this value changes when the mediating variable, i.e. gratitude, is introduced into the model (β = -0.44; $p < 0.001$). The resulting effect strength value (*Indirect* = -0.03; 95%*CI*[-0.05;-0.01]) confirms the partial mediation phenomenon for the first mediation model analysed.

3.3. The mediating role of forgiveness in shaping the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based actions

The aspect explained next was the mediating role of the different dimensions of forgiveness (revenge, benevolence, avoidance) between the sense of coherence and values-based action. The results of the mediation analysis (Fig. 4) indicate a good fit of the model to the data ($F(2.328) = 71.59$; $p < 0.001$). The sense of coherence and revenge variables explained 30% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R2 = 0.30$). The standardised values of the regression coefficients between the explanatory variable and the explained variable indicate a statistically significant, negative and relatively strong relationship between the sense of coherence and obstructions (β = -0.53; $p < 0.001$). Also, this value changes when the mediating variable, i.e. revenge, is introduced into the model (β = -0.48;

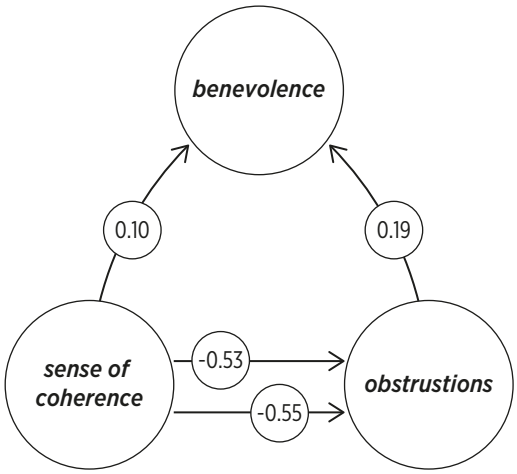

Figure 5. The mediating role of benevolence in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension of values-based action.

$p < 0.001$). The resulting effect strength value (*Indirect* = -0.01; 95%*CI*[-0.03; -0.00]) confirms the partial mediation phenomenon for the model analysed.

The results obtained (Fig. 5) indicate a good fit of the model to the data ($F(2.327) = 67.30$; $p < 0.001$). The sense of coherence and benevolence variables explained 29% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R2 = 0.29$). The resulting standardised values of the regression coefficients between the explanatory variable and the explained variable indicate a statistically significant, negative and relatively strong relationship between the sense of coherence

and obstructions (β = -0.53; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, this value changes when the mediating variable, i.e. benevolence, is introduced into the model (β = -0.55; $p < 0.001$). The resulting effect strength value (*Indirect* = 0.02; 95%*CI*[0.00;0.01]) confirms the partial mediation phenomenon for the model analysed.

The results of the analyses of the other mediation models showed no statistically significant mediating effects: in the revenge mediation mode, in the relationship between the sense of coherence and progress (*Indirect* = 0.01; 95%CI[-0.01;0.01]); in the avoidance mediation model, in the relationship between the sense of coherence and progress (*Indirect* = 0.01; 95%CI[-0.01;0.00]); in the avoidance mediation model, in the relationship between the sense of coherence and obstructions (*Indirect* = 0.01; 95%CI[-0.01;0.01]); and in the benevolence mediation model, in the relationship between the sense of coherence on progress (*Indirect* = -0.01; 95%CI[0.00;0.01]).

4. Conclusions

The presence of significant correlations between variables has been identified, indicating a correlation between the sense of coherence and values-based action. Both the overall level of sense of coherence and each of its components: the sense of comprehensibility, the sense of manageability and the sense of meaningfulness have a positive relationship with the progress dimension of values-based action and a negative relationship with the obstruction dimension of values-based action. This means that as the sense of coherence and its individual components increase, the dimension of progress increases and the dimension of obstructions to values-based action decreases.

Based on the results of the mediation analysis, it has been shown that gratitude mediates the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action (the joint significance condition is met). This means that the presence of gratitude in an individual's life strengthens the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action.

Also, the mediating role of forgiveness has been identified in the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based actions. The dimensions of revenge and benevolence have been shown to be mediators in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension of values-based action but have not shown a mediating effect in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the dimension of progress in values-based actions. By contrast, the third factor, i.e. avoidance, did not show a mediating role in any of the relationships examined. This means that the presence of benevolence strengthens the negative relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension, whereas the presence of revenge weakens this relationship (Table 3).

Table 3. Summary results of the statistical analysis of the study results

Variable		Resulting coefficient values
Sense of coherence	Values-based actions	–
Sense of coherence	Progress	$r = 0.62^{***}$
Sense of coherence	Obstructions	$r = -0.53^{**}$
Sense of comprehensibility	Progress	$r = 0.44^{**}$
Sense of comprehensibility	Obstructions	$r = -0.35^{**}$
Sense of manageability	Progress	$r = 0.41^{**}$
Sense of manageability	Obstructions	$r = 0.44^{**}$
Sense of meaningfulness	Progress	$r = 0.68^{**}$
Sense of meaningfulness	Obstructions	$r = 0.54^{**}$
Gratitude	Values-based actions	–
Gratitude	Progress	$\beta = 0.54^{***}$
Gratitude	Obstructions	$\beta = -0.44^{***}$
Forgiveness	Values-based actions	–
Revenge	Progress	–
Revenge	Obstructions	$\beta = -0.48^{***}$
Avoidance	Progress	–
Avoidance	Obstructions	–
Benevolence	Progress	–
Benevolence	Obstructions	$\beta = -0.55^{***}$

$^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

5. Discussion

The research and analysis conducted for the present study have provided empirical information on the relationships between the sense of coherence and values-based action and the mediating role of gratitude and forgiveness. As no empirical analyses have been undertaken so far for relationships identical to the aforementioned ones, it is not possible to compare the results obtained with those to date. Instead, the discussion of the results takes as its point of reference the premises of the theoretical assumptions and research into the analysed variables.

The analysis of the results makes it possible to formulate a conclusion that gratitude mediates the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action. The results obtained correspond with the theoretical background that frames gratitude as a characteristic of authentic, self-actualised, integrated and autonomous people (Maslow, 1962; Wood et al., 2008), which could also be reflected in the strengthening of the studied relationship. Research on gratitude to date has largely focused on its associations with mental health, the sense of well-being and other desirable psychological phenomena (Bono et al., 2019; Bono, Sender, 2018; Caputo et al., 2015; DeWall et al., 2012; Duckworth et al., 2005; Emmons, Crumpler, 2000; Emmons, McCullough, 2003; Jans-Beken et al., 2019; Kleiman et al., 2013; Linley et al., 2009; Ma et al., 2017; Nezlek et al., 2017; Seligman, et al., 2006; Sheldon, Lyubomirsky, 2006; Szcześniak, Soares, 2011; Trom, Burke, 2022; Wood et al., 2010), exerting immunogenic effects on the individual (Emmons, Crumpler, 2000; Kleiman et al, 2013; McCraty, Childre, 2004) and affecting health (Linley et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2007, 2008; Cousin et al., 2021). However, the most extensive meta-analysis to date on the relationships between gratitude and health, by Jans-Beken et al. (2019), highlights the need for further research into this field to "shed more light on the modest but beneficial value of gratitude for human health" (p. 37).

The results obtained in our study also reflect the significant role of gratitude in the functioning of psychological mechanisms and reveal another aspect on which the presence of gratitude has a positive effect. The mediating role of forgiveness in the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action has been also partially confirmed. Motivations to take revenge and to be benevolent towards the offender have been found to be mediators in the negative relationship (suppressors) between the sense of coherence and moving away from valued living due to unpleasant emotions. In contrast, motivation to avoid the offender has not shown a mediating role in any of the relationships examined.

Due to the lack of data in literature, the results have been explained based on studies showing only similar correlations. The aforementioned dimension of benevolence is described by the authors as a motivation to show goodness, benevolence and empathy to the offender and a desire to restore harmony in the relationship (McCullough et al., 2002a, b; 2006). This attitude may be an expression of altruism, understood as any action to benefit another without anticipation of external rewards (Macaulay, Berkowitz, 1970). Śliwak and Król's research shows that people with high levels of altruism, and therefore probably also benevolence, find their lives purposeful and meaningful, which is an expression of the sense of meaningfulness, one of the components of the sense of coherence. These people are convinced that they give direction to their life and are responsible for its course. They do not see suffering only as a negative phenomenon, but also as an opportunity to develop and become better people (Śliwak, Król, 1990). These are aspects that can be considered as manifestations of values-based action and thus justify the mediating role of benevolence in the relationship under study. By contrast, revenge is recognised in literature as one of the most destructive coping mechanisms (Meisner, 2018). According to this assumption, the reinforcement of the negative relationship between the sense of coherence and moving away from valued living can be explained by the negative effect of revenge on the individual's internal coherence. Surprisingly, avoidance has not been found to play a mediating role in the relationship under study. At the start of the present study, it was hypothesised that avoidance of the perpetrator of harm was strongly associated with avoidance of discomfort and difficult emotions, as was moving away from valued living. The results

obtained find some justification in the way individual statements were formulated in the questionnaire used in the study (Baran et al., 2019). For example, a statement relating to moving away from valued living such as "*I acted reflexively instead of focusing on what is important to me*", indicates taking action. By contrast, an avoidance statement, such as "*I live as if this person did not exist*", is an expression of adopting a passive attitude, which could have been understood by the subjects as a completely different activity. However, the results obtained may also be due to methodological shortcomings of the research.

Limitations. The research also has some limitations. In terms of methodology, the main limitation was the deviations of the distributions of some variables from the normal distribution. However, these deviations proved not to be significant, and, due to the values of skewness and kurtosis being within the relevant range, it can be assumed that the distributions of the studied variables are not significantly asymmetric with respect to the mean (George, Mallery, 2016). The obtained Cronbach's alpha reliability score of 0.47 for the sense of manageability scale (however, the reliability of the whole sense of coherence scale is 0.86 Cronbach's α) may also give rise to some doubt in terms of methodology. Another limitation of the research is the problem of having full control over the research sample, caused by making the questionnaire battery available on social networks. This made it possible to collect responses from a relatively large number of people but resulted in a poorly diverse research group: almost 80% of the subject were aged 18-35, and less than 14% of the research group were male. As can be seen, women were the majority. This is, however, quite typical of today's volunteer psychological research (McCray et al., 2005; Tuszyńska-Bogucka, 2019) and not necessarily a disadvantage that would disqualify the study (Dickinson et al., 2012). It also seems worthwhile for future research to take into account the education and broader SES characteristics of the subjects. Finally, it is worth noting that future research should consider finding an alternative mechanism to explain the relationship(s) between the positive/negative dimensions of sense of coherence, forgiveness and gratitude, and values-based action.

The listed limitations may provide a rationale for revisiting the assumptions made, this time with a research sample characterised by greater variation in terms of age and gender of the subjects. Considering that values-based action is not a highly popular research construct, particularly in Poland, it would be worth conducting further research into this construct in the future, taking into account variables other than those used so far. It appears important to search factors conducive to values-based action, as well as those that help to strengthen the sense of coherence, as both taking values-based action and a strong sense of coherence make it possible to build a dignified and meaningful life, even in the face of suffering.

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Influencer's era – the role of experts in the digital world. Do we still need their forecasts and advice?[1]

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Piotr Łuczuk[a], Szymon Maj[b]

[a] *Piotr Łuczuk, Phd, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6275-1550,*
Department of Social Communication, Public Relations and New Media, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland
[b] *Szymon Maj, MA, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1661-5870,*
Graduate of University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw, Poland

Abstract: Influencer's era–the role of experts in the digital world. Do we still need their forecasts and advice? We live in an information society. Estimates show that by 2025 global data production will increase to over 180 zettabytes. Along with the dissemination of the Internet, the development of digital communication and the reduction of digital exclusion, we are facing a serious crisis of expert culture. Over the years, it is experts who played an important role in society, today we ask where the border between professionals and specialists with specific knowledge, and experts-soremen, who gather hundreds of thousands of thousands of users in front of the screens of mobile devices in front of the screens of mobile devices in front of the screens of mobile devices. In the course of consideration of the above issues, the authors decided to develop a new expert definition based on a review of literature together with the use of the syncretic method and the original research model. The latter was successfully used in previous studies. As part of the considerations on the indicated issues, the authors focus on four key phenomena: Influencer marketing development–as a new variety of the so -called expert sector; virtual exhibitionism in the context of surveillance capitalism; functioning of the expert sector in the Bigdata era; The role of experts- futurists reaching for the models of forecasting the future. Is there still room for experts in the thicket of data? The answer to this question is the key to defining who the expert of the future will be.
Keywords: expert, influencer, social media, cyber security, big data.

Introduction

We live in an information society. It can even be said that we are swimming on an overcrowded data ocean. Estimates show that by 2025 global data production will increase to over 180 zettabytes. Thinking for a moment how to embrace this enormity of content, we reach a much more serious challenge–what to do with all these data? Who can use them? Or maybe it would be much more reasonable to ask who can use them against us?

Robert Cialdini–professor of psychology of the Stan University in Arizona, who has gained immense popularity around the world, including thanks to the book, influencing people. The theory and practice described the principles of influenced influence known for years (Cialdini, 2022). What can happen when we are aware of the extraordinary effectiveness of these rules, we transfer them to the cyberspace area? At this point, therefore, you can put up the thesis, according to which, along with the dissemination of the Internet, the development of digital communication and the limitation of digital exclusion we are facing a serious crisis of expert culture. Although over the years, experts have played an important role in society, today it is worth asking the question of where the border is between professionals and specialists with specific knowledge (and able to provide this knowledge is accessible to this knowledge), and experts-experts who, thanks to new technologies and forms of communication, Every day they gather hundreds of thousands of smartphones and mobile

1 Article in polish language: Era influencera – rola ekspertów w cyfrowym świecie. Czy nadal potrzebujemy ich prognoz i rad?, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Lucz.pdf

devices in front of the screens, and sometimes even millions of users who gave them their trust, and it is in them that contemporary authorities see them.

In the course of consideration of the above issues, the authors decided to develop a new expert definition based on a review of literature together with the use of the syncretic method and the original research model. The latter was successfully used in earlier media studies in relation to the role of experts from the economic sector, and specifically to the possibility of using new technologies and digital communication to predict the fluctuations of stock exchange rates with equal precision, as the threads of stock exchanges try to do it.

As part of the considerations on the indicated issues, the authors focus on four key phenomena:

- Influencer marketing development–as a new variety of the so -called expert sector
- virtual exhibitionism in the context of surveillance capitalism
- functioning of the expert sector in the Bigdata era
- The role of experts- futurists reaching for the models of forecasting the future

Although it seems unbelievable nowadays, many people are still trying not to notice that it is the social media that has now become the arena of propaganda, information, and disinformation activities practically all over the world. Data, both open and secret, are often at your fingertips, and the lack of awareness of a real threat means that many Internet users provide information that several dozen or even a dozen or so years ago was extremely difficult. The CERT.gov.pl team (responsible for the safety of ICT structures in the government domain) regularly warns that both social media and the entire Internet are willingly used on the one hand to support conventional military and intelligence activities, and on the other for propaganda and on the other broadly understood disinformation.

Users of social media usually do not even have the slightest resistance before publication on social media very personal or even intimate photos–only after years it turns out how serious this problem is and what the consequences have. When we read 1984 by George Orwell or the new wonderful world of Aldous Huxley, it may seem strange to function in a world practically devoid of privacy. Meanwhile, we live in such a world today. Privacy practically ceases to exist before our eyes. It becomes an attractive commodity and turns into... a product to date. Is there still room for experts in the thicket of data? The answer to this question is the key to trying to define who the expert of the future will be.

1. The Influencer Era – what do we need agents of influence for?

There is no doubt that over the past decade, social media has begun to play a key role in the context of communication forms, appropriating a large part of the media space reserved for years for all kinds of experts. In just a few years, experts faced a dilemma about whether to transfer their activity to cyberspace and social media or not.

According to the definition of Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, social media are "a group based on online application solutions that are based on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and which allow the creation and exchange of content generated by users" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The largest social networking sites were created as media for interpersonal interaction, and, in principle, from the time of the uprising, they had an extensive set of communication tools that went beyond social communication. The use of new technologies caused far-reaching changes in the way of communication, not only on the individual plane but also in entire groups, organizations, and even the community.

Specific evidence of how social media improved communication and significantly facilitated interpersonal contacts was provided in a 1969 study by psychologists Stanley Milgram and Jeffrey Travers. Researchers asked the inhabitants of Nebraska in the USA to hand over their friends, and then by their friends, a package for a resident of Boston. Then they followed the chain of acquaintances, thanks to which the parcel wandered. Thanks to this, the researchers came to the conclusion that 6.2 friends are divided between any two inhabitants of this state. This study

has become the basis for consideration for many other sociologists. Since 2000, social media researchers have referred to this thought. In 2011, Johan Ugander, a former intern at Facebook, conducted a study in which he proved that Facebook users are distant from each other by 4.74 degrees of knowledge (Fabijaczyk and Cupirak, 2016, p. 11). This example clearly shows how the development of social media and their dissemination and popularization, especially among the younger generation of Internet users, changed the nature of relationships and the manner in which we establish them at all.

2. How influencers work

We define an influencer as an active person on the internet (a popular blogger, vlogger, or holder of an influential account on a social networking site) with a large group of supporters, by whom decisions or opinions are influenced and even inspired to act. For example, the influencer can publish a link with which its subscriber will make a purchase, and the influencer will receive a percentage of sales.

In the United States, the concept of infulelencer has been used since 2010, and from 2017 on, this term began to be widely used in many non-English countries (Wójcik, 2018, p. 42).

Lisa Barone, Vice President for Strategy at the Overit Creative Agency, identified five types of entertainers in 2010:

1. Networker (Social Butterfly)–a person with a huge list of contacts He knows everyone and everyone knows who he is,
2. The opinion leader (Thought leader)–a person distinguished by great authority in his field, his opinion enjoys great trust, his notifications have a lot of comments and shares. Most often it is the best choice for the role of a brand or product ambassador,
3. Explorer (Trendsetter)–a person considered a precursor of trends, who first senses new fashion (trends) and is immediately in the center of attention in his field,
4. Distributor (The Sharer or Reporter)–a person disseminating information from bloggers and journalists, who with his actions strengthens the impact of messages,
5. User (Everyday customer)–a person who represents the behavior of customers and buyers and is quite influential in their circle. Sometimes users are mentioned as a separate category of microinfluencers (Barone, 2013).

A lot has changed since the development of the basic types of influencers on the media market. We are currently talking about a completely new branch that has grown directly from sales learning. It's about influencer marketing. These are activities focused on communication with people enjoying authority that can affect consumer purchasing decisions.

At this point, it is worth considering how the influencer distinguishes himself and what features he should have. What distinguishes an influencer from a real expert in a given field? In today's world, and especially in social media, to be considered an expert, an influencer does not have to have specialized knowledge. Of course, there are people who, as experts in given fields, successfully conduct an influencer career in parallel, but it does not always go hand in hand. More often, people gaining considerable popularity in a fairly short time are starting to speak boldly in matters that are not directly related to the original content, thus expanding the group of recipients. As for the substantive quality of such Instagram or Tik-Tok experts, you can have a lot of doubts.

Influencers are people who shape the basics of recipients lives through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media channels, such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, and Tik-Tok. According to the PWN Polish language dictionary, this is an environment of popular people who have a great impact on the recipients' opinions. "These are people who have the potential to create involvement, talk about, or sell products or services to the target group. These people can be different: from celebrities to more targeted professionals or unprofessionals, the so-called peers, e.g., young g YouTubers. (Interactive Advertising Bureau, 2018, p. 5).

Currently, there are three basic groups of influencers, depending on their popularity, number of followers, coverage, and commitment to promotion.

- Micro-influencers usually have less than 100,000 observers, are perceived as authorities in their areas of influence or in local markets, and have 22.2 times more conversations than other users (Leung, Gu, Li, Zhang, Palmatier, 2022, p. 4);
- macro-influencers have up to a million observers. Their commitment rate is lower than in the case of micro-influencers but they offer up to 10 times greater range, significantly increasing brand exposure (influencer marketing and content creation, 2017, p. 4).
- Mega-influencers: they have more than a million observers. However, despite their wide range, this does not guarantee involvement in promotion because they usually promote many brands (Leung, Gu, Li, Zhang, Palmatier, 2022, p. 5).

Over the past few years, influencers have been largely taken over by the image of experts in many fields, combining their activities with the quite rapid development of the advertising market in a completely new sector. With the help of known people and their influence on recipients, a new field has been created in this industry, which is influencer marketing.

