

Iwona Niewiadomska  
Weronika Augustynowicz

# Inclusion

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– psychosocial aspects

psychoprevention  
STUDIES





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Weronika Augustynowicz**

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**- psychosocial aspects**

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## CHAPTER I

# The inclusion of the disabled from the vantage point of Christian social ethics

*Markus Vogt*

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### ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the term inclusion, and strives to portray it from various ethical vantage points. Firstly, it focuses on inclusion and its ethical implications: society as interaction between inclusion and exclusion; the acceptance of being different as a moral principle; inclusion as a counterpoint to societal dimension of disability. Secondly, it scrutinizes human rights as the basis for inclusion: inclusion as a criterion for testing the universality of human rights; assisted autonomy; a respect for different forms of variety, as well as the risks of putting it in jeopardy. Thirdly, it tests various interpretations of inclusion from the anthropological and social justice perspective: the potentials of inclusion inscribed in the Christian image of human being; people with disabilities as particular concern in the classic theories of justice; attempts to synthesize anthropological aspects of inclusion with those articulated in the social justice discourse.

**Keywords:** inclusion, integration, human rights, anthropology, justice, pluralism, ethics

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## Towards a definition of inclusion and its ethical implications

### Society as interaction between inclusion and exclusion

The term “inclusion” derives from the Latin verb *includere* (to contain, to close, to lock up, to surround). As a term it is ethically neutral: whether an inclusion is desirable or not depends on the value of a given group or the circumstances something is being assigned to. So, as a rule, normally nobody wants to be imprisoned whereas in most cases people want to belong to the community of citizens in the land they inhabit.

Inclusion is primarily a multi-theoretical term: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz describes inclusion as a relation of being contained *Enthaltensein (in esse)* (Menne, 1976, p. 383f). One category of elements is included in another, when all of its elements are included in the other one. It can be understood either spatially (extensional inclusion) or with reference to particular qualities (intentional inclusion) – as Aristotle explains in the context of his analysis of logic. The larger the extent of an inclusion, the lower the number or range of the qualities determinable by content, which can be testified as being common in the respective quantity. According to this linguistic analytical logic, there is a reverse proportional relation between extent and content: a term which includes everything neither differentiates nor defines anything and therefore is empty in terms of content. Applied to the logic of order formation this means: structures and orders are always selective, i.e. they include particular elements in a given category of elements and thereby exclude others.

In the theory of systems inclusion has been established as the principal category by Talcott Parsons. Sociologically, it implies the inclusion of the previously excluded actors in the subsystems. It is the opposite of exclusion. Following this, Niklas Luhmann interprets inclusion as participation in the achievements of particular functional systems. However, this only becomes possible by an exclusion from other functional systems (Luhmann, 1995, pp. 237–241; Farzin, 2006). According to that, a complete inclusion into “the society” and all of its partial systems is not possible – society would always be a dynamic and multidimensional interaction constituted of various inclusions and exclusions. Against this background it becomes clear that inclusion as an ethical ideal only makes sense in reference to overcoming particular exclusions. Therefore an entirely inclusive society is hard to imagine.

In reaction to the observation of social, economic and political tendencies to exclusion various scientists have developed normative concepts of social inclusion, which differ considerably from the ways the term was used for by Parsons and Luhmann. From the normative vantage point, inclusion implies societal participation, and is used as an opposition to exclusion. The exclusion from participation and affiliation is regarded as a cause of social inequality and social need, as well as the aftermath thereof. Therefore, inclusion is perceived as a claim and central goal of solidarity (Kronauer, 2010, pp. 24–30; Stichweh, 2005). Pierre Bourdieu’s social theory receives its ethical conciseness by combining empirical analyses and social inequality with a theory of justice, which in this way leads to concrete demands for overcoming inequality and exclusion.

## **Acceptance of otherness as a moral principle**

In the ethical debate, the term inclusion has partially superseded the term integration. Integration (from the Latin *integrare*: to heal, to live intact, to restore, to complete) derives from an existing society, which an individual or group has to be incorporated into. Compared to that, inclusion required for social conditions, which cause exclusion to be overcome in advance, and so aimed at direct affiliation (Kronauer, 2010, p. 5f). Thus, inclusion and integration are two concepts that clearly differ from one other in their ethical content, even though they are being used interchangeably in the common language.

In contemporary sociopolitical debates, inclusion refers to involving people with disabilities, whereas integration strives to reach out to strangers or to those on the peripheries of social life. The preliminary ethical decision of using different concepts and objectives by



dealing on the one hand with the phenomenon of disability and on the other hand with people who are considered strangers is not indispensable. One could also think of including strangers and integrating people with disabilities. Due to its multi-theoretical origin the term “inclusion” appears to be a compound of static elements, whereas “integration” is defined as a developing process of systemic wholeness, which corresponds to a dynamic process (see for instance Herbert Spencer, who, as one of the first, attributed the primary importance to the term in his “organic” evolutionary social philosophy, Vogt, 1997, pp. 143–191). Thus, instead of being perceived as alternatives mutually excluding each other, these two terms should be considered complementary. Nonetheless, along with the focus being shifted from integration towards inclusion, there are also vital ethical learning processes and differentiations to be highlighted.