Influencer marketing helps to build an authentic bond. Acquiring consumers' attention and trust increases brand awareness, recipients' education, greater commitment, and, above all, an increase in sales.

Although today it does not seem so obvious, the development of influencer marketing has largely begun with whispered marketing. In the history of marketing, this method has been recognized for years as one of the more effective ways of advertising without the coarse agitation known from many advertising blocks emitted on radio and television stations or published in the traditional press. The use of whispered marketing for years had thunderous effects on one condition: the guarantee of maintaining authenticity was that the intentions of both sides remained honest, and their commitment caused an increase in the popularity of the brand. Currently, thanks to influencer marketing, classic whispered marketing has been moved to cyberspace, specifically social media.

Of course, how influencers work depends on the content and the target group to which the promotion is addressed. The Instagram application has developed at the fastest pace so far, and her Chinese Tik-Tok has been challenging. It is on these social giants that the largest number of so-called sponsored posts occur. These are also applications with a very wide scope. Both the creators of Instagram and Tik-Toka are outdoing themselves by introducing new functionalities that are intended to improve communication with recipients. These include live reports, surveys, Q&A, and the direct ability to buy items without leaving the community.

Running a channel on social media over the past few years has become the dream of many people. Once, children wanted to become firefighters, doctors, or astronauts in the future; today, there are such professions as YouTuber, Tiktoker, or yet another influencer. Some people actually have similar careers, and a large group is already queuing up and doing everything to exist in any way. As a consequence, it leads to the morbid or even pathological phenomenon of "pressure on glass" and more and more dangerous behavior.

For the purposes of previous scientific research, the authors described this phenomenon as "virtual exhibitionism." It turns out that this trend is increasingly gaining strength every year. Very often, we do not even have the slightest resistance to publication in social media of very personal or even intimate photos; only after years does it turn out how serious this problem is and what the consequences are.

3. Virtual exhibitionism–challenge of the age of surveillance

By considering changes in the communication process and the role of influencers in the era of social media, we will not avoid the question of to what extent we expose ourselves using social networking sites. Is there a border that we should not cross?

For a moment, it seemed that a breakthrough in terms of internet users' awareness occurred after the scandal was publicized around the PRISM system. According to the information provided to the media by Edward Snowden, special services have been collected from servers for years, including Google, Facebook, Yahoo, Paltalk, Aol, Skype, YouTube, and Apple. It is probably not necessary to convince anyone that access to this type of data means the possibility of collecting data about Internet users on literally every topic, from musical or culinary tastes through sexual tastes to interests and hobbies, especially those that can pose a potential threat to the security of the country. Unfortunately, the argument "I have nothing to hide", which acts as a kind of calming conscience. Meanwhile, very often, unfortunately, we do not realize that the world of data is not only about carefully hidden secrets. What counts is everything you can undergo in behavioral analysis and profiling. The problem is that we got caught in the trap of "surveillance capitalism," and from the consumer's perspective, we turned into a product, or maybe something completely different—at all costs, we do not want to see it (Łuczuk, 2017). It is shocking that information about our views and political preferences is not secret knowledge that someone has insidiously stolen. We are talking about data that users themselves put on their profiles.

Social psychologist and philosopher, Prof. Shoshana Zuboff from Harward, in his book Age of Surveillance. The struggle for the future of humanity on the new border of power makes it clear that we are basically no longer consumers, not even products, but objects where large companies earn a lot. For them, data on our logins and activities, including on social media, is literally at a premium. In this way, flawless psychological and behavioral profiles are created, taking into account the age, education, place of residence, and correlation between a group of friends (Zuboff, 2020).

> *The essence of this exploitation is rendering our lives as behavioral data for the purposes of exercising effective control over us by others. [...] we are no longer "entities" in the process of implementing value. We are also not, as some claimed, the "product" of Google sales. Instead, we are "objects" from which raw materials are extracted and then transported to Google's factories. Predictions of our behavior are based on Google products that are sold to its actual customers but not to us. "We are a means to achieve the goals of third parties," warns Prof. Zuboff. (2020).*

However, many people do not want to see this. The need for social media is so great that we are able to sacrifice almost everything, including the right to privacy. Whoever has never had a smartphone in the toilet, let him throw the phone first.

Shoshanna Zuboff states that:

> *[...] The right to make a decision disappears before we even manage to realize that there is a decision to make; that such a limitation of rights raises consequences that we are not able to see or predict that there is no way out; you cannot speak; loyalty disappeared; helplessness, resignation, and mental paralysis remained. (Zuboff. 2020).*

More experts, media experts, and digital communication specialists reported more and more often about growing surveillance.

An important point in the discourse was the loud document "The Social Dilemma" available on streaming platforms (Orlowski, 2022). Despite subsequent warnings, hardly anyone noticed more growing threats.

In 2010, as part of behavioral and social engineering experiments, Facebook implemented the "Like" button as part of its website). According to the creators of this idea, this was to strengthen the emotional impact on users and lead to their stronger dependence on using Facebook. Siva Vaidhyanathan claims in his book "Anti-Sea Media" that "Facebook promotes content that works on emotions, evoking both joy and disgust. It was explicitly designed to promote everything that evokes strong emotions "(Vaidhyanathan, 2018). It is emotions that provide algorithms with the database necessary to improve

algorithmspower over discourse in cyberspace. This changes human emotions into something that no algorithm will generate because nothing sells more than emotions (Vaidhyanathan, 2018).

In the context of the role of experts and authorities in our daily lives, Evan OSNOS recorded an interesting observation in The New Yorker in 2018:

> *If Facebook were a country, it would have the largest population in the world. Over 2.2 billion people, or about a third of humanity, log in to the portal at least once a month. Such a user base has no precedent in the history of American enterprises. Fourteen years after Zuckerberg's dormitory, Facebook has as many supporters as Christianity (Osnos, 2018).*

The mechanism of social giants acting on their role in the context of any future for real experts revealed scientific research. One of the first people who drew attention to the ways of collecting data and creating a personality model based on it was Dr. Michał Kosiński a social psychologist and data scientist dealing with the study of people through the digital traces left by them and a lecturer at Stanford University. He is a co-author of an algorithm that acquires knowledge about a person only on the basis of the analysis of "likes". The effectiveness of the mechanism reaches up to 93 percent. The algorithm, with 70 to 100 likes, acquires knowledge about a given person similar to that of the immediate family. If we analyze 250 "likes," the algorithm predicts the behavior of the respondents better than their life partners. Kosiński said, "It wasn't me who built a bomb. I just showed that she exists "(Redzisz, 2020).

Jan Waszewski (analyst of the Center for Safety Research Center for the Academy of Martial Arts) describes in your work in your work, you will not hide in your work. Consequences of Big Data synergy, social media and neuroscience (Waszewski, 2021).

We live in Internet times, and every piece of information we leave online, every word, and every bit of traffic is followed by millions of algorithms that create our digital portrait and, as a result, decide what we see, with whom we communicate, what we read, and what decisions we make. When we combine it with the statement of Marek Zuckerberg that our privacy is no longer a social norm because it is clearly demonstrated by the behavior of Facebook users, who, in protecting their privacy, value the possibility of communication and the exchange of information, we get a fairly full picture of the scale of danger (after: Johnson, 2010).

4. Experts drowning in the data ocean

While centuries ago, the expert position was relatively easy because competitiveness was definitely lower due to greater social divisions, uneven access to education, and undemocratic access to knowledge, today a problem arises. Experts analyzing the future, thresholds, and analysts—all those who want to discover the curtains of the future are facing a sheer volume of data. We live in an information society; we swim in an overcrowded data ocean. Estimates show that by 2025, global data production will increase to over 180 zettabytes. Humanity recorded a rapid leap in data production during the 2020 pandemic, when the number of zettabytes was 64.2 zettabaytów, compared to 41 zettabytes in 2019. In 2021, 79 zettabytes were produced, and in 2022, 97 zettabytes were produced (Statista, 2023). Researchers have been reporting about the problem of overproduction of information for years, and the production of information is constantly accelerating. This is due to the growing computerization of society but also the addiction of people to data (Edmunds and Morris, 2000, pp. 17–28). Others (Bawden and Robinson and Robinson, 2020) also referred to the problems of attention, information fog, and reloading with data. Philosophers also reported about the phenomenon. Luciano Floridi, in a similar period, created the concept of inform, i.e., the entities that, together with the information, create the whole are somewhat dependent on the information, and thus, they cannot function without access to information (Floridi, 1999). Over the following years, subsequent researchers noticed that we live in a data smog and an era of information. Some also called this state analytical paralysis (Stanley, 1997), which results

from an excessive amount of information that man is unable to process. John Feather described an overload of information as a point where it cannot be used effectively (Feather, 2017). Orrin Edgar Klapp, in turn, compared the information shock to noise, which reaches the level of overloading for the recipient, which is why he can no longer effectively process the stimulus without the accompanying dispersion (Klapp, 1986). Modern research is in line with the claims of previous researchers. In a study carried out on 1,200 adults from South Korea, it was found that the higher the level of overloading, the greater the probability appeared that he would suffer from analytical paralysis and message fatigue (Song, Jung, Kim, 2016, p. 1172–1190). What's more, researchers are increasingly claiming that overloading with information and, as a result, avoiding messages make the recipient more exposed to faith in false information. This is a growing problem that can spread a tendency to believe in fake news materials. It should be noted that the aforementioned relationship concerned people who were overloaded with information, avoided messages, and were often exposed to disinformation (Tandoc and Kim, 2022).

5. Interpreting information difficulty

Research on noise and judgments on viewing points and opinions is well known. Lack of current information may prevent you from generating the right forecasts, but on the other hand, excessive attachment to information may cause future cognitive errors. It is difficult to get a golden mean here, but a solution can be proposed by several researchers to use the methodologies in making decisions (Kahneman, Sibons, Sunstein, 2021). However, this action is possible, assuming that we are functioning in an environment that can be tried to locate in a decision and prognostic scheme. The situation is different on the capital market, where a quick response to new information is necessary. And there are many sources of such information, starting with stock reports, media reports, and information leaks from the market. If you look at the stock exchange and the reactions of companies listed on it, access to information and access to it play a key role here.

For some researchers, the attention of investors, which was analyzed through the search frequency on Google (Search Volume Index), turned out to be crucial. The creators of the study noticed that "attention," measured by the number of search operations, is associated with phrases from the first public offer and later returns. [...] Growth in SVI indicates a rapid increase in public interest, in line with the marketing role of IPOs [...] "(Da, Engelberg, Gao, 2011, pp. 1461–1499). Therefore, information, and in particular the media in this case, became the starting point for assessing the future of a given IPO process. In turn, other researchers have shown that the presence of information about the company in the media is directly associated with its valuation (GAO, XU, LI, XING, 2021). The repetitive motive is that the information appearing in important and load-bearing titles generated trading in the shares of a given company, increased the interest of investors, and thus also caused a change in the valuation on the stock exchange. An important point that shows the trend of information analysis is also the observation of the emotional aspect of information and sentiment. The ocean of information began to be understood not only as a set of data but also as a set of decisions, motives, and emotional content in society.

In another 2018 study, it was decided to analyze 4.5 million articles from the Reuters agency published worldwide in the years 1991–2015. Researchers wanted to verify how articles affect the main stock indexes. One of the conclusions was the claim that sentiment affects short-term share prices around the world. The mood indicator developed by the authors showed the formation of global indexes much better than the commonly used VIX (CBOE Volatility Index). indicator. Another conclusion was that a positive mood in the media had a greater influence in the study on developed markets than on emerging markets (Fraiberger, Lee, Puy, Rancière, 2018). The cited studies show that the information ecosystem created by humanity is a research field from which some conclusions can be drawn.

Another practical example of the use of media analysis and attempts to clarify a bright position on the phenomenon in the digital world was a study on CD Projekt. In this example, researchers analyzed the

impact of the premiere of Cyberpunk 2077 on the company's quote. Importantly, the authors pointed to the multi-threadedness of this event; the premiere of the game was an awaited moment in the history of games. The scale of the phenomenon is also illustrated by the budget that was allocated to the production of the title; it amounted to PLN 1.2 billion, with 45 percent of this amount going to promote the game. According to the researchers, in this case, forecasting the scale of the success of the premiere, investors' reactions to the title, and the future development of the studio was too complex an element to make appropriate respect. It should be noted that the analyses of professional stock market analysts cited by researchers did not take into account the unsuccessful premiere of Cyberpunk 2077 (Łuczuk, Maj, 2022). It can be argued that a number of factors influenced the effort to estimate this event, but the biggest role could be played by the fact that the premiere of the game was set in many contexts: investment, product, player reception, the effectiveness of a marketing campaign, committed obligations by producers, or broad cultural perception.

6. Future experts: the super-forecasters era

Recently, probably the largest source of research on forecasting has been the achievements of the team created by Philip E. Tetlock. The Canadian scientist attracted the attention of both other researchers and practitioners from the business world (Tetlock and Gardner, 2019). The data provided by Tetlock as part of his research surprised in this respect in that the current view of the literature on this issue did not give clear answers to whether people are able to create long-term, repetitive, and effective forecasts (Katsagunos, Thomakos, Lissiou, Nikolopoulos, 2021). In turn, a group of practitioners was interested in the possibilities of using models and the ability of SuperPrognosta to make key social and geopolitical decisions.

A large package of evidence on superprognosis was delivered as part of the research project The Good Judgment Project. It was realized by Philip Tetlock and Barbara Mellers. It was a complex experiment lasting 4 years with the participation of over 5,000 experts from around the world, as a result of which 260 SuperPrognosa (The Good Judgment Project, 2023) were identified. As a result, the project allowed the creation of a group of experts who successfully forecasted future events. The experiment can be included in breakthrough moments in the area of forecasting science and eliminating variability, which is a critical element of decision infrastructure (Katsagunos et al., 2021).

7. Monkeys or experts?

It seems that the bane of experts who appear in the media is the measure of their effectiveness. Tetlock's descriptions are significant; he mentioned that hardly any expert wanted to verify their forecasts (Tetlock and Gardner, 2015). Despite the achievements in research on the ability to forecast in recent years, on the other side, there are arguments undermining such skills in humans. Interestingly, also on the Polish market, we had examples of experiments by the Puls Biznesu daily with Lucy the chimpanzee from the Warsaw Zoo (Wierciszewski, 2014). There were more similar experiments; most of them consisted of observing the chaos of stock market markets and their partial randomness (Katsagunos et al., 2021). It is worth paying a broader attention to the randomness because it sheds light on the potential of experts in predicting activities on the stock market. According to some researchers, the markets can be predicted by their chaoticism after all. While the question of the randomness of capital markets and the method of functioning of this sector is already a philosophical issue, it can be stated that empirical data regularly provides evidence that experts can be more effective than a monkey.

Research providing arguments on this subject shows that regularly, among stock exchange investors and analysts, those who are more effective than the market can be selected. The conviction of the rarity of superprognoses and ultimately a small number of effective analysts returns in various experiments. Exceptions are studies that show that the most prof-

itable recommendations are issued by analysts who thoroughly forecast profits in a given period (Loh and Non, 2006). This group of experts was also able to notice relatively often which companies are valued improperly by the market, which has the potential to increase the valuation.

However, it is problematic to know in advance which analysts will forecast effectively. As individual studies showed, the effective forecasts of analysts from a given period did not have to confirm their ability to forecast in subsequent periods. One study noted that this is one of the biggest restrictions in the context of using expert applications. The assessment of their effectiveness can be verified only after the end of the period and the event, and thus the risk of choosing an expert with a low level of effectiveness (Hall and Tacon, 2010) is born.

Summary

American political scientist Benjamin Barber has already drawn attention to the serious challenge, which is the growing strength of consumerism. He noted that citizens of modern societies attach a lot of attention to freedom and possibilities of choice, but in fact they are powerless in the face of the desire to buy. This, in turn, comes down to the purchase of goods on markets that are outside the consumer's control and on which he has no influence (Barber, 2013). In addition, in the book "Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole," Barber indicates that the modern representative of modern society is extremely susceptible to all kinds of suggestions and propaganda. In the face of the power of consumerism, it is like a child who will do everything to just get a new toy, completely not thinking about the consequences of his behavior (Barber, 2009).

Barber notes that in various countries, there are already names specifying the state in which adults overwhelmed by the frenzy of consumerism behave like children. In English, an interesting term for fully reflecting the phenomenon described by Barber is the term kiduchs (a combination of kid, child, and adult). The scale of the phenomenon is evidenced by the fact that similar terms are successful in Germany, Italy, Japan, India, and France (Barber, 2009).

The contemporary behavior of the radical consumer society is conditioned by the ethos of infantilism, which can effectively divert the attention of citizens from important issues and draw it towards banal things created by Specs from image and marketing (Barber, 2009).

The key thesis placed in the introduction, according to which, along with the dissemination of the Internet, the development of digital communication, and the limitation of digital exclusion, we are facing a serious crisis of expert culture, is justified and defended by the authors. The quick adaptation of individual experts to modern communication solutions and the significant role of social media will depend on the future of the entire expert culture, which was and will still be needed by society.

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Spirituality and cancer[1]

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Monika Paleczna[a]

[a] *Monika Paleczna, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5841-2583,*
Institute of Psychology, University of the National Education Commission, Cracov

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to provide a detailed characteristic of the spiritual sphere of cancer patients. The considerable relevance of this area, for both theorists and practitioners alike, stems from the patients' quest for purpose in their experience of cancer and the need to cope with the disease on a variety of levels (including emotional). The paper opens with a focus placed on the complexity of the phenomenon described and a presentation of two components of spirituality in the context of the disease: cognitive and emotional. This is followed by a discussion of the terminological inaccuracies involved in defining spirituality and religiousness, noted by researchers and patients. Studies conducted on the correlates of spirituality in cancer patients are reviewed next. The paper presents the results of a number of studies on the relationship between spirituality and patients' mental health. It also outlines the potential mechanisms of the positive impact of spirituality on this sphere, as discussed in the literature, namely: self-regulation, conveying new meanings onto experiences and religious coping. The correlation between spirituality, the demoralisation syndrome and the regulation of desirable and undesirable emotions is then discussed. Attention is also given to risks related to spirituality and mental health. The aim of this article was also to discuss the relationship between spirituality and physical health, which is a topic much less frequently addressed by researchers. The results of studies in this area are not clear-cut. Other studies analysed the focus on spirituality and the quality of life in cancer patients. The results indicating a positive dependency between spirituality and quality of life and those proving the opposite direction of this relationship are both outlined. Emphasis is placed on this correlation in end-of-life patients, who often experience spiritual pain. Barriers related to addressing spiritual matters in the patient-medical personnel dyad are also discussed. Furthermore, the article addresses the complex aspect of spirituality in relation to cancer patients in remission. The paper closes with the results of research on the importance of spirituality to informal caregivers of cancer patients. As in the case of patients, both positive and negative aspects of the issue in question are then itemised.
Keywords: cancer, informal carer, mental health, quality of life, spirituality

Introduction

When examining the psychological functioning of cancer patients, the spiritual dimension, which plays a vital role in every culture, must not be overlooked (Nuraini et al., 2018; Wildes et al., 2009; Yan et al., 2019). The heightened importance of spirituality results from patients' attempts to redefine the meaning of life, which alters after the diagnosis (Ferrel et al., 2003). Numerous studies have shown that cancer patients demonstrate high levels of spirituality (Al-Natour et al., 2017; Gudenkauf et al., 2019; Tasan and Citlik Saritas, 2022). They focus on it at every stage of the disease – from diagnosis to the end-of-life stage or remission (Mercier et al., 2023). It should be noted, however, that a cancer diagnosis may either strengthen or weaken the patients' spirituality (Levine et al., 2007). Both younger (Proserpio et al., 2020) and older (Levine et al., 2007) people pose numerous questions in relation to spirituality. During their conversations with the chaplain, they seek answers to questions about God's lack of intervention in their treatment, the meaning of the pain they are experiencing, why they became ill or what will happen to them after death. For this reason, researchers emphasise the need to integrate the focus on spirituality into the interdisciplinary model of cancer patient care (Leão et al., 2021), as many patients indicate that their spiritual needs are not sufficiently met by either the religious community or the medical personnel (Balboni et al., 2007).

1 Article in polish language: Duchowość w chorobie nowotworowej, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Pale.pdf

Spirituality in the context of cancer has at least two components: cognitive and affective (Garssen et al., 2015). Patients perceive cancer in a way that enables them to see sense in the experience. Their suffering, therefore, takes on a new meaning, which would be difficult for them to find without making a reference to spirituality. This allows them to look at their current situation from a certain viewpoint and accept it. Research conducted by Toledo et al. (2021) demonstrated that a sense of purpose and meaning derived from the female patients' spiritual beliefs helped them understand the fact of receiving the diagnosis. The affective component, on the other hand, manifests itself via the following: experiencing support from a spiritual (often metaphysical) guide, acknowledging unwanted emotions, which evokes a sense of relief, allowing difficult emotions to be expressed, and strengthening bonds with other followers of a particular religion (Garssen et al., 2015).

1. Religiousness and spirituality

Addressing the concept of spirituality necessitates the introduction of terminological order. It is particularly important, although not entirely possible, to differentiate between spirituality and religiousness. At times, these concepts are used interchangeably, which may lead to methodological difficulties (Kelly et al., 2023) and make creating a method for measuring these variables more demanding (Vachon, 2008). Stefanek et al. (2005), on the other hand, stipulate that spirituality refers to existential aspects and is more individual in nature, whereas religiousness is related to specific institutions and is more structured. Puchalski et al. (2014) relate to humanity's inner and dynamic dimension when defining spirituality. They point to the quest for purpose, meaning and transcendence and experiencing relations with oneself, others and nature. Steinhauser et al. (2017) place focus on the search for meaning and purpose, which may but does not have to be associated with the divine dimension. Bearing in mind the broad understanding of spirituality, it is worth noting that caring for spiritual needs is not solely the responsibility of the chaplain but should involve all medical personnel (Amoah, 2011). According to some researchers, spirituality is a broader concept than religiousness, and religious practices are part of it (Richardson, 2012) – this is how spirituality will be understood in this article.

Importantly, not only researchers but also patients understand spirituality in a variety of ways. In a study by Leão et al. (2021), female patients indicated that for them, the spiritual dimension was connected to a new objective in life, or they treated spirituality as a method to find this objective. Some of them associated spirituality with the religious dimension.

2. Spirituality and mental and physical health

The spirituality and, primarily, religiousness of oncology patients are frequently analysed in the context of mental health. A limited degree of spirituality is associated with poorer mental health and vice versa (Hulett et al., 2022; Krupski et al., 2006; Salsman et al., 2015). According to James and Wells (2002), religion affects the mental health of patients in two ways. On the one hand, it is a type of self-regulatory mechanism which allows patients to direct their thoughts and attention towards particular aspects, away from undesirable topics. On the other hand, patients may interpret different experiences by giving them a meaning that would be difficult to grasp without a religious context. Pargament et al. (1999; Pargament et al., 2000) point to religious coping, which may be primary or secondary in nature (see also Garssen et al., 2015). To begin with, patients' actions aim to alter their current situation (for example, they pray for God's aid in their recovery). In contrast, secondary religious coping encompasses religious practices that reduce emotional distress or actions needed to reformulate one's own beliefs about a particular situation (for example, "this is God's will"). Some studies (Arbinaga et al., 2021) found that spirituality was a significant predictor of active coping and a negative predictor of maladaptive coping with the disease. It also affects the mental resilience of patients (Yıldırım Üşenmez et al., 2023). It manifests itself in the use of diverse spiritual resources, such as praying to God or meditating (Mkuu et al., 2021), and is a common phenomenon (McKinley et al., 2020).

Demoralisation syndrome is an important factor in the context of patients' spirituality and mental health[2]. It is characterised by the experience of emotional distress, which comprises a sense of hopelessness and losing a sense of meaning and purpose in one's life (Clarke and Kissane, 2002). Its other symptoms include the perceived lack of social support and the inability to change one's method of reacting (Basińska, 2021). Garcia et al. (2023) indicate that spirituality and demoralisation approached in this way may be negatively related. Such a hypothesis was put forward by researchers who referred to their studies. They observed that the state of such demoralisation strengthens with the approach of death and that experiencing spiritual well-being is a protective factor. Moreover, unmet spiritual needs can exacerbate the loss of morale and tenacity and, therefore, the state of demoralisation. Similar results were arrived at by Tasan and Citlik Saritas (2022). They established that the feeling of hopelessness in patients decreased as their level of spirituality increased. Other studies found that individuals who engage in religious coping and have higher rates of spirituality demonstrate more hope (Atlas and Hart, 2023; Sharif et al., 2021). Lagman et al. (2014), on the other hand, showed that prayer provides patients with peace of mind. They attach great importance to their own prayers and to those made by other people.

Spirituality plays a crucial role in regulating emotions. Engagement with the spiritual realm is associated with lower emotional distress (Agarwal et al., 2020) even one year after the initial observation (Gudenkauf et al., 2019). Miller et al. (2022) found that the higher the levels of spirituality in patients, the lower the levels of depression. In a study by Garssen et al. (2015), patients were shown to experience a particularly high degree of support thanks to their belief that they were receiving comfort from God, who listened to them. Patients who draw closer to God demonstrate greater emotional well-being, while those who distance themselves from God show lower emotional well-being (Nuraini et al., 2018). A study by Sterba et al. (2014) noted that patients characterised by strong faith were comforted by the belief that God would not burden them with more than they could carry.

Different types of emotions can also be directed towards God or other higher powers. Often, it is rage and anger combined with the question 'why me' (Levine et al., 2007). This question is frequently asked by people who hold the conviction that they are leading a good life and that there is no reason to have their faith put to the test. Although numerous studies have shown positive consequences of looking after patients' spirituality, it should be emphasised that patients also frequently experience spiritual distress. It primarily accompanies patients starting their treatment (Martins et al., 2021). According to a study by Mako et al. (2006), spiritual distress was reported by more than 90% of patients. Spiritual suffering manifested itself in experiencing intrapsychic conflicts, feelings of loss and conflicts in the interpersonal area or in the patients' relationship with God. Moreover, its severity was related to the severity of depressive symptoms, while its relationship with physical pain and the acuteness of the disease was not demonstrated. Mkuu et al. (2021) observed that one of the symptoms of cancer patients' emotional crisis were doubts in the sphere of spirituality. Patients try to make sense of their illness and interpret their emotional distress using categories of religion, while their trust in God diminishes or they experience a complete lack of faith.

Visser et al. (2010) conducted a literature review seeking to analyse the relationship between spirituality and well-being. Such a relationship was confirmed in more than 85% of the analysed publications, with mixed results reported in several longitudinal studies. Importantly, the researchers emphasise that certain limitations prevent concrete conclusions from being drawn. They focus their attention primarily on methodological aspects, as some statements used in

2 Despite the widely acknowledged narrow meaning of the word "demoralisation", its dictionary definitions allow it to be understood also as a description of a mental state in which a person has lost confidence in their success and the strength to endure the hardships related to having to carry out daily tasks and the sense of responsibility for their completion. The way in which it is currently understood makes it possible to define demoralisation as a loss of morale and fortitude, as a mental state involving a lack of optimism and trust, both in oneself and in other people (Basińska, 2021).

tools for assessing spirituality overlap with those used in tools for verifying emotional well-being. In consequence, the researchers recommend conducting more studies using tools that do not contain such similar content.

Although a rich spiritual life of patients is linked to numerous benefits for mental health, focusing on its advancement as a response to a diagnosis may not produce such results. Gall et al. (2009) established that women who have limited interest in the matters of spirituality before falling ill and who, as a result of their diagnosis, try to veer towards spirituality might experience a variety of uncertainties in this area. Such dilemmas may result in maladaptation to the situation of being ill.

The way spirituality is perceived by patients may depend on their attitude to the situation in which they find themselves having contracted a life-threatening illness. Kübler-Ross (1998) identified five phases in the emotional-spiritual development of seriously ill patients: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. In the course of the anger phase, patients may address the 'Why me'? question to God, while in the bargaining phase, they may try to negotiate the possibility of living a longer life. Importantly, each phase may be accompanied by hope related to a positive outcome or finding meaning (Pater, 2015). Majda et al. (2022), who demonstrated a negative relationship between spirituality and patients' quality of life, explain this result by referring to changes in patients' perception of their situation. In their opinion, health improvement may lead to the extinction of the need to entrust one's health to God or another higher power.

Considerably fewer studies have been conducted on the dependency of the spirituality of oncology patients on their physical health (Almaraz et al., 2022). In men with prostate cancer, low levels of spirituality are associated with decreased sexual function and more acute urinary problems (Krupski et al., 2006). Neves et al. (2023), based on a review of thirty case reports, established a relationship between spirituality and better medical test results in patients with prostate cancer. The researchers emphasise that the current state of research is insufficient to determine whether it is spirituality that contributes to better health or whether better health enhances spirituality in patients. Jim et al. (2015) performed a meta-analysis of data sourced from studies comprising a total of more than thirty thousand patients. Religiousness/spirituality was shown to be associated with better health as perceived by patients. A question that should be asked, however, is connected to the relationship between the spirituality of patients and the objective indicators of physical health. Miller et al. (2022) established that the higher the levels of patients' spirituality, the lower the levels of fatigue and sleep disturbance. More diversified results were reported by Almaraz et al. (2022), who, based on their review of the literature, found a typical positive relationship between spirituality and physical health of the patients, while few studies observed the lack of such a relationship or a negative relationship.

3. Spirituality and the quality of life

Several studies demonstrated that spirituality is associated with patients' quality of life (Brandão et al., 2021; Kamijo, Miyamura, 2020; Sharif et al., 2021; Zare et al., 2019), regardless of sociodemographic or disease factors (Dos Reis et al., 2020). Most researchers agree that the more developed the area of spirituality in patients, the higher their quality of life. Therefore, this indicates that developing the spiritual realm may prove beneficial for many dimensions of patients' quality of life (Al-Natour et al., 2017), while further research in this area is necessary (Yosep et al., 2022).

The issue of spirituality becomes particularly relevant in the advanced stages of the disease (Kelly et al., 2023; Piderman et al., 2015), and therefore, especially during this period, it is recommended to assess spiritual suffering and identify spiritual needs in patients (Piderman et al., 2015). A study of this type was conducted by Bovero et al. (2016) in cancer patients with four months or less to live according to their prognosis. Such an assessment was proven to be a significant predictor of the quality of life, with faith playing a particularly significant role. Patients are also known to retain their hope as well as their belief in

the sense and meaning of life through religious practices (Silva et al., 2023). In a study by Delgado-Guay et al. (2011), patients in palliative care pointed to spirituality as a vital method of coping with their illness. They also defined it as a source of strength and solace. Some patients, however, admitted experiencing spiritual pain, understood as non-physical pain emanating from the soul. The greater its severity in patients, the lower they rated their spirituality and religiousness. According to the researchers, a lack of established spiritual and religious support can amplify spiritual pain but, on the other hand, acute spiritual pain resulting from an illness can result in questioning one's faith. Patients themselves reported that the experience of spiritual pain worsened their physical and emotional functioning.

4. Obstacles to discussions of spirituality

Both health service professionals and patients themselves find talking about matters of spirituality exceptionally challenging. When considering patients' spiritual needs, it is necessary to take into account their willingness to talk about this topic (Ghaempanah et al., 2023). Merath et al. (2020) asked patients about their preparedness to converse about spiritual aspects during a medical visit. Approximately 20% of the respondents expressed a preference to have such a discussion with medical personnel, while almost 50% preferred talking to a family member or a friend. Some respondents explicitly pointed out that caring for spiritual needs is not the responsibility of health professionals. The patients' approach to faith also plays an important role. Some patients draw a clear line between medicine and religion, while others see doctors as 'possessors of the gift of healing received from God' (Cipriano-Steffens et al., 2020; Sterba et al., 2014). In the study by Lagman et al. (2014), female patients believed that God and prayers undertaken by other people had healing power.

Spiritual matters also pose a considerable challenge to medical personnel. Doctors do not address such topics in every consultation they conduct (Best et al., 2019). They emphasise their low competencies in conducting conversations about spiritual aspects and the lack of adequate training (Bar-Sela et al., 2019), so they prefer referring patients to the chaplain (Best et al., 2016). Similar difficulties are observed in relation to nurses. In the study by Zumstein-Shahy et al. (2020), nurses were aware of the importance of spirituality for cancer patients, but they often found it difficult or discomforting to talk about such issues. They paid particular attention to their insufficient abilities to choose the right words or converse on this topic. Some of them consider this area private and not suited as a subject matter of a conversation. Van Meurs et al. (2018) arrived at identical conclusions. In this study, nurses quoted the lack of time, a different way of thinking and their reticence on the subject as obstacles to talking about spiritual matters.

5. Spirituality of cancer survivors

Spirituality is also significant for convalescents. For many, it is a source of comfort (Préau et al., 2013). It is also associated with less acute concerns relating to disease relapse (Cannon et al., 2011). Spirituality provides guidance on life after illness and facilitates recovery (Sterba et al., 2014). On the one hand, convalescents reinforce their relationship with God through their conviction of God's role in their healing (Hamilton et al., 2007). On the other hand, the experience of cancer can lead to a spiritual crisis and doubt in God (Levine et al., 2007). In the study by Lynn Gall and Cornblatt (2002), female breast cancer survivors were asked to describe their beliefs about the role of spirituality in their adaptation to the disease. The researchers conducted a qualitative analysis of the narratives obtained and developed a so-called cognitive model of adjustment. According to this model, the relationship with God, religious activities and social support play a key role in conveying new meanings onto experiences and in the course of personal development after the disease. Spiritual beliefs become an important resource in the adaptation process, as they help reduce emotional distress and increase the peace of mind of convalescents. The patients felt that their

relationship with God and the conducted dialogue strengthened their resolve and self-confidence and provided guidance in making life decisions.

Spirituality also has an impact on the convalescents' quality of life. Cannon et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between spirituality and the quality of life related to the physical and mental spheres. Variables were measured at the time of the study, six months and then twelve months later. Spirituality was found to play a vital role in improving the quality of life in both spheres. Moreover, spirituality is associated with post-traumatic growth (Domanowska et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2023), i.e. positive changes resulting from coping with a traumatic experience (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 2007). On the one hand, spirituality is a crucial predictor of post-traumatic growth (Bussell and Naus, 2010; Oh et al., 2021), while on the other, post-traumatic growth can be a source of spiritual transformation (Domanowska et al., 2018).

6. Spirituality of informal carers

A cancer diagnosis is also a challenging experience for the relatives of patients, who often assume the role of informal carers. The spirituality of informal carers has a multidimensional nature. As a result of spending time with someone close to them who is sick, they redefine the meaning of their own life and suffering and assign meaning to their role (Benites et al., 2021a). Becoming involved in religious practices also allows them to cope with the death of loved ones (Lövgren et al., 2019). The study by Benites et al. (2021b) indicates that acting as a carer at the end of a loved one's life can be a life-changing experience. Colgrove et al. (2007) focused on the complex relationship between stress, spirituality and carers' health. The researchers found that the negative impact of stress on carers' mental health was of a lower degree than in carers with a higher level of spirituality. On the other hand, stress was associated with poorer physical health in people with a high degree of spirituality. This means that informal carers with high levels of spirituality have better mental health and worse physical health than carers with low levels of spirituality. As reported by the researchers, such a correlation may stem from the fact that caregiving may be perceived by these carers as one of the responsibilities arising out of their spiritual convictions. The fulfilment of such a responsibility may involve neglecting one's own physical health.

Nemati et al. (2017) dedicated their research to assessing the spiritual challenges faced by informal caregivers. Firstly, they may undergo a spiritual crisis. Those close to the cancer patient begin to ask God about the reason for the illness affecting the family. This causes the disease to be interpreted as divine retribution or leads to doubts in God's justice, which may result in a loosening of the relationship with God as a kind of 'retaliation' for not fulfilling one's requests. Such sentiments are quoted, among others, by parents of sick children (Atashzadeh-Shoorideh et al., 2018). Secondly, informal carers sometimes express disappointment that their prayers have not been answered and that they themselves are unnoticed by God. Informal caregivers also experience existential distress expressed through losing a sense of one's purpose in life, feeling abandoned by God, feelings of isolation and helplessness and the fear of the imminent death of a loved one (Benites et al., 2021a). Moreover, in a similar way to the patients, the carers may develop a demoralisation syndrome associated with spiritual suffering (Garcia et al., 2023). Some carers, on the other hand, are convinced of God's presence and protection, and illness only serves to reinforce their trust. Such a sense of God's continued presence strengthens their inner peace (Nemati et al., 2017). Similar conclusions were reached by Paiva et al. (2015). In their study, carers highlighted the role of faith in retaining the strength necessary to cope with a loved one's illness. They admitted to using faith to alleviate the pain caused by the disease and the approaching death of a loved one. They also emphasised that their caregiving role prevents them from participating in various religious practices, so instead, they try to nurture their inner spirituality. Furthermore, through seeing the fragility of a loved one's life, the carers strive to redefine the purpose of their life by turning their focus towards the small things.

Conclusion

Cancer presents patients with multiple challenges. One such challenge is the wavering of or losing the sense of purpose in life. For many patients, the sphere of spirituality becomes a way of coping with the illness. Regardless of the theoretical debate conducted by researchers with regard to defining the concept of spirituality and its relation to the concept of religiousness, it should be noted that the search for life's meaning and purpose and faith alike are crucial aspects of the functioning of many cancer patients. The role of spirituality in the lives of patients can be analysed on two levels: cognitive (giving life a new meaning) and affective (coping with emotions triggered by the illness). The dependency between becoming ill and spirituality is, on the other hand, quite complex. Whether and in what way patients relate to spiritual issues will depend on what stage of emotional-spiritual development they are at, in line with the concept created by E. Kübler-Ross.

The attitude of patients towards spirituality is dependent on the disease stage.

For some people, the disease becomes a motivation to turn to spirituality, while for others, it contributes to the wavering or dissipation of their spirituality. The area to which most attention has been paid by researchers is that of the relationship between the spiritual sphere and the mental health of cancer patients. Numerous studies confirmed this relationship to be positive. Spirituality is associated with a lower loss of fortitude, i.e. demoralisation. It performs a function in regulating emotions, with religious coping playing a particularly important role. Spirituality may also be a source of unwanted emotions and may reinforce emotional distress, mainly anxiety and spiritual pain. Emotional reactions of patients are connected to the patients' current stage of the disease. Much less research has been dedicated to the correlation between spirituality and physical health. It seems that drawing conclusions in this area is not possible at present. Numerous studies identified a positive relationship between patients' spirituality and their quality of life, although not all researchers confirm this particular dependency. A number of obstacles to addressing spirituality in the patient-medical personnel relationship were also determined. This is primarily a question of patients' readiness to engage in such conversations or their approach to spiritual matters, but also a lack of willingness or a feeling of a lack of competencies in this area on the part of healthcare professionals. Spirituality's positive and negative role is also observed in informal caregivers of patients. On the one hand, it helps them find the purpose of the new role they are taking on, while on the other, it causes them to experience an emotional crisis. Spirituality is also important to cancer patients in remission. Here, too, its positive and negative consequences are observed.

The research findings presented should be of particular relevance to patients' friends and families as well as the medical personnel. Placing emphasis on the spiritual sphere of patients in interdisciplinary, formal and informal care should be the norm. At the same time, the advancement of studies on the relationship between patients' spirituality and their physical and psychological health requires a suitable methodological regime and a clear definition of the variables measured.

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Position of religious interactions in the paradigm of juridical social work: an assessment attempt[1]

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Waldemar Woźniak[a]

[a] *Associate Professor Rev. Waldemar Woźniak, PhD, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1560-6489, Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Cristian Philosophy, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw*

Abstract: Correctional and psychocorrectional work with different categories of socially maladjusted people, especially prisoners and juveniles in specific resocialization facilities, can be performed using different approaches or models. Working with these people is extremely difficult, because in their axiological functioning, they often follow anti-values, have difficulty complying with social, moral, and legal norms, and are often characterized by demanding attitudes. In Poland, the term resocialization is commonly used to refer to working with prisoners or wards of youth detention centers. The present paper discusses in detail three paradigms of interventions towards people who have come into conflict with the law, or in general towards people who are not adapted to social functioning, that is, living by the moral, social, and legal norms that are used and generally accepted by society. These are classical resocialization, juridical social work, and social rehabilitation paradigms. In a given paradigm, certain forms of work will be preferred. Methodology of working with socially maladjusted, or resocialization methodology, involves the functions, principles, and methods of this work. Methods of correctional work (methods of resocialization) have a psychotechnical (individual, and at the same time psychological or psychotherapeutic), sociotechnical (working with a group or using interactions through a group), or culture-technical character (learning, e.g., at school, work, contact with culture as a recipient or creator). Various religious interactions should also be considered a culture-technical method. Not all inmates or wards of youth detention centers have a negative attitude toward religion or specialized (penitentiary, facility) prison ministry. Many of them see the value in religious interactions as helpful. Religious practices help them function socially, although to obtain given benefits, the inmates or wards may manipulate their religious commitment, which may turn out to be a sham commitment. The professional work of the author of the present paper has allowed him to conduct many years of observation among inmates in penitentiary units or among those placed in juvenile institutions of the justice department. The results of this observation provided a basis for placing religious interventions not in the paradigm of classical resocialization but in juridical social work.