The supporters of inclusion consider heterogeneity as a “normal” condition. They consciously and programmatically dispense the principle of homogeneity. Homogeneity would be a fiction since every human being is unique and it is this uniqueness one’s particular dignity, identity and purpose in life comes from. Therefore, inclusion cannot be reduced to integration in a sense that separated persons were reunited later. Such a concept of inclusion is pluralistic and eschews exclusion from the very beginning, which would endanger the element of humanity in society. Inclusion does not adapt people to existing systems and standardized catalogues of achievement, but strengthens them in their capacities to love, to work and to live as autonomous and authentic beings. Inclusion is an attitude that emerges from the actions of incorporation and from creating a sense of community (Herz, 2013). The claim associated with it goes back to the very roots of our visions of the human being. Thus, inclusion is often perceived as an existential basic need, and accordingly, is understood as a claim and human right (Flieger & Schönwiese, 2011; Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2011; Beilefeld, pp. 65–68). Some far-reaching conclusions can be derived from the aforementioned; for instance, the measures that make inclusion possible, such as handicapped-accessible public facilities, shall be independent from financial restrictions.

### **Inclusion as a counterpoint to the social dimension of disability**

People are considered “disabled” if they have considerable and relatively lasting impairments in their physical, mental and/or spiritual functions (Speck, 1995, p. 619; Biewer, 2010). In this context, the English distinction between *impairment* (damage, physical or psychological deviation from the norm), *disability* (functional impairment) and *handicap* (disadvantages of a person afflicted with impairment) can be helpful. This differentiation helps to distinguish the functional, physical and the spiritual dimensions of disability from its social dimension. The socio-ethical debate on the difference, and also the complementary character of the two aforementioned dimensions, can be understood by means of analogy, namely, the feminist debate on *sex* and *gender* (particularly with regard to the awareness for physical differences not to be rashly combined with evaluations and role patterns, the learning experience of the debates on feminism can be of considerable help for the discourse on disability, Bendl, Hanappi-Egger & Hofmann, 2004). As a rule, different aspects superimpose one another. In so far as the impairment is perceived and considered as a deviation from what is socially expected from the ability to communicate and act, these expectations are not entirely, but still to some degree, a phenomenon of social assignment.

In the social meaning disabilities result from functional disturbances and arise through the process of interaction, in which the individual perceives his or her self as having certain physical-functional impairments under the applicable norms. “What in the complex sense is meant as a disability, arises from interaction between the impaired person and their environment” (Speck, 1995, p. 621). For the well-being of a disabled person, the experience of functional impairment often proves to be secondary in nature – the primary factors are humanitarian commitment, recognition and acceptance as well as those concerning exclusion from social participation and social relations.

“Only the reduction in these subjective needs, caused by rejection, disregard and exclusion from social relations, constitutes the entire extent of one’s impairment in the context of common life. For the disabled person the most critical problem is not his or her physical impairment to function, but the reduction in the social contacts triggered by it, discrimination, and one’s identity that are being put into question” (Speck, 1995, p. 622).

Inclusion aims at preventing exclusion and stigmatization by the qualifying system of “disability”, which always goes along with a certain vision of social and medical norms (Kronauer, 2002; Dorrance & Dannebeck, 2013).

Inclusion does not refer only to the way one deals with the “disabled”, but also to the existential aspects of response produced by a lack of experience, which are important for every human being. For every human being has to cope with inadequacies and specific limits of their competencies that change in the course of their biography. The decisive factor for the achievement of individual satisfaction and a stable identity is not the level of capacities and limits, but rather a constructive and honest approach to the experience of one’s own deficiencies, and the deficiencies of other people, too. That kind of approach depends essentially on one’s awareness of being treated as a respected part of a community. As it has been noted, particularly by resilience research (Endreß & Maurer, 2015), those who feel recognized on their own terms and accepted as human beings can also cope with massive constraints. The appreciative approach to people with disabilities shows whether or whether not the respect of human dignity is unconditional and altruistic. In this case, the Christian image of mankind presents perhaps the most important religious and cultural principle. Without it “modern faith in human dignity” (Große, 2014; Küppers, 2013) is hardly understandable.