Keywords: socially maladjusted persons, offenders, classical resocialization, juridical social work, social resocialization, religious interactions

Introduction

Religion has various positive effects on human life. Since the dawn of time, humans have related to what is immaterial, and therefore spiritual, thus entering the area of religion, regardless of how they conceived this area. The approach to religion, one way or another, determines its functions.

In the *Pedagogical Dictionary*, customs are defined as "[...] ways of thinking and acting established in society that constitute the distinctiveness of a given social group or a cultural or geographical area" (Cz. Kupisiewicz, M. Kupisiewicz, 2018, p. 202). Customs can be created by specific communities, including nations, social groups, and religions. Various customs, including religious customs, affect a person's activity, functioning in society, and direction of actions.

A. Bałandynowicz (2021, p. 52) wrote that "as an essential element of tradition, faith develops man's awareness that the natural universe cannot be a primordial reality but was created by a purely spiritual entity. This entity was defined as the Creator-God, who has always existed, and is the progenitor of all creation, intervening in the course of events by performing impossible things,

1 Article in polish language: Umiejscowienie oddziaływań z zakresu religii w paradygmacie jurydycznej pracy socjalnej. Próba oceny, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Wozn.pdf

understood as miracles and revelations, and holds the attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and perfect strangeness".

Religion is a platform for the realization of faith in God, and at the same time helps form certain values, attitudes, and ways of behavior that can determine the positive direction of life not only of man in general but of a particular person living in a particular territory at a particular time.

Religion performs a number of functions. For the Christian, the primary function of religion is its salvific function. Religion helps a person find and understand God, and at the same time can be a help in his or her daily life, such as bringing encouragement or giving strength to cope with the difficulties of life. Undoubtedly, religion also performs a broad peacekeeping function. Peace can be shattered through tyranny, the drive to subjugate nations, and also through crime or maladaptive lifestyles. A. Bałandynowicz (2022) shows peace as the foundation of humanity.

The positive impact of religion and faith can be used in various areas, for example, in working with socially maladjusted people, including those with criminal records. In the present paper, an attempt was made to consider religious interactions within the given paradigm of correctional work with inmates and juvenile wards of youth detention centers. The content of the paper is set in Polish reality and the Catholic religion.

1. Terminological issues

An optimal model/paradigm should be sought in correctional work with inmates or wards of youth detention centers. *The Pedagogical Dictionary* defines paradigm as "(pattern, model) colloquially: a typical example or model to be used; in the philosophical sense: a universally recognized scientific achievement that provides model solutions in a particular field of science and related fields. The term was introduced to the philosophy of science in 1962 by Th. Kuhn" (after: Cz. Kupisiewicz, M. Kupisiewicz, 2018, p. 131-132).

A completely different understanding of the paradigm was presented by B. Proctor (2023, p. 9-10), who wrote that "a paradigm change requires a conscious and deliberate decision because it opposes almost everything we have been taught. The default learning system is to read books, ask questions, and move on, but this makes us unable to understand the content of what we have read. Reading something once is not enough.

The paradigm is created through repetition: performing certain actions again and again, at certain intervals. This is the way it can also be changed. However, we usually think that it is pointless, because we refer to what we were taught in the past, and we were not really taught at all; we just gathered information". Further in his book, B. Proctor (2023, p. 11) explains that "[...] a paradigm is a multitude of concepts established in our subconscious. These concepts are so-called *habits*. Therefore, a paradigm is a set of habits, and a habit is a concept that manifests itself without the participation of consciousness – just automatically".

Analysis of the above two approaches to the paradigm reveals that they are quite different. The former approach is primarily theoretical in nature as one begins to explore and learn about a particular model or construct, although later, particular principles or elements of that model can be implemented in social, professional, and family functioning. This second approach to paradigm points directly to its individual behavioral value. Therefore, in this view, the paradigm has rather no theoretical meaning but has a practical value since the *paradigm* so viewed generates our behavior, conduct, professional action, etc.

These two definitions of the paradigm can be used in correctional, resocialization, and readaptation work with adult inmates, former inmates, and juvenile wards and former wards of youth detention centers. In this first sense of paradigm, a penitentiary educator or a juvenile facility educator, if they want to improve their working skills and better understand the environment in which they have to work, should explore theoretical models relating to this area of work. With the second paradigm view, a penitentiary educator, or resocialization educator in general, should be characterized by a given behavioral pattern that is habitual in nature to guide their communication with inmates in the penitentiary facilities or with juveniles placed in youth detention centers or juvenile shelters. It is possible to imagine a penitentiary educator who

habitually treats prisoners as a necessary evil and only labels and brands them, which in principle can derail correctional effectiveness. It is also possible to imagine an educator who, somehow habitually and spontaneously, advises inmates what action to take in prison, so that after leaving it, and therefore in conditions of freedom, they can function in society, or at least function in such a way as not to threaten the established social order.

Three paradigms of correctional work with inmates or wards of youth detention centers which are present in this work in Polish realities will now be presented. The first of them is the paradigm of classical resocialization. In Poland, the term commonly used is resocialization (*resocializacja),* and in other countries it is known but rather not often used, so in the case of these countries, it refers more to classic corrective work with inmates. In the *Pedagogical Dictionary*, "resocialization" is defined as "[...] the pedagogical and psychological interventions in general, consisting in the application of various forms and methods of education, including psychological, social, and cultural techniques, school education, and work towards individuals who are maladapted to the social environment, the manifestation of which is their violation of the social, moral, and legal norms" (after: Cz. Kupisiewicz, M. Kupisiewicz, 2018, p. 155). This definition of resocialization indicates a kind of evolution of interventions towards offenders and towards socially maladjusted people in general, because it assumes the use of different methods, whether of a psychological nature, or interactions through the group or through culture in the broadest sense. Nevertheless, the definition should be considered within the model of classical resocialization.

Analysis of the history of prisons (cf. Christianson, 2006) starting from ancient prisons or prisons in the Middle Ages, reveals that they often served not so much to improve the behavior of prisoners but to exclude or even eliminate them, so they are unlikely to be placed in the paradigm of classical resocialization.

The first penitentiary cell systems (cf. Ciosek, 2001, p. 183-192), i.e. Ghent (established in 1775) and Auburn systems (established in 1816), introduced methods based on labor and silence. It can be considered that along with these systems, the classical model of resocialization began to be developed. The Geneva system, which was established in 1833, was the first progressive system, and it introduced the classification of prisoners, at least with regard to their moral state.

The model of working with prisoners or juvenile offenders has been constantly changing and expanding, whereas methods and techniques of influence have been developed, based on such principles as – re-education, personality development, care, acceptance, and individual approach (cf. Marzec, Sarzała, Woźniak, 2018, p. 61-128). The model of classical resocialization has undergone transformations in individual countries. This model, from the first phase of its development, is actually diametrically opposed to the current development phase, as it can be considered that there are countries where it is still used but modified many times.

A paradigm different from classical resocialization is the paradigm of juridical social work. These two models differ in details and emphasis on individual elements. In the paradigm of classical resocialization, it can be assumed that the inmate or ward must take advantage of the opportunity given to him or her to become a socialized individual again (as an effect of resocialization), and thus, at the very least, not threaten the social order. Inmates often perceive resocialization interventions as imposed, and consequently, they respond negatively to them. The paradigm of juridical social work emphasizes assistance and counseling, without which the inmate or ward cannot change, if only because of depleted personal resources. The ward usually decides to seek help on his or her own, because they recognize their situation as difficult, and in this case, giving them help can cause a positive change.

In practice, social work focuses primarily on offering a variety of assistance and providing it. Social work is provided to people in need, such as the homeless or unemployed. The paradigm of juridical social work presupposes conducting this work among current or former inmates or wards of youth detention centers and thus it is performed in the field of law. Dialogue is of great importance in social work. According to H. Kaszyński (2019, p. 25-26), "in conversation-ori-

ented social work, it is crucial to understand dialogue as a communicative practice that enables the optimal flow of meaning between relationship partners. Dialogue leads to new understanding, and a new context, which is the basis for future thoughts, agreements, and actions. It is the art of thinking in relation, in an interaction-based space that can be conventionally called a «border strip». It is an «in-between» territory that cannot be occupied, colonized, or appropriated by either partner if the dialogue is supposed to continue and not turn into a monologue. In this space, the specificity of which lies in extraterritoriality, neutrality, the possibility of feeling the equivalence of «Me–You», a multiplicity of meanings relating to the past experience of harm coexist". Social work, if it is to be effective, should be based on the appropriate competence of the helper and on his or her empathetic approach (cf. Grudziewska, 2021; Stanek, 2021). Academic social work is important, learning about its theories, but the true meaning of social work is told by its mature practice based on thoughtfulness (cf. Krasiejko, 2023). Social work is based on various principles, the most important of which seems to be the principle of assistance (which can also be described as the principle of social support), but the principle of individualization is also of high importance as each social problem of a person is complex, and at the same time, a similar social problem occurring in another person may be characterized by a different course (cf. Woźniak, 2020, p. 49-58). In this paper, it should be further emphasized that providing social support often has a religious motivation, since mature faith in God is linked to doing mercy (cf. Kamiński, 2019).

The third paradigm, which will now be presented, refers to the current state in Poland of dealing with people incarcerated in penitentiary units or placed in youth detention centers. P. Stępniak (1999) put forward a postulate to change the model of work with inmates by describing the direction of change as from resocialization to social work. Knowing the Polish reality, including the common use of the term resocialization (*resocializacja*) and at the same time to reconcile what is ideal with what is real, P. Stępniak (2008) proposed a mixed model called *social resocialization* (cf. Woźniak, 2015).

The paradigm of *social resocialization* should be examined as a kind of consensus between the paradigm of classical resocialization and the paradigm of social work while including both elements from the field of resocialization and elements from the field of social work. The paradigm of social resocialization should include the assumptions of social work and the resocialization concepts as well as principles and methods from the field of resocialization which assume the provision of social support rather than just diagnosis or assessment (cf. Woźniak, 2015).

Forensic psychology primarily develops forensic diagnosis and expertise (cf. Majchrzyk, 2018, 2020), but this is just the beginning of the corrective process. By offenders, both adults and juveniles, diagnosis is often perceived as a social stigma, and these individuals may not often adopt an attitude of openness only if they experience assistance, especially spontaneous.

Socially maladjusted people often engage in manipulation against specific individuals or the social environment in general (cf. Hadnagy, 2021). An educator or psychologist working in a prison or youth detention center, showing a willingness to help another person, can make that person abandon manipulative techniques.

The goal of corrective and resocialization work is to bring about a wide-ranging change in the wards (cf. Grzesiak, 2023). In view of the mental crises experienced by socially maladjusted people, it even seems necessary to use methods beyond classical resocialization, with these methods including psychotherapy and sociotherapy, which are often recommended in social work (cf. Jankowiak, Soroko, 2021; Kowalski, 2021).

In order to examine paradigms for working with prisoners and with wards of youth detention centers, legal acts should also be analyzed. The introduction of two systems of imprisonment, that is, programmed and therapeutic interventions (Executive Penal Code, Article 81), should be considered a departure from classical resocialization, as these systems offer various assistance, including specialized assistance. The third, ordinary system of executing punishment (Executive Penal Code, Article 81), can be placed in the classical resocialization paradigm.

The Law on the Support and Resocialization of Juveniles as of June 9, 2022, introduced district educational centers (Articles 186-211), which should be considered as intermediate centers between the already existing youth educational facilities and youth detention centers. The introduction of these centers should be considered a search for new forms of assistance provided to socially maladjusted youth. The above law states that three systems of education can be implemented in youth detention centers: resocialization, resocialization-revalidating, rehabilitation-therapeutic systems (Article 244). Based on the analysis of these three systems, it can be considered that even the resocialization system goes beyond the paradigm of classical rehabilitation, and therefore it can be considered within the paradigm of social resocialization. The analysis of these systems, that is, the analysis of the assistance provided, makes it possible to include the other two systems in the paradigm of juridical social work. Although the name of the law contains the term *resocialization*, which is still frequently used in Poland, it also directs attention to the process of intensive assistance, which should be regarded as going beyond classical resocialization.

There is undoubtedly a place for religious interactions in the social resocialization paradigm. There are people in Poland who, because of their faith and religion, visit inmates in prisons and young people placed in youth detention centers and educational centers.

2. Method

Since 1997, the author of the present paper has been associated, in professional and volunteer forms, with the community of wards of youth detention centers but also with the community of adult inmates (or former inmates). This activity allowed the author to use the following qualitative research methods in these communities for many years: observation, free-form interview, and active listening; in this way, the author acquired the material that will be presented in the present paper in the "Results and discussion" section.

D. Maison (2023, p. 73) wrote that "although observation is rarely an independent and sole research method, in many qualitative studies it is a very important tool used to better understand the problems studied. In the case of focus groups, the moderator should observe respondents, especially for consistency between verbal and non-verbal levels of communication, and watch for any signals that might indicate their discomfort".

According to D. Maison (2023, p. 185), "the free and less structured way of conducting an interview has an additional advantage of giving the respondent the opportunity to talk about what is important to him or her and helps understand the way they see the world. Consequently, the moderator's perspective of the world's perception is not imposed on the structure of the interview. It is important to remember that qualitative research is there to understand how the respondent sees the world rather than how he or she responds to a vision of the world created by the researcher. Therefore, an overly structured qualitative study sometimes limits getting to the truth".

A very important and often even necessary method (although only additional) in qualitative research is *active listening*. D. Maison (2023, p. 216-217) argues that "the basis of moderation is active listening, that is, listening that stimulates the statements of the participants. In moderation, it is important to maintain an asymmetry of roles between the moderator, who primarily listens, and the participants, who are supposed to speak. However, the moderator should not listen passively but actively. He or she must constantly stimulate the statements of the respondents so as to obtain as much of the information sought as possible and direct the discussion so as to balance the participation of the less and more active individuals in the discussion.

The moderator must also have good contact with the respondent throughout the interview. This is definitely easier in a one-on-one interview than in a focus group with several participants at the same time. The various verbal and non-verbal signals of acceptance, interest, and understanding from the moderator are used to maintain contact with the respondent".

The primary research method used in the present study was a long-term observation conducted by the author in the community of wards of youth detention centers and juvenile shelters, as well as in the environment of adult inmates in penitentiaries or

detention centers for adults. During the observation, spontaneous conversation (which can be regarded as a casual interview) combined with active listening often took place.

3. Results and discussion

Due to the specificity of their collection, the results presented here are only in the form of conclusions, as determined by ethical standards. Professional and volunteer work has allowed the author of this paper to collect extensive observational material, or derived from spontaneous conversations with young people in rehabilitation centers, as well as with convicts and detainees. The collected material (in the form of memory or written records) relates to many areas of human functioning, and this study will present the material only relating to the Roman Catholic religion and the problems studied. Such research material requires the researcher to be responsible and objective in presenting the results.

In psychological quantitative research, there is a model for presenting research results, whereby a separate section presents the results in the form of statistical analysis, and another contains a discussion of the results. In this paper, the research results, due to the nature of the research methods used, will be presented in a different way: a finding from observation or a piece of information from a spontaneous conversation (during which the active listening technique was also used) will be presented, with a simultaneous discussion (explanation).

The long-term observation conducted by the author of this paper among the wards of youth detention centers and adult inmates often took the form of participant observation, with the author (researcher) and the subjects of observation united by a common activity, such as participation in liturgy, prayer, or a pilgrimage to places of worship. In such situations, the behavior of the respondents appears to have been authentic, and consequently, the results of such research largely reflected the actual state of affairs.

Persons placed in youth detention centers and penitentiary units for adults seem to be characterized by a rather shallow and superficial religiosity. At the same time, such a state does not exclude the participation of these people in religious practice, since this activity stimulates reflection, allows forgetting the omnipresent factors of evil, and provides an opportunity to confide and be heard and understood.

Participation in religious practices in a prison or youth detention center allows communication with people outside the facility, such as chaplains or volunteers, which can be a protective (helping) factor against the likely prisonization, which should be considered a negative phenomenon, meaning a process of becoming a typical (in the negative sense) prisoner or ward of youth detention centers, by adopting maladaptive behavior and the facility dialect.

The methods of resocialization are psychotechnical (psychological, psychotherapeutic), sociotechnical (group and through-group interventions), and culturotechnical. Culture techniques of rehabilitation include teaching (school, course, vocational), work (paid, unpaid), sports and recreation, and contact with culture in a broad sense by the recipient or creator (cf. Ptak, Woźniak, 2009).

Religious interventions can also be considered as a resocialization method, especially culturotechnical. Although not all, the respondents were open to religious culture, including religious art, reasoning that they wanted to broaden their horizons.

A form of cultural interaction is the technique of cultural models. Religion shows such models by promoting social behavior and also shows personal role models by presenting, for example, people who act on behalf of other people, including people in need, out of religious motives. Striving for change, both adult prisoners and wards of youth detention centers often look for models of behavior, and are often impressed by people who do works of mercy.

Religious interventions can be psychotechnical in given cases. Cases have been recorded in which the wards, after prayer, regained peace of mind and hoped for effective social readaptation, and some of them considered prayer as a kind of self-psychotherapy.

In the communities discussed, prayer can often be considered magical in nature, meaning that words of prayer are said just in case, in order to receive help, but it is difficult to see genuine faith in such behavior.

Religious interventions with inmates, detainees, and wards of youth detention centers should be considered within the pastoral-soteriological model since the primary goal of pastoral activity is to help the faithful in their pursuit of salvation. For these people, *salvation* is often a state that is too abstract, while they accept pastoral interventions because they see the possibility of receiving wide-ranging help. The motives for their participation in pastoral care are therefore often non-religious, such as emotions or atmosphere.

Prisoners or wards of youth detention centers often show openness to chaplains, but they may do so based on the mechanism of manipulation, for a particular chaplain to be more willing to provide certain assistance or give a positive opinion.

Many years of observation (including participant observation), combined with spontaneous conversations and active listening led the author of the present paper to consider religious interventions in the paradigm of juridical social work, that is, provided in the field of law. The essence of social work is to provide assistance in the broadest sense, with resocialized people often joining pastoral interactions, as they see the possibility of receiving a variety of assistance: spiritual, moral, social, and even financial.

Conclusion

Both adult inmates and wards of youth detention centers do not exclude religious interactions at once, and those who participate in them often do so for non-religious reasons. Pastoral activities go beyond the paradigm of classical resocialization. As members of various religious groups, both priests and volunteers who work at prisons or youth detention centers do not force anyone to participate in the activities offered, as the principle of voluntariness applies. The goal of pastoral work is to lead believers to *salvation*, which for prisoners or wards of youth detention centers seems to be a state/goal that is too abstract. They often join the facility's pastoral activities because they want to experience a variety of social assistance, which does not preclude some of them from considering *salvation* as a state of high value in a given time frame. There is no need to incorporate religious interventions into the *paradigm of social resocialization*, which is provided in Poland, albeit only informally. Religious interventions can be directly placed in the paradigm of juridical social work since they include a broad range of assistance. *A paradigm* can be viewed in two ways: as a theoretical construct or as a behavioral model, i.e. as a multitude of concepts/collection of habits. If the behavioral model is formed as the will (habit) to provide assistance, then regardless of the theoretical model, this assistance will be provided by a person, and this means the activation of the behavioral paradigm of social work. In the case of providing assistance to wards of youth detention centers, it is necessary to emphasize the social work paradigm, regardless of whether the assistance is provided formally or informally, for example, in the form of voluntary work.

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Risk factors and protective factors of suicidal behaviour in people diagnosed with depression[1]

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Robert Gajewski[a], Katarzyna Kucharska[b]

[a] *Professor Katarzyna Kucharska[1], MD, Ph.D., https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6130-0520*
[b] *Robert Gajewski[1], M.Sc., https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0288-2631*
[1] *Institute of Psychology, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw, Poland*

Abstract: According to the WHO, over 700,000 people commit suicide annually. Their main cause is clinical depression. It is predicted that by 2030 it will become the most diagnosed ailment among people. In the face of the pandemic of depression and suicidal behaviour, it is important to establish the so-called protective factors. Aim of the study: The main aim of the study was to analyse the relationship between protective factors (spirituality, religiosity) and suicidal risk factors (mental pain, depression, anxiety, fascination with death, coexistence of Borderline Personality Disorder BPD, self-harm) in people with a clinical depression. Methodology: The study was conducted from November 2022 to March 2023 using standardized tools and clinical scales to assess the above-mentioned variables. A total of 167 people were examined, while 96 people were qualified for the study, including 46 patients with depression and 50 people from the control group. Results: A significant number of subjects from the control group declaring mental health showed features of depressive disorders (27%), anxiety disorders (45%) and BPD (31.5%). Depressed participants compared to the control group, showed a lower level of spirituality and religiosity and a higher level of suicidal risk factors. Among people with depression, a positive effect of spirituality on lowering the fascination with death was shown, while religiosity correlated negatively with self-harm. In addition, psychological pain and fascination with death increased with the severity of anxiety, depression, self-harm, and BPD. In the examined group, the level of suicidal risk factors increased along with the religious crisis. Conclusions: The study partially confirmed the protective effect of spirituality and religiosity on people with depression in the context of suicidal risk. Religious crisis turned out to be a significant predictor of suicide risk.
Keywords: suicide risk factors, factors protecting from suicide, suicide and depression

1. Introduction

Suicide and depression have become a significant problem in modern civilisation. In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that depression is the fourth most serious illness worldwide and one of the main causes of suicide. Globally, it affects 5% of adults. Unfortunately, about 75% of people with depression in low- and middle-income countries do not receive any treatment. It is predicted that by 2030 it will also become the most frequently diagnosed disease in the world. It affects as many as 350 million people, including 4 million in Poland (WHO, 2021b; Provincial Sanitary-Epidemiological Station in Krakow, 2022). A study from the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic period of 2020-2021 showed that 38.8% of "healthy Poles" show symptoms of depression and require consultation with a specialist. This study also showed that among "healthy Poles", depression positively correlates with religious crisis, fascination with death, life stressors, and psychological pain (Surmacz et al., 2021). It was also shown that with greater severity of depressive symptoms, there is a higher level of professional burnout (Kornakiewicz et al., 2019).

According to the American classification DSM-5 (*American Psychiatric Association*, 2018), so-called "major depressive disorder" can be diagnosed in a person who meets 5 or more of the following criteria for at least 2 weeks: depressed mood, significant decrease in interests

1 Article in polish language: Czynniki ryzyka a czynniki ochronne zachowań samobójczych u osób z diagnozą depresji, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Gaje.pdf

and ability to experience pleasure, weight loss or gain without intention, insomnia or excessive sleepiness, agitation or psychomotor retardation, fatigue or lack of energy, feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt, decreased ability to think/concentrate/make decisions, recurrent suicidal thoughts. It is important that at least one of the symptoms is: depressed mood or so-called anhedonia (American Psychiatric Association, 2018). DSM-5 distinguishes the following types of depression: mood dysregulation disorder, major depressive disorder, chronic depressive disorder (dysthymia), premenstrual dysphoric disorder, substance/medication-induced depressive disorder, depressive disorder due to another medical condition, unspecified depressive disorder. According to DSM-5, depressive disorder can have a course: severe, moderate, mild, with psychotic symptoms, in partial or full remission. It can be a single or recurring episode. Depressive disorders often co-occur with anxiety disorders, personality disorders, neurodevelopmental disorders (ADHD, ASD), addictions. In our study, most people from the clinical group had recurrent depressive disorders co-occurring with other mental disorders.

Suicide is defined as a person's conscious, deliberate and intentional act aimed at taking their own life (Grzywa et al., 2009). According to the WHO, more than 700,000 people commit suicide each year. There are even more suicide attempts. A person who has attempted to take his or her own life is at high risk of doing so again. Suicide is the fourth (in terms of frequency) leading cause of death among adolescents. The leading cause of suicide is depression. About 77% of global suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries (WHO, 2021). In 2016, among people who died before the age of 45, 52.1% committed suicide (Surmacz et al., 2021). In the same year: the global suicide rate was 10.5; the European rate was 12.9; the Polish rate was 13.4. In Poland, this rate for women was 3.4; for men 23.9 (Surmacz et al., 2021). Studies show that men commit suicide about 1.8-3 times more often than women. Women are more likely to attempt suicide (Grzywa et al., 2009). Suicide is the fourth most common cause of death among 15-19 year olds. The most common methods of suicide worldwide include consumption of chemical agents, hanging, and use of firearms.

With the increase in suicidal acts in recent years, it is particularly important to examine suicide risk factors and protective factors that reduce self-destructive and suicidal behaviour.

Among the motives for suicide are: wanting to stop the pain, hopelessness, emptiness as well as seeking revenge. Revenge is the most common motive for suicide attempts among 14-18 year olds (Makara-Studzińska, 2013). The rate of suicidal behaviour in major depression is: for 'S' thoughts, 53.1%; 'S' tendencies, 17.5%; and for 'S' attempts, 23.7% (Dong et al., 2018, 2019). Individuals with major depression account for 15% of successful 'S' attempts (Grzywa et al., 2009).

The most important risk factor for suicide in the general population is a history of suicide attempts (WHO, 2021). Others include male gender, old age, social isolation, lack of support, stressful life situations, substance abuse, chronic somatic and psychiatric illnesses, too few protective factors, psychological pain and fascination with death (Grzywa et al., 2009; Makara-Studzińska & Koślak, 2009; Młodożeniec, 2008). The likelihood of suicidal behaviour is increased by concurrent use of psychoactive substances, DSM-5 cluster B personality disorder (antisocial, borderline, histrionic or narcissistic), feelings of hopelessness, a tendency to behave in aggressive ways, difficult childhood experiences and stressful life events (Surmacz et al., 2021). Disease factors have also been shown to predispose to but not trigger suicidal acts (Isometsä, 2014). A Polish study conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic on a population of healthy individuals found that psychological pain was the strongest predictor of suicide attempts (Surmacz et al., 2021). Similar results have been obtained in other populations (Campos et al., 2019; Tanrıverdi et al., 2022a).

Shneidman (1998), after analysing suicide notes from people committing suicide, noted that most of them described 'intolerable' emotional distress and a belief that death was the only way to end it (Shneidman, 1998). The researcher defined psychological pain as 'the experience of anguish, suffering and negative emotions such as fear, despair, anxiety, regret, shame, guilt, lack of love, loneliness and loss'. He identified frustrated needs for love, belonging,

achievement, dominance, aggression as the causes of this condition. In his view, psychological pain is the primary source of suicidal behaviour (Shneidman, 1993). This happens when it reaches an 'unbearable intensity for the individual combined with cognitive narrowing'. Death then begins to appear as the only way to end suffering. This condition is referred to as presuicidal syndrome (Chodkiewicz et al., 2017). Mee et al. (2006, 2011) described the impact of psychological pain on the development of suicidal thoughts and plans in patients with depression (Mee et al., 2006, 2011). Obrach and colleagues (2003) defined psychological pain as 'a subjective experience accompanied by an awareness of negative changes in oneself and one's functioning along with co-occurring unpleasant emotions' (Orbach et al., 2003). A longitudinal study of 4 years on a group of 82 Canadian students found that psychological pain was a stronger predictor of suicidal thoughts than depression or hopelessness (Montemarano et al., 2018). When faced with the above-mentioned suicide risk factors, it is important to identify 'protective factors' that reduce the risk of destructive behaviour. Researchers in this area distinguish the following: spirituality (Dziwota et al., 2016), religiousness (Kyle, 2013), social support (Warzocha et al., 2008), sense of coherence (Ruszkiewicz and Eldridge, 2015) and sense of connection (Makara-Studzińska et al., 2017). Studies of the effect of protective factors on suicide risk do not provide conclusive results. They identify a difference in the protective effect depending on the coherence of religion with society and the severity of disorders (Lawrence et al., 2016).

There is a wealth of research on the relationship between religiousness and spirituality and suicide risk. Kyle's (2013) study of US students found significant statistical differences between believers and non-believers in the context of suicide. Believers showed lower suicide risk. Reasons for this included: social support, moral objections to suicide, survival, stress management and religious well-being. It has also been recognised that spiritual beliefs may function as a mediating variable to help negotiate social support and make sense of adverse situations (Kyle, 2013). A 2022 study of 150 patients with a diagnosis of depression receiving psychiatric treatment found that higher levels of spiritual well-being led to a reduced risk of suicide and lower levels of psychological distress. Suicide risk increased in parallel with increased levels of psychological pain (Tanrıverdi et al., 2022a). In the Koening et al. study, religiousness was also found to be: 1) the most effective protective factor for suicidal behaviour, 2) a factor that moderately reduces depression, and 3) a factor that positively affects mental health and well-being (Koenig et al., 2020). A review of studies on the impact of religiosity and spirituality on depression symptom reduction found that: 1) religiousness was a predictor of reduced depressive symptoms in 49% (out of 138 studies); 2) religious crisis is a predictor of increased depressive symptoms in 59% (out of 22 studies); 3) among those with mental illness, religiousness had a protective effect (Braam & Koenig, 2019a). An older analysis of 147 studies with a total of 98,000 participants also found a negative correlation between religiousness and depression (Smith et al., 2003). A longitudinal study conducted in the USA, over a 2-year period, on older people (mean age 68 years) showed that religiousness was found to be protective and therapeutic in the diagnosis of depression. People who were not depressed at the start of the study remained depression-free for 2 years if they attended religious services frequently. Those starting the study in the active phase of depression were less susceptible to it if they engaged in private prayer more frequently (Ronneberg et al., 2016). Similarly, Gmitrowicz and Krawczyk (2014) categorise religiousness as both a risk factor and a protective factor. The principle reasons why religiousness protects against suicide are penalisation of this act and sanctions against suicide in monotheistic religions, moral prohibition of using psychoactive drugs (which increase the risk of 'S'), reducing levels of aggression and hostility, receiving emotional warmth and supportive bonds through participation in religious communities. The religions with the lowest suicide rates include those most restrictive towards the act: Islam and Judaism. Hinduism adopts the most tolerant approach to the issue of suicide. This religion, which believes in reincarnation, allows a person to end his or her life arbitrarily in the case of a serious disability or incurable illness. In between these two poles is Chris-

tianity. In its area, Catholicism is more protective than Protestantism (Krawczyk & Gmitrowicz, 2014). In 2016, Lawrence and colleagues provided a review of 89 articles from 2003-2013 analysing religion and its relationship to suicide. This analysis shows that some authors identify religion as a protective factor against suicide in their studies, while another part identifies it as a risk factor. This is determined by several important factors. The authors of the study review found that religion does not protect against suicidal thoughts, although a study by Dervic et al. revealed such a relationship (Dervic et al., 2011). In contrast, religious affiliation is a protective factor against suicide attempts. This is mainly because of the moral objections that the main religions (Islam, Christianity, Judaism) have against suicide. Such results were obtained in the USA and Europe. Results to the contrary were obtained in South Africa in 2010, where people belonging to 'other [non-mainstream] religions' reported more suicide attempts than 'non-believers'. A longitudinal study from Scotland in 2011 showed an important correlation: belonging to a religious minority group, 12 non-congruent with the general public (in this case Catholics) is a stronger factor for suicide attempts. Most likely due to a sense of social ostracism (Lawrence et al., 2016). Cohesion of the religious community has an impact on lowering suicide risk. A 2011 study conducted in Switzerland confirmed the advantage of Catholics over Protestants in reducing suicide risk (Lawrence et al., 2016). According to the authors of the above-mentioned meta-analysis, religion is a protective factor against suicidal behaviour, but not against 'S' thoughts. Religion may prevent a person from following suicidal thoughts by: providing access to a supportive community, shaping beliefs about suicide, providing a source of hope, providing ways to interpret suffering. The impact of religion on suicide depends on: type of religion, congruence with society, message content (supportive vs condemnatory), degree of engagement in religious practices. An example of a study whose outcome did not confirm the positive effect of religiousness and spirituality on suicide risk reduction was that of Surmacz and colleagues. They analysed the results obtained on a 'healthy' part of the Polish population during the coronavirus pandemic. She showed that religious crisis positively correlates with depression, psychological pain and fascination with death. However, this is a correlation, not a cause and effect relationship. No correlation was found between religious commitment, spiritual transcendence, fulfilment in prayer, a sense of universality, a sense of social connection and suicide risk factors (depressiveness, fascination with death, psychological pain), (Surmacz et al., 2021). Another study found that religiousness did not reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in young and middle-aged Hispanic individuals (Lerman et al., 2018).

The main aim of this study is to analyse the protective effects of spirituality and religiousness on suicide risk reduction in people with depression. The severity of suicide risk factors, i.e. depression, anxiety, psychological pain and fascination with death, was assessed in a group of people diagnosed with depression. In addition, the severity of self-injurious behaviour without suicidal intent was assessed in the clinical and control groups in relation to protective factors. Relationships between spiritual transcendence and religiousness and individual risk factors for suicide in the study sample were analysed.

2. Study group and method

2.1. Group description

The research project received approval from the Ethics Team of the UKSW Institute of Psychology (consent no.: 11/2022). Participants were asked to give informed consent to participate in the study. Inclusion criteria: age of subjects: 18-55 years; gender: female, male, other; education: at least primary. Recruitment was conducted online and through the reception desks of psychotherapy clinics. Exclusion criteria: symptoms confirming CNS damage, coexistence of serious somatic diseases, presence of alcohol addiction syndrome, presence of psychotic disorders (e.g. schizophrenia, bipolar disorder). A total of 167 individuals participated in the study. After a preliminary analysis of the results obtained on the clinical scales, 71 subjects

were excluded from the study. From the control group, which initially consisted of 111 subjects, 54 with BPD, high anxiety and depression scores were excluded. From the study group, 10 people were excluded due to high scores indicating alcohol addiction or psychoactive substance use. A total of 96 subjects were enrolled in the study. The control group consisted of a population of 50 healthy subjects without mental or physical disorders. The clinical group included 46 people in the active phase of depression (ICD-10, DSM-5) diagnosed by a psychiatrist. Of these, the vast majority were females (79.1% in the study group, 62% in the control group). The mean age was 30 years with a standard deviation of 9 in the study group and almost 37 with a standard deviation of 10 in the control group. In the healthy group, heterosexual orientation was by far the most dominant (90%). Bisexuals (10.9%) and homosexuals (8.7%) were more numerous among the depressed compared to the healthy group. There were also asexuals (2.2%) and pansexuals (4.3%). Most respondents in the clinical group came from large (43.5%) and small towns (19.6). In the control group, the distribution looked similar. More than half of the respondents in the clinical group declared their religious affiliation as 'Catholic' (58.75%), with the remainder being 'agnostic/atheist' (30.4%). The control group was far more religiously homogeneous: 90% were Catholics. In the clinical group, 58.7% of the respondents had higher education, 30.4% had secondary education. In the control group, there were more people with higher education (76%), fewer with secondary education (22%). In the control group, 82% of respondents declared continuous occupational activity; in the clinical group, 58%, while 26% declared intermittent activity. The clinical group compared with the healthy group was statistically worse in terms of relationship status: in the control, 74% of people declared that they were in a stable relationship; in the clinical group, 50%. Both groups were dominated by those undertaking white-collar jobs. Among depressed patients, there were more individuals with somatic diseases than in the healthy group. Patients most frequently mentioned hyperthyroidism (33.3%), hypertension (25%), and insulin resistance (16.7%). In the clinical group, the mean duration of treatment for depression was 5 years. The predominant form of treatment was mixed psychotherapy combined with pharmacotherapy 52.2%. The most commonly taken drugs were from the antidepressant and anti-anxiety groups.

2.2. Method

The following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. The clinical group of people with a diagnosis of depression showed a statistically significant decrease in spirituality and religiousness compared to the control group of healthy people.
2. The clinical group of people with a diagnosis of depression shows statistically significant increase in suicide risk factors (depression, anxiety, fascination with death, psychological pain, self-harm, BPD) than the control group of healthy people.
3. In the clinical group, psychological pain and fascination with death correlate positively with clinical variables such as depression, anxiety, BPD.
4. In the clinical group, protective factors (religiousness, spirituality) correlate negatively with suicide risk factors.
5. In the clinical group, protective factors are predictors of suicide risk factors.

The following tools were used in the study:

1. The Scale of Psychache (PAS, Holden et al., 2001; Polish adaptation: Chodkiewicz, Miniszewska, Strzelczyk, Gąsior, 2017) has 13 items, 1 factor listed in the title of the scale. The reliability of the Polish adaptation was high: Cronbach's α was 0.93. The external validity of the tool is satisfactory. It showed statistically significant correlations with tools measuring depression (BDI, HADS), hopelessness (BHS), anxiety (HADS) and anhedonia (SHAPS) (Chodkiewicz et al., 2017). Validation studies of the Portuguese version of the Scale have confirmed its ability to distinguish between those at risk of suicide and those not at risk; its ability to predict suicidal thoughts (Campos et al., 2019).

2. The Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS, Zigmond AS Snaith RP., 1983). It has 14 items. It distinguishes between two factors: anxiety and depression. The tool has satisfactory reliability. A Polish validation study on a group of adolescents aged 14-18 years, showed a Cronbach's α internal consistency of 0.70-0.77 (depending on the HADS-A/D version). It also showed high test-retest reliability after 10-14 days (Spearman's ρ was 0.67 for HADS-A and 0.75 for HADS-D). The tool has high validity relative to other tools measuring depressive and anxiety symptoms (Mihalca and Pilecka, 2015). Similar results were obtained when examining students (Czerwiński et al, 2020).
3. The SLiFŚ Fear of Death and Fascination with Death Scale (Piotrowski, Żemojtel-Piotrowska, 2009). The tool was constructed to measure conscious, general fear of one's own death. In a pilot study, it was found to also measure fascination with death. It has 23 items, 2 factors: fear of death and fascination with death. The reliability of the tool was determined for the fear scale at 0.80 (Cronbach's α), for the death fascination scale at 0.90. The validity of the tool was demonstrated with other similar tools. Remarkably, it was demonstrated that the SLiFŚ shows the level of specific fear: of death, not general fear as a state or trait (Żemojtel-Piotrowska & Piotrowski, 2009).
4. The Borderline Personality Checklist (BPD Checklist) is a tool based on the DSM-IV system. It is a self-report questionnaire developed to measure the intensity of complaints associated with Borderline Personality Disorder experienced in the past month. It lists 47 items, with respondents marking answers on a five-point scale. Tests of psychometric properties confirmed the 1-factor and 9-factor model based on DSM-IV criteria. The scales of the tool are consistent with the DSM-IV criteria: abandonment avoidance, unstable relationships, identity disturbance, self-destructive impulsivity, recurrent suicidal behaviour, affective instability, lack of anger control, dissociation and paranoid ideation. The tool has very good internal consistency, theoretical, diagnostic and differential validity. The tool was considered suitable for screening and measuring the effect of therapy (Bloo et al., 2017).
5. The Inventory of Statements About Self-Injury (ISAS) was developed by David E. Klonsky (2007). He created a questionnaire tool to measure self-injury (Klonsky and Glenn, 2008). It allows for the measurement of 13 types of self-injury functions: affect regulation, interpersonal boundaries, self-punishment, self-care, anti-dissociation/feeling-generation, anti-suicide, sensation-seeking, peer-bonding, interpersonal influence, toughness, marking distress, revenge, autonomy. Respondents mark the level of importance of a given function on a 3-point scale (Kubiak, 2013). Studies on the psychometric properties of the tool have shown that it has good test-retest reliability after one year (ranging from 0.52 to 0.89 depending on the function tested, Glenn and Klonsky, 2011). Other psychometric parameters of the Polish version of the ISAS were rated as good (Szewczuk-Boguslawska et al., 2021).
6. AUDIT Scale (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test). It has 10 items. It is used to assess the existence of an alcohol use disorder. Depending on the score obtained, the respondent may be assigned to the following groups: low-risk consumption, risky consumption, harmful alcohol consumption, possible alcohol dependence. Polish studies on psychometric properties have concluded that the AUDIT has high reliability and accuracy (strong correlation with the MAST and CAGE scales, ρ = 0.76). Therefore, it can be used as a reliable screening tool in Poland (Klimkiewicz et al., 2021).
7. ASPIRES questionnaire (The Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments [ASPIRES], Piedmont, 2010; Polish adaptation: Piotrowski, Żemojtel-Piotrowska, Piedmont, Baran, 2021). A scale for examining spirituality and religiousness in terms of Piedmont's theory of spiritual transcendence. It has 35 items. It consists of two scales:

a. Spiritual transcendence scale (ST), which includes prayer fulfilment (PF), universality (UN), connectedness (CN). The scale consists of 23 statements rated on a five-point Likert scale. The reliability expressed by Cronbach's α for the Polish version is: 0.91 for Prayer Fulfilment, 0.75 for Universality, 0.63 for Connectedness, 0.89 for the whole Spiritual Transcendence scale.
b. The Religious Sentiments Scale (RS), consisting of two subscales: religious involvement (RI) and religious crisis (RC). The first subscale includes questions about the frequency of religious practice, religious beliefs or experiences related to God. The second assesses the experienced conflict with God, the religious group and the dogmas of the faith. This part of the questionnaire uses a variety of response options, ranging from a five-point to a seven-point scale for the 12 questions. The reliability expressed by Cronbach's α is 0.87 for RI and 0.70 for RC. Polish validation studies have shown medium to high accuracy of the tool when comparing it to those measuring similar constructs (Piotrowski et al., 2019).