## **Principles of inclusion from the perspective of human rights**

### **Inclusion as a test of the universality of human rights**

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) there is no reference to the difficult situation of people with disabilities. Attempts to make up for this were belated, when the United Nations at its 2006 Annual General Meeting adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In 2009, Germany committed itself to submit an action plan to implement the Convention in the areas of education, work, health, mobility and communication, as well as the right for personal protection, the right for freedom and the right for self-determination (Baum, 2013, pp. 1–21; Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2011).

In the CRPD, inclusion is not conceived as a special right for a specific group, but as a necessary expression of the universality of human rights. This is only manifested when the various living conditions of people are comprehensively considered (Bielefeldt, 2011, p. 65f). The CRPD continues to develop a full spectrum of human rights with regard to the living conditions of people with disabilities. It is about “nothing less than the core of human rights universalism, which can never be understood as simply being given, but is to be articulated ever anew in response to publicly articulated experiences of injustice” (Bielefeldt, 2011, p. 67). Inclusion is a program term for the universality of human rights, that encompasses all social groups and life conditions. This form of intentional universality is equally significant, as its spatial and intercultural extension (on the distinction between intentional and extensional universality, Menne, 1976 and Farzin, 2006).

### **Assisted autonomy**

Inclusion is based on the notion of human dignity. However, human dignity is not only an axiom that bears the idea of human rights, but it is also a tangible claim, in terms of a “sense of dignity” (Bielefeldt 2011, p. 69). Exactly this step from the abstract proclamation of human dignity towards a reflection on the conditions of its possible experience is the decisive innovation in the Pastoral Constitution of the Catholic Church, *Gaudium et spes* (1965), which links the principle of the person with that of suable human rights, and in that way, redesigns the foundation of social ethics (Hünemann, 2013, pp. 36–50). The social conditions that help disabled people experience their dignity are to be conceived from the vantage point of human rights as structures to guarantee their recognition. On recognition as a keyword of normative theory of society (Honneth, 2003, particularly p. 54–105), and also on the claim to basic (status negativus) human rights, which are to be made socially tangible *via* “objectification” (cf. Honneth, 2015).

By looking at social contexts, in which an individual is aware of their own dignity and also of developing their own identity, the principle of freedom receives a new aspect: Sigrid Graumann describes it as “assisted autonomy” (Graumann, 2011; Pauer-Studer, 2000, pp. 9–65). That kind of autonomy “does not aim at the ‘autarkie’ of a self-sufficient and entirely self-contained individual as portrayed in the heroic ideal of the Stoics, but aims at a self-determining lifestyle, which can never succeed without promoting and supporting social structures. This does not only concern people with disabilities, but basically every human being” (Bielefeldt, 2011, p. 72). The concept of assisted autonomy does not come up literally in the CRPD. Nevertheless, Graumann plausibly points out that assisted autonomy is reflected in the mere intention of finding it, and that it stimulates the transformation of the disabled policy, understood as charity, to the inclusion-oriented policy of human rights. At the same time, the concept is essential for the ability to link a discourse on human rights with the Christian vision of the human being. For the dignity and freedom of a human being in Christian anthropology is not conceived as autarkie, but as an act of relationship – it requires gratitude and humility towards God, who has bestowed it on those who are fashioned in God’s image, and it expects a willingness to pass on this gift of recognition to others (Vogt, 2016). Therefore, the need for help and “grace” does not contradict dignity, but is understood as essential to human existence.

One look at the social conditionality of recognition leads to the transformation of the idea of equality: it is operationalised by making an issue of social barriers under the aegis of overcoming structural discrimination. Among these discriminating barriers are “collective habits, unreflected assumptions, stereotypical linguistic phrases, established selection structures in the education system, the functioning of the public transport system, the structures of the labour market, and the design of buildings” (Bielefeldt, 2011, p. 73). Equality is, therefore, not interpreted in terms of the general equalization of differences, but is derived from the normative postulate to eliminate discrimination, and becomes concrete in reference to that (on the normative sense of equality apart from the levelling of differences: cf. Vogt, 2012b, p. 131f, and also fundamentally by means of the term respect: Margalit, 2012).

From a human rights perspective, it is not only the understanding of freedom and equality but also the term of brotherhood in the CRPD that gets a new qualitative horizon of interpretation.

“Through the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities the triad of freedom, equality and brotherhood gains a new interpretation, which from now on serves as the guiding principle for the theory and practice of human rights. The claim for assisted autonomy is derived from freedom, equality becomes concrete in terms of the absence of barriers, and the principle of brotherhood is replaced by the principal of social inclusion” (Bielefeldt, 2011, p. 70f).

Brotherhood or sisterhood are therefore not primarily interpreted as a caring solidarity, but above all as an inclusion in the social community, and thus as something that enables social participation.