3. Results of the study

H1: It was verified whether there were statistically significant differences between the study group and the control group regarding the protective factors of suicidal behaviour (spirituality and religiousness). A parametric Student's *t*-test for two independent samples was used, where the independent variable was diagnosis of depression (no vs. yes) and the dependent variables were seven protective factors (spiritual transcendence, universality, connectedness, prayer fulfilment, religious sentiments, religiousness, religious crisis). The results obtained are presented in Table 1.

It was observed that the study group obtained statistically significantly lower levels of spiritual transcendence, universality, prayer fulfilment, religiousness and significantly higher levels of religious crisis than the control group. No inter-group differences were found for connectedness and religious sentiments.

H2: It was verified whether there were statistically significant differences between the study group and the control group on suicide risk factors. A parametric Student's *t*-test for two independent samples was used, where the independent variable was a diagnosis of depression (no vs. yes) and the dependent variables were six risk factors (fear of and fascination with death, Borderline personality disorder, anxiety and depression, psychological pain). The results obtained are presented in Table 2.

It was observed that the study group obtained statistically significantly higher levels of fear of and fascination with death (SLiFŚ), Borderline personality disorder (BPD), anxiety and depression (HADS) and psychological pain (PAS) than the control group.

A non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test for two independent samples was also used, where the independent variable was diagnosis of depression (no vs. yes) and the dependent variables were the six self-harm subscales (affect regulation, self-punishment, self-care, anti-suicide, toughness, marking distress). The results obtained are presented in Table 3.

It was observed that the study group achieved statistically significantly higher levels of self-punishment and anti-suicide than the control group. It is noteworthy that at the level of statistical trend ($p = 0.075$), the study group also obtained higher levels of toughness than the control group. No statistically significant inter-group differences were found for affect regulation, self-care and marking distress.

H3: Statistically significant correlations between individual suicide risk factors (fear of and fascination with death, Borderline personality disorder, anxiety and depression, psychological pain, self-harm) were tested. Parametric Pearson's correlations *r* were used for variables with a normal distribution and non-parametric Spearman's *rho* correlations for variables with a distribution deviating from the normal distribution (ISAS in the control group). The results obtained in the study group are presented in table 4.

In the study group, it was observed that fascination with death (SLiFŚ) correlates statistically significantly, positively and moderately with Borderline

Table 1. Comparison between the control and study groups regarding the protective factors

	Control group *N* = 50		Study group *N* = 46		*t(94)*	*p*	*Cohen's d*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
ASPIRE: Spiritual Transcendence	3.55	0.69	3.06	0.70	3.44	0.001***	0.71
ASPIRE: Universality	3.75	0.77	3.21	0.83	3.25	0.001***	0.67
ASPIRE: Connectedness	3.38	0.93	3.22	0.68	0.96	0.341	0.20
ASPIRE: Prayer fulfilment	3.52	1.01	2.74	1.20	3.47	0.001***	0.72
ASPIRE: Religious sentiments	2.67	0.61	2.49	0.82	1.24	0.221	0.26
ASPIRE: Religious involvement	3.73	1.35	2.82	1.45	3.17	0.001***	0.65
ASPIRE: Religious crisis	1.62	0.67	2.16	0.96	-3.22	0.001***	0.66

Annotation. *N* – number; *M* – mean; *SD* – standard deviation; *t(df)* – Student's t-test statistic; *p* – t-significance; *Cohen's d* – strength of correlation.
***$p < 0.001$.

Table 2. *Comparison between the control and study groups on suicide risk factors*

	Control group *N* = 50		Study group *N* = 46		*t(94)*	*p*	*Cohen's d*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
SLiFŚ: Fascination with death	1.45	0.36	2.11	0.71	-5.76	0.001***	1.19
SLiFŚ: Fear of death	2.28	0.68	2.57	0.75	-1.96	0.051*	0.40
BPD: Borderline personality disorder	67.34	12.52	113.72	31.36	-9.66	0.001***	1.99
HADS: Anxiety	4.04	1.83	12.57	4.80	-11.68	0.001***	2.41
HADS: Depression	2.90	2.04	10.87	4.78	-10.78	0.001***	2.22
PAS: Psychological pain	17.46	5.01	42.30	11.49	-13.18	0.001***	2.72

Annotation. N – number; *M*–mean; *SD* – standard deviation; *t(df)* – Student's t-test statistic; *p* – t-significance; *Cohen's d* – strength of correlation.
*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Table 3. *Comparison between the control and study groups on self-harm*

	Control group *N* = 7		Study group *N* = 29		*U*	*p*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
ISAS: Affect regulation	2.86	2.41	4.41	1.72	64.00	0.123
ISAS: Self-punishment	1.00	1.41	3.52	2.23	41.00	0.014**
ISAS: Self-care	0.43	0.79	1.55	1.88	64.00	0.109
ISAS: Anti-suicide	0.00	0.00	1.48	1.94	52.50	0.026*
ISAS: Toughness	0.29	0.76	1.62	2.08	61.00	0.075#
ISAS: Marking distress	2.00	2.00	2.48	2.18	87.00	0.552

Annotation. N – number; *M* – mean; *SD* – standard deviation; *U* – Mann-Whitney *U* test statistic; *p* – *U*-significance.
** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; # $p < 0.10$.

Table 4. Correlation matrix between individual suicide risk factors in the study group

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
SLiFŚ: Fascination with death[1]	–											
SLiFŚ: Fear of death[1]	-0.30*	–										
BPD: Borderline personality disorder[1]	0.43***	0.12	–									
HADS: Anxiety	0.36**	0.10	0.71***	–								
HADS: Depression	0.34*	0.05	0.56***	0.58***	–							
PAS: Psychological pain[1]	0.60***	0.05	0.74***	0.63***	0.57***	–						
ISAS: Affect regulation[1]	0.39*	0.04	0.17	0.18	0.07	0.30	–					
ISAS: Self-punishment[1]	0.47**	0.20	0.31	0.36	0.30	0.45**	0.59***	–				
ISAS: Self-care[1]	0.24	0.37*	0.37*	0.25	0.29	0.42***	0.13	0.42*	–			
ISAS: Anti-suicide[1]	0.52***	-0.12	0.16	0.29	0.20	0.36*	0.39*	0.47**	0.26	–		
ISAS: Toughness[1]	0.20	0.23	0.29	0.13	0.21	0.29	0.09	0.51***	0.54***	0.08	–	
ISAS: Distress[1]	0.22	0.48**	0.18	0.08	-0.03	0.32	0.45**	0.66***	0.61***	0.38*	0.55***	–

Annotation. [1] Parametric Pearson's correlations *r* were used
*** *p*< 0.001; ** *p*< 0.01; * *p*< 0.05.

Table 5. Correlation matrix between protective factors of suicidal behaviour and suicide risk factors in the study group

	ASPIRE: ST	ASPIRE: UN	ASPIRE: CN	ASPIRE: PF	ASPIRE: RS	ASPIRE: RI	ASPIRE: RC
SLiFŚ: Fascination with death[1]	-0.24	-0.03	-0.11	-0.34*	0.06	-0.18	0.37*
SLiFŚ: Fear of death[1]	0.13	0.02	0.22	0.09	-0.11	-0.02	-0.16
BPD: Borderline personality disorder[1]	-0.09	-0.09	-0.10	-0.04	0.17	-0.05	0.36**
HADS: Anxiety[1]	-0.11	-0.15	0.01	-0.11	0.18	-0.05	0.38**
HADS: Depression[1]	-0.15	-0.14	-0.05	-0.13	0.13	0.10	0.07
PAS: Psychological pain[1]	-0.01	0.08	0.07	-0.11	0.23	0.02	0.36**
ISAS: Affect regulation[1]	0.12	0.44*	0.02	-0.04	-0.22	-0.14	-0.24
ISAS: Self-punishment[1]	-0.10	0.14	0.03	-0.27	-0.33#	-0.36#	0.09
ISAS: Self-care[1]	0.28	0.33	0.32#	0.10	0.03	0.04	0.17
ISAS: Anti-suicide[1]	-0.18	0.06	-0.10	-0.29	0.10	-0.16	0.38*
ISAS: Toughness[1]	-0.02	0.08	0.18	-0.20	-0.30	-0.29	0.15
ISAS: Distress[1]	0.09	0.33	0.30	-0.14	-0.26	-0.25	-0.05

Annotation. ST – spiritual transcendence; UN – universality; CN – connectedness; PF – prayer fulfilment; RS – religious sentiments; RI – religious involvement; RC – religious crisis.
1. Parametric Pearson's correlations *r* were used
*** p< 0.001; ** p< 0.01; * p< 0.05; # p< 0.10.

Table 6. Predictors of suicide risk in the study group

Explained variables	Explanatory variables	B	SE	Beta	T	R^2	F
SLiFŚ: Fascination	(Permanent)	2,49	0,41		6,01*	0,20	6,24***
	Age	-0,03	0,01	-0,39	-2,77**		
	ASPIRE: Religious crisis	0,19	0,11	0,25	1,80*		
SLiFŚ: Anxiety	(Permanent)	2,04	0,22		9,36	0,15	8,36**
	Age	0,71	0,24	0,40	2,89**		
ZOB: Personality Disorders	(Permanent)	131,76	16,96		7,77*	0,25	8,04***
	ASPIRE: Religious crisis	8,84	4,36	0,27	2,03*		
	Age	-1,31	0,41	-0,42	-3,15***		
HADS: Anxiety	(Permanent)	17,69	2,31		7,65*	0,11	6,29*
	Age	-0,18	0,07	-0,36	-2,51*		
PAS: Psychological pain	(Permanent)	57,19	5,38		10,64***	0,17	9,55***
	Age	-0,52	0,17	-0,43	-3,09***		
ISAS: Affect regulation	(Permanent)	0,65	1,31		0,50	0,23	8,36**
	ASPIER: universality	1,11	0,38	0,51	2,89**		
ISA: Distress	(Permanent)	5,07	1,31		3,88***	0,12	4,53*
	Age	-0,09	0,04	-0,40	-2,13*		

Annotation. Gender: 0 - male, 1 – female; Relationship status; 0 – single people, 1 – people in relationship.
B – unstandardized regression coefficient; SE – standard error B; beta – standardized regression coefficient;
t – test statistics t; F – statistic ANOVA; R2 – adjusted coefficient of determination
*** p < 0,001; ** p < 0,01; * p < 0,05.

Personality Disorder (BPD), anxiety and depression (HADS), affect regulation and self-punishment (ISAS), or positively and strongly with psychological pain (PAS) and anti-suicide (ISAS). Fear of death (SLiFŚ) correlates statistically significantly, positively and moderately with self-care and marking distress (ISAS). Borderline personality disorder (BPD) correlates statistically significantly, positively and moderately with self-care (ISAS) or positively and strongly with anxiety and depression (HADS) and psychological pain (PAS). Psychological pain (PAS) correlates statistically significantly, positively and strongly with anxiety and depression (HADS) or positively and moderately with self-punishment, self-care and anti-suicide (ISAS). No statistically significant correlations were observed between anxiety and depression (HADS) and self-harm (ISAS).

H4: A statistically significant correlation was examined between protective factors and suicide risk factors (anxiety and fascination with death, Borderline personality disorder, anxiety and depression, psychological pain, self-harm). Again, parametric Pearson's correlations *r* were used for variables with a normal distribution and non-parametric Spearman's *rho* correlations were used for variables with a distribution deviating from a normal distribution (ISAS in the control group). The results for the study group are shown in Table 5.

Statistically significant positive and moderate correlations were observed between universality (ASPIRE) and affect regulation (ISAS) in the study group, negative and moderate correlations between prayer fulfilment (ASPIRE) and fascination with death (SLiFŚ), and positive and moderate correlations between religious crisis (ASPIRE) and fascination with death (SLiFŚ), Bordeline personality disorder (BPD), anxiety (HADS), psychological pain (PAS) and anti-suicide (ISAS). Additionally, statistically significant at the level of statistical trend, positive and moderate correlations were observed between connectedness (ASPIRE) and self-care (ISAS), and negative and moderate correlations were observed between religious sentiments and religious involvement (ASPIRE) and self-punishment (ISAS). No statisti-

cally significant correlations were observed between protective factors and fear of death (SLiFŚ) and depression (HADS)

H5: Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine which protective factors are predictors of suicide risk. The explanatory variables were protective factors (spirituality and religiosity) and, as a control, sociodemographic factors (gender, age, years of education, relationship status). The explained variables were suicide risk factors (fear and fascination with death, Borderline personality disorder, anxiety and depression, psychological pain, self-harm). Due to the low sample size, self-harm in the control group was not included in the regression analysis. The results obtained in the study group are presented in Table 6.

In the study group, three statistically significant predictors of suicide risk were observed: universality and religious crisis (ASPIRE) and age. A higher level of religious crisis (ASPIRE) increased the level of fascination with death (ŚLiFŚ) and Bordeline personality disorders (ZOB). Higher levels of universality (ASPIRE) increased levels of affect regulation (ISAS). Older age increased the level of fear of death (ŚLiFŚ) and decreased the level of fascination with death (SLiFŚ), the level of Bordeline personality disorders (ZOB), the level of anxiety (HADS), the level of mental pain (PAS) and the level of distress (ISAS). The strongest predictor was universality (beta = 0.51). Gender and other protective factors (spiritual transcendence, sense of connection, fulfillment in prayer, religious feelings, religious involvement) were not statistically significant predictors of suicide risk factors. There were also no predictors of depression level (HADS).

4. Discussion

H1: The results indicated that people with depression are characterised by lower scores on the spirituality and religiousness scales compared to healthy people. Additionally, they are characterised by higher levels of religious crisis. As the literature shows, people suffering from depression are characterised by a decrease in mood, drive, anhedonia and reduced activity. Their cognitive functions deteriorate. The brain is influenced by increased cortisol secretion, levels of neurotransmitters, i.e. serotonin, noradrenaline, decrease. Brain structures are altered: the hippocampus responsible for memory decreases in size, the amygdala responsible for fear perception processes enlarges (Galecki & Szulc, 2018). The above-mentioned variables may influence the reduction of religiousness and spirituality in people in the active phase of depression. The results of the study supported this hypothesis. Unfortunately, the literature review was unable to find studies analysing strictly the spiritual or religious state of people with depression in order to refer the results of this project to them. In contrast, there are many studies supporting the protective and health-promoting effects of religiousness and spirituality on people with depression (Braam & Koenig, 2019b; Cole-Lewis et al., 2016; Pečečnik & Gostečnik, 2022; Ronneberg et al., 2016; Sikora et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2003; Vitorino et al., 2018). This may indicate that people in the active phase of depression are religiously committed. A Polish study on the health practices of people with depression showed that people with depression represent a high level of religiousness and sought opportunities to participate in religious practices (Sikora et al., 2021). The results may indicate that individuals in the active phase of depression differ spiritually and religiously from healthy individuals.

H2: The results obtained confirmed the pattern that depressed individuals, compared to healthy individuals, were characterised by higher levels of suicide risk factors: fascination with death, severity of BPD, anxiety, depression and psychological pain. They were also characterised by higher levels of self-harm particularly occurring as self-punishment and anti-suicide among those with depression. In addition, it was found that the majority of people in the study group had scores indicative of BPD (69.60%) and anxiety disorders (67.40%). Psychological pain was found to be the strongest predictor of suicidal thoughts-it accompanies depression and exacerbates its symptoms (Montemarano et al., 2018). Psychological pain is the most debilitating complaint of people with depression, prompting suicidal thoughts and behaviours (Chodkiewicz, 2013).

The findings of the research project are consistent with other reports linking depression and psychological pain (Chodkiewicz et al., 2017; Frumkin et al., 2021; Mee et al., 2019; Mento et al., 2020; Surmacz et al., 2021), depression and fascination with death (Lee et al., 2013; Surmacz et al., 2021; Żemojtel-Piotrowska and Piotrowski, 2009), depression and BPD (Zuchowicz et al., 2018) as well as depression and self-harm (Dugiel, 2018; Radziwillowicz, 2020). Research has confirmed the thesis that depression is comorbid and complex. People suffering from this illness experience not a wide range of negative psychological phenomena: fear of death and a concomitant fixation on it (most likely as a way out of suffering), psychological pain pushing them into suicidal thoughts and behaviour, emotionally unstable personality traits. This may support other researchers' hypotheses that depression and cluster B personality disorders (according to the DSM 5) fall on a single continuum (Zuchowicz et al., 2018).

H3: In the clinical group of depressed individuals, psychological pain and fascination with death correlate positively with anxiety, depression, self-harm and BPD. Overall, strong correlations were found between the individual suicide risk factors: psychological pain, anxiety, depression, fascination with death and self-harm.

The results obtained in the depressed group indicating that psychological pain is a significant suicide risk factor correlated with depression, anxiety, self-harm, and fascination with death remain consistent with studies by other authors in this research issue (Chodkiewicz et al., 2017; Frumkin et al., 2021; Mento et al., 2020; Surmacz et al., 2021).

H4: Prayer fulfilment reduces fascination with death. With religious crisis, fascination with death, Bordeline personality disorder traits, anxiety, psychological pain and self-harm (as an anti-suicide function) increase. Religious sentiments and religious involvement decrease self-harm (as a function of self-punishment). Aspects of spirituality such as universality and connectedness were observed to co-occur with self-harm as a function of affect regulation and self-punishment. No statistically significant correlations were observed between protective factors and fear of death and depression.

Similar results on religious crisis have been shown in other studies (Rodziński et al., 2017; Trevino et al., 2014). Surmacz and colleagues (2021) indicated that religious crisis positively correlates with depression, psychological pain and fascination with death. Her study involved a population of healthy individuals. The current study obtained analogous results, except that on a population of people with depression. This may indicate that religious crisis has similar effects among both healthy and depressed people. This obviously requires further analysis, but it indicates that religious crisis can translate into serious problems in the lives of individuals. Hence, taking care of religious well-being appears as one of the preventive behaviours in the context of suicide risk. In fact, higher levels of spiritual well-being have been shown to lead to a lower risk of suicide and lower levels of psychological pain (Ibrahim et al., 2019; Tanrıverdi et al., 2022b).

In the context under discussion, it is worth citing Koening's results. He showed that religion is the most effective measure in reducing suicidal behaviour and moderately reducing depression (Koenig et al., 2020). In people with psychiatric disorders, religiousness tends to be more protective than in healthy individuals (Braam & Koenig, 2019c). A study of adolescents aged 12-15 years experiencing social problems found that private religious practices, institutional religiousness and religious support correlated negatively with depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts. The authors suggested that religiousness should be included in prevention programmes for depressive disorders and suicidal behaviour (Cole-Lewis et al., 2016). A cross-sectional study among Brazilians found that individuals with higher levels of religiousness and spirituality showed higher scores on the following scales: quality of life, quality of social relationships, optimism, happiness (Vitorino et al., 2018).

The absence of statistically significant correlations between the protective factors studied and depression in a healthy Polish population was shown by Surmacz and colleagues (2021). Similar conclusions were reached by Lerman and colleagues (2018) in relation to young Hispanics. The reasons for the discrepancies in the findings can be attributed to the small clinical samples and the study methodology: self-descriptive online surveys.

H5: Only religious crisis was found to be a statistically significant predictor of suicide risk. Its increase predicted increased levels of fascination with death and Borderline disorder. Contrary to expectations, we found that higher levels of universality (a dimension of spiritual transcendence) predicted increased risk of self-harm (as a function of affect regulation). Interestingly, we found that older age significantly reduced the severity of risk factors (fascination with death, borderline personality disorder traits, general anxiety, psychological pain, self-harm (as a function of distress).

A review of 22 studies on the protective effects of religiousness and spirituality on people with depression found that 59% of the results confirm that depressive disorders increase with religious crisis (Braam& Koenig, 2019a). In a similar study to the current one, but conducted on a group of healthy individuals, depression, psychological pain, and fascination with death increased with increasing religious crisis (Surmacz et al., 2021).

The study presented here showed that among people with depression, age decreases the severity of risk factors (level of fascination with death (SLiFŚ), level of Bordeline personality disorder (BPD), level of anxiety (HADS), level of psychological pain (PAS) and level of distress (ISAS). Other studies consider old age as a risk factor for suicide (Grzywa et al., 2009; Makara-Studzińska & Koślak, 2009; Młodożeniec, 2008).

In the current study, religious crisis was found to be a predictor of suicide risk. Meanwhile, in other studies on samples of healthy individuals, the strongest predictor of suicide risk was psychological pain (Campos et al., 2019; Surmacz et al., 2021; Tanrıverdi et al., 2022a). Contrary to the results of this study, spirituality was found to be a protective factor against suicide risk in other studies (Tae & Chae, 2021; Wu et al., 2015). Reasons for the discrepancy include the project's small clinical sample.

5. Summary of study results

One of the strengths of the study is its innovation and novelty. There are not many studies analysing the protective effect of religiousness and spirituality on suicide risk in people with depression. Another strength of the project is the use of reliable, well validated tools. In this study, a large number of tools were used, which made it possible to analyse the cross-correlations of numerous factors–both those included in religiousness and spirituality as risk factors. A strength of this study is the homogeneous group structure due to the careful selection of participants for the study.

Limitations of this study include its cross-sectional nature. A longitudinal study would certainly have been more informative on the issue under discussion. It was also a questionnaire-based, self-reporting study conducted online. These aspects of the study may reduce its reliability. Furthermore, those declaring themselves healthy showed some features of mental health problems in the clinical scales: those with the highest scores were excluded, those with medium and low scores remained in the study. Similarly, those in the control group did not present only symptoms of one problem (in this case depression) but also of personality and anxiety disorders.

A limitation of the study is the religious heterogeneity of the groups. Religious and non-religious people were mixed in the study group. This could have negatively influenced the results: in non-religious people, religiousness cannot be a protective factor because it is not practised. Secondly: there were people in the study group who declared depression in an active phase, but not all of them showed its symptoms in clinical scales.

Practical implications

The project's findings are part of a long list of studies confirming the impact of spirituality and religiousness in the process of maintaining and returning to full mental health. A meta-analysis conducted to determine effective factors in psychotherapy found that psychotherapy tailored to patients' spirituality and religiousness yielded statistically significantly better outcomes than no treatment or psychotherapies without reference to spirituality and religiousness. In other studies with control groups following the same modality and for the same duration, psychotherapies tailored to spirituality and religiousness

were as effective as standard approaches in reducing psychological distress, but resulted in greater spiritual well-being (Hook et al., 2019). Myers (2018) conducted a cross-cultural study on a sample of almost 3,000 people and distinguished five factors of happiness: sense of influence, optimism, meaning, close relationships and faith. The latter is understood as a personal relationship with God. It can therefore be said that a personal relationship with God is a happiness factor. Myers, in his previous research from 1995, came to a similar conclusion: religious involvement is positively correlated with happiness (Myers & Diener, 2018). Other studies have shown that religiousness protects against depression and helps to recover faster (Ronneberg et al., 2016). It has also been proven that religiousness helps to effectively reduce the effects of stress. A study by researchers at the University of Texas found that a 'prayer of devotion' helps effectively reduce cardiovascular reactivity in response to an interpersonal challenge of a religious nature. Furthermore, it was found that the religious practice of 'prayer of devotion' resulted in the most significant suppression of vascular reactivity compared to groups using secular meditation and relaxation techniques (Masters et al., 2022).

Furthermore, religiousness is recommended as a patient resource in recovery by: *American Psychiatric Association, Royal College of Psychiatrists and World Psychiatric Association*. However, when engaging religiousness in treatment, it must be taken into account whether the patient's religiousness is healthy or pathological in nature (Koenig et al., 2020). Spirituality has also been used effectively in the healing process of patients. A review of the literature from 2000-2018 showed that spirituality incorporated into psychotherapeutic treatment programmes by teaching gratitude, forgiveness, self-acceptance and compassion has good and measurable results in improving patients' mental health (Pečečnik & Gostečnik, 2022).

From the research findings and recommendations of psychiatric societies cited above, it can be concluded that access to healthy forms of religiousness and spirituality will have a health-promoting impact on communities. In clinical practice, this could involve allowing psychiatric patients to access religious practices: inviting chaplains to treatment facilities, facilitating travel to places of worship (Ronneberg et al., 2016). Religiousness and spirituality could also be included in prevention programmes, social campaigns or educational programmes. The statistics on the mental health of Polish youth are alarming (Ombudsman for Children, 2023). As Professor Myers notes, some countries such as Bhutan and the United Arab Emirates have already undertaken such practices. In an effort to increase the happiness of their citizens, they promote spiritual and religious values among their citizens (Myers & Diener, 2018). Although religiousness has been proven to correlate positively with happiness and psychological well-being, researchers in this area observe a 'religious paradox': people are moving away from participating in religious practices and institutional religious communities. They suggest that this may be due to increasing individualisation, cultural pluralism and reduced social pressure to be religiously involved (Myers & Diener, 2018). In Poland, as shown by the statistics of religious practices from 2000-2020, the number of firm believers and regular practitioners is declining. At the same time, the number of non-believers and non-practitioners (CBOS, 2020) as well as people making suicide attempts (Police Headquarters, 2023) is increasing. The results of the present study showing religious crisis as an important predictor of suicide risk are consistent with the Polish reality. Attention to the religiousness and spirituality of Poles may translate into a decrease in suicidal behaviour and an improvement in the quality of life.

Although religiousness and spirituality are recognised as an important resource, it should be taken into account that people in the active phase of depression function in an altered way. The results of this study showed that people with depression experience a reduction in their spirituality and religiousness. They find it harder to pray, they do not experience as much connection with others and the world as before, they experience a religious crisis, although they retain religious sentiments and a sense of connection with other believers. This is a result of being closed to life, anhedonia and egotism characteristic of depression. It is necessary to take these phenomena into account when approaching depressed people: to express sym-

pathy for their 'state of soul', to adapt the demands to their current capacities, not to demand or expect great religious commitment, not to retraumatise them with accusations of 'losing their faith'. Their apathy in this area seems to be a characteristic element of the illness that has affected them, not a 'spiritual laziness' or an 'offence against God or the Church' as close believers sometimes suppose.

The results of this study showed that a group of people with depression are at higher risk of suicide than healthy people. They share significantly higher levels of: anxiety, psychological pain, fascination with death (often perceived as a 'way to end suffering', Chodkiewicz et al., 2017; Shneidman, 1998). They experience a greater severity of BPD symptoms than healthy individuals, i.e.: abandonment avoidance, unstable relationships, identity disturbance, self-destructive impulsivity, recurrent suicidal behaviour, affective instability, lack of anger control, dissociation and paranoid ideation. They use self-harm to avoid suicide. These characteristic experiences and behaviours of depressed people need to be taken into account when approaching them: both by the professionals treating them and by their family members. It is above all the latter who should receive psycho-educational support, as they are often the ones who deny, diminish and fail to understand the suffering of their loved ones. It is worth including psychological support of the patient's loved ones in the healing process.

People with a diagnosis of depression have been shown to be at higher risk of suicide. Their condition should be monitored on an ongoing basis by, for example, asking questions about suicidal thoughts, plans, intentions, using 'risk assessment cards'. This practice appears to be advisable in both home and hospital care.

The correlations obtained in the study indicate the danger of the mental states in which people suffering from depression find themselves. Strong positive correlations were found between fascination with death and psychological pain and self-harm as a function of suicide prevention. Hence, in clinical practice, it is to be expected that if a patient has reasons to experience psychological pain (e.g. a sense of great loss combined with few resources, a declared 'hopelessness' of the situation), he or she may be approaching suicidal intentions, with a high probability of self-harm. In clinical practice, patients who declare high levels of psychological pain and concomitantly elevated drive should be considered as 'high-risk patients' and receive attentive care. This study showed positive correlations of psychological pain with self-harm. Correlations of psychological pain with substance use disorder (SUD) have been shown in another study (Mee et al., 2019). Consequently, patients experiencing intense psychological pain are more prone to maladaptive forms of emotion regulation such as self-harm and psychoactive substance use. Psychotherapeutic management should include training in emotion regulation skills such as those proposed by Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (Linehan, 2016).

Another practical implication of this study is the clinical value of information about a depressed patient's religious crisis. It has been shown to go hand in hand with increased suicide risk factors. Noticing a religious crisis in a loved one with depression can be an important piece of information for the surrounding people.

Although religiousness and spirituality support the healing process, it should be emphasised not to rely solely on them to combat depression or suicide risk. It is necessary to take into account other healing factors: professional psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy, psycho-educational activities, social support.

As shown earlier, the impact of religiousness and spirituality on mental health is widely mentioned. It should therefore be studied in order to make even more effective use of these resources in treatment.

Another study on the impact of religiousness and spirituality on suicide risk reduction in people with depression could be conducted on a larger clinical group in the form of a longitudinal study. In this form, it could examine the impact of specific religious practices on patients during treatment, e.g. the previously mentioned 'prayer of devotion'(Masters et al., 2022). Suicide risk factors could be assessed before, during and after interactions. The length of the sustained effect could be examined. Such a study could also use EMA (*Ecological Momentary Assessment*) sampling method. Self-reported information could be added to the information collected from patients' relatives.

In this study, the results of the effect of religiousness on suicide risk reduction were examined in a group which included believers and non-believers, as the selection criterion for the group was 'depression' rather than religious practices. This may have had the effect of lowering the effect of religiousness on suicide risk in the study group such that the poor religiousness of non-practitioners lowered the final statistical effect of religiousness on lowering risk factor levels.

In the next study, one could examine: a group of people in active depression (criterion of declaration and presence of symptoms) declaring themselves as believers and practitioners and compare them with a group of people in the active phase of depression (the same criteria) declaring themselves as non-believers and non-practitioners. This would allow us to assess the differences and similarities between believers and non-believers. It would be possible to empirically verify whether the religiosity of believers is a stronger protective factor among believers compared to non-believers? Is the spirituality of non-believers a stronger protective factor than the religiosity of believers? What protects believers more: religiosity or spirituality?

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Was Queen Jezebel intelligent? Insight in individuals with histrionic personality disorder[1]

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Małgorzata Starzomska-Romanowska[a] ✉

[a] *Małgorzata Starzomska-Romanowska, Phd hab., https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9540-2402, Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Christian Philosophy, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw*
✉ *eltram@life.pl*

Abstract: In this article, the author attempts to answer the question of whether it is possible to speak of insight in individuals with histrionic personality disorder. In principle, this question is rhetorical, since researchers, and not only psychoanalytic ones, have long had no doubt that the answer to this question is „no". However, it is worth asking the question again and answering it in the context of a very specific group of women whose symptoms manifest themselves in places of religious worship. People associated with theology, especially clergymen, describe such people as functioning in the „spirit of Jezebel," the amoral queen described in the Bible. The author of the article attempts to look at this phenomenon with the help of an imposing analogy of the characterization of Jezebel in women with histrionic personality disorder. Highlighting the danger that these individuals pose in places of worship in the area of respect for the sacrum, the author tries to explain the motivations for their actions. This allows us to look at them as individuals who hide inner despair under the mask of unconscious defenses, most often in the form of sexualizing even formal relationships.
Keywords: histrionic personality disorder, sacrum, Queen Jezebel, countertranference, massive repression

Introduction

In the Old Testament Jezebel is described as a princess from Sidon worshipping the gods of weather and fertility, Baal and Ashera, who married Ahab, the King of Israel. She enticed Ahab to adopt her religion, as well as to force his subjects to follow suit. Jezebel had the prophets of God violently purged and brought the prophets of Baal in their place. The only one to survive was Elijah, who later defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. The enraged Jezebel wanted to kill Elijah, and so the prophet had to go into hiding. Jezebel persuaded Ahab to murder Naboth in order to possess hive vineyard. Elijah predicted her violent death, and indeed she was defenestrated upon Jehu's orders (New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition). In the New Testament, Queen Jezebel appears as a pseudoprophetess enticing Christians to turn against God and commit spiritual immorality as well as eat food sacrificed to idols (Revelation, 2, 20-23). The name Jezebel has become synonymous with licentiousness, while she herself is considered an archetype of femme fatale. Jezebel remains a moral and political prototype of a wicked, seductive, and greedy woman engaging in machinations behind the back of a man in power. The Epistle to the Ephesians contains the following words of Jesus "These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit [spiritual] fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

1 Article in polish language: Czy królowa Jezebel była inteligentna? Wgląd u osób z histrionicznym zaburzeniem osobowości, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Starz.pdf

Jezebel's personality brings to mind two nosological entities: narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) and histrionic personality disorder (HPD), although one should also keep in mind that her activity was predominantly associated with religious cult and sites devoted to it. Although undoubtedly one can discern clear narcissistic traits, especially in her amoral drive for power and lack of empathy, in this text I would like to focus on HPD, because using seduction to attain one's goals is one of the major traits of the abovementioned disorder. While in the old Testament this mode of Jezebel's action is not explicitly mentioned, it is described in the cited fragment of the Book of Revelation.

At the beginning of this text, it seems necessary to provide the diagnostic criteria of HPD. According to the ICD-11 classification (code F60.4)[2], for the clinician to diagnose this disorder, the patient must present with at least four of the following traits or behaviors: – self-dramatization, theatricality, exaggerated expression of emotions; – suggestibility and being easily influenced by surrounding persons and/or circumstances; – shallow and labile affectivity; – continuous seeking of exciting experiences and activities, during which the individual is at the center of attention; – inappropriate seductive behavior; – excessive focus on physical attractiveness. In turn, according to DSM-5 (code 301.50) (2013) HPD is characterized by deep-seated, exaggerated emotionality or attraction-seeking, usually beginning in early adulthood. For a diagnosis, at least five of the following criteria must be met: the individual – is uncomfortable in situations in which he or she is not the center of attention; – his or her interaction with others is often characterized by inappropriate sexually seductive or provocative behavior; – displays rapidly shifting and shallow expression of emotions; – consistently uses physical appearance to draw attention to self; – has a style of speech that is excessively impressionistic and lacking in detail; – shows self-dramatization, theatricality, and exaggerated expression of emotion – is suggestible (i.e., easily influenced by others or circumstances); and – considers relationships to be more intimate than they actually are. As can be seen, both diagnostic systems define HPD in very similar terms, but DSM-5 (2013) provides two additional criteria as compared to ICD-10[3], namely a style of speech that is excessively impressionistic and lacking in detail and considering relationships to be more intimate than they actually are. In turn the psychoanalytical researcher Mentzos (2009) lists seven characteristics of individuals with HPD: – theatrical behavior with a tendency for self-dramatization and pretentiousness, unnaturalness and exaggeration, seeking attention, sympathy and admiration, – emotional lability characterized by outbursts of laughter or crying disproportionate to the stimulus, as well as the high volatility of shallow affect, whimsicality, – the need to enter into dependent relationships with others in an infantile way without, however, giving up one's own activity and initiative (in contrast to dependent personality); – overreactiveness, or excessive readiness for exaggerated reactions to external changes; – egocentrism, or a tendency to prioritize one's own needs including the unmet need of "being loved and appreciated"; – seductive behavior manifesting itself in the sexualization of all activities, emphasizing the motif of erotic love, experiences in this area, and orgasm, exclusively for the purpose of being liked and admired by others; and – suggestiveness, or strong susceptibility to the influence of others and one's own. In the guidelines formulated by the AWMF (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Wissenschaftlichen Medizinischen Fachgesellschaften – an umbrella organization for medical associations) (de Folch, 1984), histrionic patients are described as hyperexpressive, theatrical, and often self-dramatic in their behavior and emotionality. Motivated by a strong need for attention, acceptance, and adoration, histrionic individuals often function within an imaginary world. They are extrovert, charming, and attractive, and sometimes very successful; they pursue popularity and are admired. However, up close their charm seems to pale. People with HPD often behave unnaturally and sometimes come across as vague or empty. Their low tolerance to stress and frustration

2 https://icd.who.int/en
3 Ibidem.

lead to a propensity to get distracted and a lack of reflection, as well as a clear tendency for quick changes and sensation- and challenge-seeking. This impressionistic cognitive style is characterized by vagueness and ambiguity. They often find it difficult to engage in abstract thinking, logical cognitive processes, and planned problem solving. Such individuals find a lack of attention from others unbearable. The problem is that the initially captivated audience soon gets irritated and turns away, while the vicious circle repeats itself and continues until the emergence of mental symptoms necessitating treatment (Sulz, 2010).

1. Histrionic individuals in places of religious worship

These days one can find a clear similarity between Jezebel's actions and the behavior of some women in religious communities that would be astonishing for the average person. Analysis of this worrying phenomenon is important in that while there is a rather widespread awareness of narcissism, few people have heard of HPD, and certainly do not anticipate meeting histrionic individuals in places of religious worship. The subject matter of Jezebel has been recently brought up at several conferences of Catholic and Protestant ministers in relation to women that join communities "out of nowhere," quickly wreaking destruction and depriving the religious leaders of strength and charisma, occasionally causing illness in them (probably of decisively psychosomatic nature). It should be emphasized that while narcissistic disorders are much more democratic in terms of sex distribution, and are slightly more widespread among men, HPD affects mostly women (but not exclusively).

As already mentioned, the main medium by which histrionic women reach their goals (even though they may not realize their own motivations, as later explained), are eroticization and sexualization. Obviously, one of the traits of narcissistic individuals is their propensity for seductiveness. Millon and Davis (2005), who examined the seductive subtype of narcissistic personality noted that it has a strong histrionic component. Members of Internet discussion clubs devoted to this disorder who have experience of relationships with HPD individuals report that their partners engage in numerous sexual affairs, which are very hurtful for them. At the same time, histrionic individuals tend to diminish the significance of those affairs, as if they did not matter in the context of their current relationships. It appears that the relationships of individuals with HPD are short-lived due to their manipulativeness, propensity for lying, shallowness, and emotional theatricality.

One should now address the question of how such people function in a community that is highly spiritual, exalted, and venerates that which is sacred? When a thoughtful person who is sensitive to non-verbal cues meets an individual with HPD, then even in a purely formal setting one can experience shock, disbelief, embarrassment, awareness of the inadequacy of behavior with respect to the environment, disgust with the overtly conspicuous form of seduction, and even perversion,[4] as well as anxiety and anger. An individual knowing a woman with HPD stated that while contacting that person he sensed a kind of "void." Most of the aforementioned feelings can be deemed countertransference in nature. Obviously, it cannot be said that "guilt" lies only on the part of the histrionic individual, as Gabbard and Wilkinson (2011) are right in claiming that countertransference stems from both the projected aspects of the patient and the inner conflicts of the therapist (the word "therapist" may be here substituted with the name of any person interacting with HPD individuals, as countertransference, as well as transference, occur in all our relations to a smaller or greater degree), creating a specific interaction pattern

4 According to Steiner (2017), although the term "perversion" is usually associated with sexual excitement, it is increasingly thought to have a broader meaning, especially in psychoanalysis. Most old dictionary definitions of the words "perverse" and "perversion" stress the concept of "turning away from the truth." The definition of the verb "to pervert" (distort, misrepresent, subvert, corrupt) contains the idea of demoralizing or leading one astray in judgment or action. Interestingly, older editions of English dictionaries did not include the idea of perversion as a deviant sexual act or make only a passing reference to it. It seems striking that in our contemporary understanding of perversion we are increasingly inclined to use its dictionary definitions and consider sexual perversion as a particular case of a more general perverse attitude towards what is right and true.

within the therapeutic process. Bollas (1987, p. 202) notes that "in order to find the patient we must look for him within ourselves. This process inevitably points to the fact that there are two 'patients' within the session." Assuming that countertransference is a product of both the therapist's and patient's mental activity, their relative contributions differ depending on the psychopathology, being greater on the part of the individual with more serious disturbances (cf. Curyło).[5] As Gabbard and Wilkinson (2011) aptly put it, "we all have sadists and murderers lurking in our depths as well as saints and heroes. Considerable insight is gained in conceptualizing the psychotherapeutic process as involving 'two patients,' rather than one, by understanding that the most bizarre aspect of the patient has some parallel counterpart in ourselves (Searles 1986)." Thus, interactions with an individual exhibiting HPD (just as any other mental problem) may be a litmus test of our own mental health, triggering our previously repressed dark aspects. However, it is our knowledge and awareness of our own thoughts and emotions that are the precondition for realizing this fact as well as for gaining some benefit from experiencing such a difficult relationship.

It should be noted that, wherever they might be, histrionic women do not tolerate other women who could threaten their status as the center of attention. Moreover, motivated by jealousy, in their rivalry they draw other women into their game. The countertransference reactions of the latter may mirror (probably to a lesser degree than in the case of the histrionic individual) the sexualizing and seductive behavior of women with HPD (perhaps this should be treated as countertransference-related seduction). Within such a "hot cauldron" of rivalry and countertransference reactions, the sacred inevitably becomes overshadowed. This may be a very difficult experience for a person with a sensitive conscience, as the place of religious worship turns very secular and barren, and the exalted atmosphere appears to pale. Even if some spirituality persists, the behavior of a histrionic individual makes the place of worship saturated with a certain inadequacy, or even grotesqueness, as it is the human being and her appearance and erotic aspect that take center stage, which is paradoxical, or indeed absurd in this particular instance. For instance, histrionic females may exhibit grotesque religious self-representation: on the one hand they may dress in a very seductive manner to casually reveal their charms while taking Holy Communion genuflected, while on the other hand, if it is not well received by the religious community (which is usually the case), they may, metaphorically speaking, switch to "sackcloth." They may then kneel most of the time during religious rites or fervently pray the rosary making sure that no-one fails to notice how piously their fingers move on the beads. Creating this repentant image may actually make them more attractive to the devout, or perhaps austere religious leader. Obviously, such individuals repress the fact that in doing so they commit an amoral, or indeed perverse, manipulation.[6]

When a man enters into a relationship with such a woman (which is discouraged by both Catholic and Protestant clergymen), it conforms to the dynamic of relationships with histrionic women in general. According to the former partners of such women, a short "honeymoon" period is followed by a "nightmare": harassing phones, text messages, e-mails, and visits; increasingly inappropriate behaviors towards the partner in the presence of other people, visits with family members and parents, as well as, regrettably, false accusations of sexual harassment, as reported by some psychotherapists and lawyers.[7] It should be noted that one of the main diagnostic criteria of HPD,

5 https://skraweknieba.com.pl/materialy-szkoleniowe/adam-curylo-przeciwprzeniesienie

6 In such a community, we may also have to do with a group of women who use their religious fervor to mask intersexual rivalry with other women for power (sic!) in the Church. This phenomenon is hard to notice at first glance, but it comes to the fore when the community is joined by a woman who could threaten a histrionic "leader" through her appearance or other socially attractive traits. The methods of devaluation of such a person, though disguised as "religious," are characterized by intense intersexual rivalry often fueled by sexual instincts suppressed by compulsive religious practices. Obviously, such persons are a decisive minority, but nevertheless they do appear and often gain control over the entire religious group, despite suffering from a serious personality disorder.

7 It should be noted that O'Donohue and Bowers (2006), who studied a variety of factors leading to false allegations of sexual harassment, listed HPD as the second most popular one, right after borderline personality disorder.

which may underlie the aforementioned accusations of men is the tendency to consider relationships to be more intimate than they actually are, which essentially boils down to distorted mentalization (Allen, Fonagy, Bateman, 2014; Marszał, 2015) in the area of relationships. Histrionic women take very seriously the words of potential partners, not to mention any sexual intimacy. It seems that in terms of mentalization, this points to mental equivalency whereby mental states merge with external reality and whatever the individual feels, thinks, or imagines appears frighteningly true. Finally, when the partner fails to meet the essentially unrealistic expectations (often he is unable to do so), the histrionic woman enters into another relationship, while in processing her grief after the loss of the previous relationship she may use the mechanism of projection, telling herself and others how much she was hurt by her former partner (even if this mostly happened in her imagination). It seems that the tendency to engage in short-lived romantic relationships in histrionic individuals is even higher than in narcissistic ones, as in the latter case relationships last quite long despite being mostly founded on manipulation (a cycle of love-bombing, criticism, and rejection).

2. Insight in individuals with histrionic personality disorder

It should be stressed that the main defense mechanism used by histrionic individuals is massive repression enabled by the splitting of consciousness (Freud's term used in reference to such individuals). Thus, histrionics are not conscious of their own behavior, of dressing inappropriately, or of crossing the fine line of good taste. This does not mean that a woman must never dress boldly, even in places of religious worship, except in mentally closed communities, which are rare. Even in such places there is some naturalness and spontaneity, as can be seen, e.g., in tourists visiting historic churches. The problem is that individuals with HPD send explicit sexual signals. Millon and Davis (2005) depart for a while from their scientific discourse to observe that histrionic women cannot be bothered to think about the feelings of men attending such places mainly for religious reasons. And why is that so? The authors explain that while the ability to empathize with other people requires reflection, histrionics filter out what is logical and reasonable and accept only what is tinged with emotion. In their analysis of individuals with HPD, Millon et al. (2004) observe that the histrionic cognitive filter provides protection from "anything too precise, factual, concrete, abstract, reasoned, logical, systematic, philosophical, or existential. The factual or concrete is too boring. The abstract or reasoned is too tedious. The philosophical is too long and tiresome. The existential is too deep and too threatening" (p. 315). After Shapiro (1965), Lewis and Mastico (2017) note that individuals with HPD notoriously exhibit impairment of certain cognitive abilities; they often make their decisions based on hunches or impressions without fully considering the available options or consequences of their actions. According to Millon and Davis (2005) "by refusing to reflect on their own goals, attitudes, and identity, histrionics free themselves from worry and are thereby excused from the existential albatross the rest of us bear. Histrionics repress the emptiness of the marketed self, the conflicts their sexualized relationships create in others, and even their own unfulfilled desires."

In the beginning, one should note that according to Reich (1933, after: Millon, Davis, 2005) histrionics use seduction as a way of defending themselves against the fear or threat of male aggression. According to Reich, histrionic women (as already mentioned most individuals with HPD are female, although males are increasingly often diagnosed with this disorder), anxious about possible violence, address another drive in the potential aggressor, attempting to arouse sexual attraction in place of hostility. This to some extent explains a curious paradox in their behavior: while they demonstrate enormous sexual potential, they harbor intensive fear and disgust towards actual sexual acts. Despite their outward erotic signaling, such individuals have deficits in the area of sexuality: paradoxically, they are closer to asexuality rather than to the kind of sexuality that would be open to the partner and rich in feelings and imagination. In reality, the histrionic individual is in shock when

someone responds to their sexual signals. It may be noted that their self-image of sweet innocence does not allow them to realize how instrumentally they treat their own body. It is a good example of massive repression. Sometimes this may become even more extreme: a histrionic woman meeting with a positive response from a man may reverse the situation, projecting excessive interest in sex onto those who accuse her of it, thus diverting attention from herself. Such individuals may claim with "righteous indignation" (Millon, Davis, 2005) that they are extremely hurt by the allegation, leaving the unfortunate suitors furious, astonished or completely confused (Millon, Davis, 2005). This amounts to the devaluation of men. According to Rev. Piotr Glas, histrionic women ("acting in the spirit of Jezebel") want to turn men into "eunuchs" – this term well reflects the intention that is hidden very deeply in the unconsciousness of such women.

3. The underlying causes of histrionic personality disorder

Psychoanalysts link the development of histrionic personality with inadequate, cold, and insensitive maternal care. As noted by Millon and Davis (2005), "Feeling afraid, isolated, unsafe, or unappreciated, the little girl must seek some source of nurturance beyond the primary caretaker [mother]. Eventually, she turns strongly to her father while devaluing her mother, thereby refusing a normal female identification. Males are strong and exciting, and females, including herself, come to be seen as weak and wanting. The part of her personality that might have developed a genuinely full and female selfhood given an adequate female role model is thus left to atrophy (McWilliams, 1994). Without any realistic anchor, it becomes caricatured into a loose set of behaviors that conform to social stereotypes about what elicits male desire (Blacker & Tubin, 1991). At the same time that the little girl is turning to her father, she finds attention-getting efforts to win his approval are made more effective by nuances of seduction.[8] Awareness of this attraction is mutually threatening to both father and daughter and must be forcefully repressed, though comments may be made on the little girl's beauty, cuteness, sweetness, or innocence (McWilliams, 1994). As a result, a pattern of repressed sexual desire and sexual manipulation takes form and continues throughout life. Naturally, this also leads to conflicts between mother and daughter, whereby the mother is devalued. In effect, the future histrionic or hysteric, now 'Daddy's cute little girl,' learns to throw herself at male figures with the false maturity of hypersexualization, but at the same time develops a shallow or superficial sense of self that betrays her lack of an adequate female role model" (Millon, Davis, 2005). Although in light of the above argument histrionic individuals may be perceived as innocent "perpetual girls," being victims of a difficult childhood, this is not the whole truth. Their behavior may in fact lead to the destruction of men's lives: while not aiming at a genuine sexual relationship they may end up "catching" a man who consents and drawing completely non-sexual benefits from the situation, involving allegations of unfairness, abuse, harassment, etc. It should be noted here that having experienced fewer prohibitions set by parental figures, histrionic individuals became "frozen" in their development, which impaired the formation of their superego; consequently, they may unscrupulously renege on their commitments or manipulate people in their environment (Millon, Davis, 2005). One should remember that in fact the histrionic individuals' awareness of the harm they do to others and of the amorality of their attitudes is very limited.

Conclusions

To sum up, the question is how best to react to the presence of histrionic women in places of religious worship. First of all, it should be remembered that they are not aware of their actions, even if ruth-

8 Perhaps one should use the term "erotic transference," which is "experienced as ego-dystonic and perhaps shameful desire for the therapist, the gratification of which is viewed as unrealistic" (obviously in the case of histrionic females what is indicated here is the transference initially addressed towards one's father to another man) (Gabbard and Wilkinson, 2011, p. 97).

less. Theatrical behavior and the sexualization of relationships are in fact symptoms of underlying desperation (Benjamin, 1996, after: Millon, Davis, 2005). Self-dramatization, which is prevalent among histrionics, fulfills the role of an unconscious defense against deeply rooted anxiety and conflict (Lewis, Mastico, 2017). By dissociating their true self from theatrical flair and self-confidence, which they show off to the world, the individual with HPD prevents the deeper processing of painful experiences. As a result, the existence of an integrated self is suspended until the "storm" calms down to ward off suffering, desperation or anxiety. According to Bollas (1999), in the case of histrionic individuals, the necessary preconditions for therapy are finding their authentic self separated from the drama, building sexual awareness through analysis of their defensive mechanisms, and setting boundaries if necessary. Unfortunately, individuals with HPD rarely seek psychotherapeutic help, and so we need to learn to look at them with compassion, or, to put it in religious terms, with neighborly love. At the same time, one needs to be watchful to make sure that they do not harm themselves, and especially those around them, with their exaggerated and inadequate reactions.

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Long COVID and autism spectrum disorders – a narrative review[1]

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Anna Zalewska[a]

[a] *Anna Zalewska, Phd, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7021-2592, Department of Health Sciences, University of Lomza*

Abstract: *Introduction:* COVID-19 disease may have long-term consequences, called long COVID. They concern symptoms (most often neurological and neuropsychiatric) lasting ≥12 weeks without another diagnosis and a predictable time of resolution. They become a diagnostic and therapeutic problem in patients with previously observed behavioral disorders, e.g. in people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Most published studies on long COVID mainly focus on adults, and there is limited information on the pediatric population. There is also not much information in the available literature about long COVID in people with autism spectrum disorders. The main aim of this narrative review is to present the problem of long COVID in people with autism spectrum disorders. *Method:* Based on a review of the current literature based on the EBM (Evidence-Based Medicine) paradigm, the problem of long COVID in autism spectrum disorders is presented. During data collection, the PubMed search engine, which supports the MEDLINE database, and the Google Scholar search engine were used. The criteria used to search for articles are works published since 2022, available in Polish or English. *Results:* The pandemic has deepened behavioral disorders related to the autism spectrum disorders. The occurrence of COVID-19 and subsequent symptoms associated with long COVID was and is more common in people with ASD. *Conclusions:* COVID-19 has a significant impact on neuropsychiatric symptoms in people with autism spectrum disorders. Difficulties have been observed in the treatment of long COVID in patients with ASD. There is a need to increase the awareness of parents, health care workers, and scientists about the effects of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the population of people with autism spectrum disorders. This is necessary to understand the consequences of the disease, speed up diagnosis and provide appropriate specialist help.
Keywords: ASD, autism, long COVID, post COVID

1. Introduction

The pandemic announced in 2019 caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus causing the coronavirus disease COVID-19 has led to global crises in health and social support for entire populations. It particularly affected the elderly, the poor and people with disabilities, including: autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (Karpur et al., 2022). As it turned out, focusing mainly on the acute phase of the disease is not enough. Many people, after a few months, still experience or have experienced negative symptoms of SARS-CoV-2 infection, which required additional medical intervention and further observation (Lopez-Leon et al., 2022).

COVID-19 disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus may have long-term consequences, currently referred to as long COVID. They concern symptoms (most often neurological and neuropsychiatric) lasting ≥12 weeks without another diagnosis and with a predictable time of resolution (Jyonouchi et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2022). They become a serious diagnostic and therapeutic problem in patients in whom behavioral disorders have been previously observed, e.g. in people with autism spectrum disorders (Jyonouchi et al., 2022).

Long COVID affects children and adults. However, its frequency in children is not fully known (Ludvigsson, 2021; Zimmermann et al., 2021). The most

1 Article in polish language: Long COVID i zaburzenia ze spektrum autyzmu – przegląd narracyjny, https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023_4Zale.pdf

frequently reported symptom is cognitive dysfunction (including disturbances in concentration, attention and memory, as well as the speed of information processing, which may be accompanied by anxiety, fatigue and sleep disorders), referred to as „brain fog" and affecting one in 4-5 patients after COVID-19 (Ceban et al., 2022).

Autism spectrum disorder is a complex developmental disorder characterized by impaired social communication and repetitive/restrictive behavior patterns (Rosen et al., 2021). When a child with intellectual disability or other previously diagnosed neuropsychiatric disorders develops brain dysfunction caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, distinguishing the symptoms of long COVID becomes a huge diagnostic challenge. It turns out that it is possible to reject neurological and neuropsychiatric symptoms associated with long COVID and treat them, for example, as typical behaviors related to ASD (Jyonouchi et al., 2022).

Most published studies on long COVID mainly focus on adults, and there is limited information on the pediatric population (Lopez-Leon et al., 2022). There is also not much information in the available literature about long COVID in people with autism spectrum disorders.

The main aim of this narrative review is to present the problem of long COVID in people with autism spectrum disorders.

2. Method

Based on a review of the current literature based on the EBM (Evidence-Based Medicine) paradigm, the problem of the so-called long COVID in autism spectrum disorders. During data collection, the PubMed search engine, which supports the MEDLINE database, and the Google Scholar search engine were used. All articles included in the review were archived in electronic form–in the form of PDF files. The criteria used to search for articles are works published from 2021, available in Polish or English. The following keywords were used: long COVID, post COVID, ASD, autism.

3. Results

3.1. COVID-19 and the autism spectrum disorders

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in aggravation of behavioral disorders related to the autism spectrum disorders, reduced sleep quality and increased sensitivity to stimuli (Mutluer et al., 2020). Parents and guardians of people with ASD reported new problems in managing free time and organizing activities during the pandemic (Colizzi et al., 2020). However, people on the spectrum had problems with understanding the need to maintain social distance and the obligation to use personal protective equipment in every situation (Karpur et al., 2022).

Statistical data on clinical experiences (e.g., incidence of COVID-19) and hospitalizations of people with autism spectrum disorders during the pandemic are insufficient (Karpur et al., 2022). The occurrence of COVID-19 and subsequent symptoms associated with long COVID was and is more common in people with ASD. The risk of hospitalization in people with ASD during the pandemic was nine times higher due to SARS-CoV-2 virus infection, and the risk of longer hospitalization was almost six times higher (Karpur et al., 2022). This is related to the increased concentration of pro-inflammatory cytokines occurring in chronic conditions, which are a risk factor for COVID-19 (Jyonouchi et al., 2019). The overlap of neuroinflammatory pathophysiology in ASD and COVID-19 has exacerbated challenging behaviors and mental health issues (Lima et al., 2020), as well as long COVID symptoms. Typical features of SARS-CoV-2 infection were observed in people with ASD (fever, cough, sore throat, musculoskeletal pain, headaches, fatigue, smell and taste disorders, shortness of breath), but there were also specific symptoms that made diagnosis difficult. and treatment (Nollace et al., 2020).

Increased stress levels both before, during and after the pandemic are observed not only in children with ASD, but also in their families. Among the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is a negative impact on the behavior of people with autism spectrum disorders, which is found to be related to the level of anxiety in their mothers (Aslan et al., 2023).

Symptoms coinciding with features of post-traumatic stress disorder have been observed in patients with autism spectrum disorders in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, which confirms the thesis that the pandemic was a traumatic event for many people with ASD and others (Mutluer et al., 2020). Such disturbing behaviors include: behavioral difficulties, intense stereotypes, difficulty concentrating, psychomotor hyperactivity, deepening social communication disorders, and sleep disorders (Peterson et al., 2019). Long-term symptoms may also develop as a result of deterioration in adaptive functioning, usually in the social sphere (observed 6 months to 1 year after the traumatic event) (Valenti et al., 2012).

3.2. Long COVID and the autism spectrum disorders

Two long-term consequences of COVID-19 disease are most often observed in children: multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) and long COVID. Both can develop even in asymptomatic patients (Kundu et al., 2022). MIS-C is a condition in which various parts of the body become inflamed (it occurs in less than 0.01% of infected children and requires intensive care in 68% of cases) (Helms et al., 2020).

Symptoms of long COVID may include, for example, cough, shortness of breath, headache, and musculoskeletal pain (Aiyegbusi et al., 2021). Neuropsychiatric symptoms of long COVID most often manifest themselves as cognitive impairment (loss of concentration or memory problems), headache, sleep disorders, symptoms of peripheral neuropathy (tingling and numbness), dizziness, anosmia, symptoms of depression, anxiety and fatigue. Patients with long COVID report a decreased quality of life with difficulties in everyday functioning (Roesch Ely et al., 2022). The term „brain fog" is a collective term for symptoms reported by some patients who have recovered from COVID-19 and observed temporary or permanent cognitive impairment. These symptoms concern patients infected with SARS-CoV-2, who also developed a mild form of the disease. „Brain fog" includes deficits in: attention, executive functioning, language, information processing speed and memory. „Brain fog" caused by SARS-CoV-2 (and not e.g. ASD) is often difficult to diagnose because longitudinal neurocognitive data regarding individual are usually not available (Venkataramani, Winkler, 2022).

The burden of the disease develops more often in women, smokers, and in patients with comorbidities. People with ASD, compared to neurotypical people, usually have greater needs related to medical care, which are related to the co-occurrence of other diseases, e.g. of the nervous or digestive system, and mental disorders (Karpur et al., 2018; Shea et al., 2018). The symptoms characteristic of long COVID are similar to those of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), which is caused by infectious diseases (Astin et al., 2023).

A large percentage of people with autism meet the diagnostic criteria for CFS, as well as other disorders characterized by central sensitization (CS). In the CS theory, the nervous system responds with an enhanced response to certain stimuli (e.g., an enhanced response to nociceptive stimuli may lead to hyperalgesia). An enhanced internal response to external stimuli is often observed in people with autism spectrum disorders (Grant et al., 2022). Diseases characterized by CS, such as CFS, are more frequently observed in people with ASD (Ablin et al., 2016).

Conclusions

The pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus was a difficult period for most people with ASD, who showed increased emotional and behavioral problems that persisted after the pandemic ended. Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that COVID-19 has a significant impact on neuropsychiatric symptoms in people with autism spectrum disorders. Difficulties in the treatment of long COVID in patients with ASD have been observed. There is a need to increase the awareness of parents, health care workers, and scientists about the effects of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the population of people with autism spectrum disorders. This is necessary to understand the consequences of the disease, speed up diagnosis and provide appropriate specialist help.

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