## **Appreciation of and threat to diversity**

The realization of comprehensive inclusion presupposes the acceptance of otherness as a moral principle. Significant in that case is a diversity posture, which positively recognizes disability as a manifestation of social diversity (diversity or Diversität is a normative concept that has its roots in the American civic movements and is being used worldwide as a concept against discrimination based on race, colour, descent, sex, religion, age or impairment; it has been in use in the European Union as pattern since the 1990). So, the state has been obliged in the CRPD “to recognize and promote the linguistic identity of deaf people” (Bielefeldt, 2011, p. 77), and to perceive their language no longer as an emergency aid to compensate for deficits in communication, but to recognize it as an expression of linguistic diversity and cultural achievement, analogous to cultural minority rights. Disability or the forms of expression and communication that arise from disability tend to be viewed as part of a “normal cultural” diversity. The fact that the term “disabled people” is now being replaced by “people with disabilities” is a semantic attempt to take this into account: in the first place there is the perception of their humanity and not of their deficiency. Paradigmatic for this change in perspective is the renaming of the “Action for a Child in Need” into “Human Action” (the social lottery founded in 1964, supports up to 1000 projects for inclusion every month; it is present in the public realm with commercials that make disabled people visible, and in the encounter of people with and without disabilities humorously portray the awkwardness of the so called “normal”).

From an ethical point of view the diversity approach should be demarcated from a belittling approach – that is, one that tends to suppress the painful experience of functional deficiency of those personally affected and their relatives, and turn it into something positive. The transformation of an experience of deficiency into an experience of overcoming and success is an individual and social achievement, that by no means can generally be assumed. Of greater importance is a much more problem-oriented focus, that takes into account the eclipsing of functional and social aspects, and that underscores real experiences of the exclusion of those affected by disability. This diversity posture aims at reducing the social construction of disability, however, it should not be used to underestimate the aspects of functional deficiency.

Due to the possibility of prenatal selection of people with disabilities, the overcoming of the viewpoint that focuses on deficiencies gains a new eminent practical importance: “due to the growing biotechnological possibility of ‘optimizing’ the human genome, there is a risk that disabled people will be stigmatized in a new way – as products of allegedly wrong parental planning” (Bielefeldt, 2011, p. 76). The practice of “liberal eugenics” (Habermas, 2001) established in clinical practice in a border area between prenatal diagnosis, selection and therapy shows that the specific form to universalize existential human rights in the CRPD is by no means only a special discourse for a socially marginalized group, but also a fundamental dimension of the understanding and practice of human rights in our late modern society. Here one should remember the debate launched by Peter Singer, on the question whether human dignity should be defined by the possession of consciousness, which would partially exclude people with disabilities (Singer, 2011, p. 196f).

## **Anthropological and theoretical justice interpretations of inclusion**

### **Inclusion potentials of the Christian human image**

The biblical vision of the Kingdom of God is essentially articulated in Jesus’ “first speech”, (Luke 4) as a social inclusion of people with disabilities (Kliesch, 2011, p. 102f). The therapeutic activity of Jesus by his devotion to people with disabilities is manifested accurately in Mark’s Gospel. It is given a central place in the texts of the New Testament, where there is a record of no less than fourteen cases of the healing of infirm people and six cases of casting out demons.

A key element in the composition of the biblical text is by no means the one that has been put emphasis on at a later date as a “supernatural” medical miracle, but the unconditional attention to people in need. This signals recognition and inclusion. Healing stories are “narrative responses to the question of inclusion” (Kliesch, 2011, p. 112). They are understood as an order to be followed, and thus as a calling addressed to everyone.

The healing stories of Jesus are documents of protest against the prejudices and exclusions that social normality has associated at times with illness, disability and suffering. These are “stories that break into a world, where the boundaries of unbearable normality are overcome in favour of people who are or will be handicapped. These are stories of hope full of longing for this world not to remain as it is now” (Kliesch, 2011, p. 101). In that way, they do not aim at normalization in terms of integrating disabled people into the world of

those who consider themselves healthy and unhindered, but aim at a fundamental renewal of relationships and value patterns.

The “prophecy” of disabled people lies in the fact, that by interaction, the healthy are compelled to accept the reality of the dynamism of dependency and certain limitations as a part of human existence. The confrontation with them is an opposite pole to the suppression of one’s own limitation and weaknesses in the meritocracy. It “can point to things that we as humans actually live on: it does not primarily focus on our efficiency and efficacy, but on the trust and the humanity we share with others. A man with visible deficiencies cannot [...] as easily as the seemingly perfect people [...] delude himself and go beyond his capacities” (Mieth, 2011, p. 128). The encounter with disability forces healthy people to re-consider the fundamental values and fragility of the inner constitution of a person.

Keeping open our image of the person is a central concern of the idea of inclusion (Dederich, 2013, p. 36). It has to restate itself continually against the hostility to disabled people – this hostility is deeply anchored in history, in European cultures as well as those outside of Europe (Dederich, 2013, p. 114f). Such defence and exclusion mechanisms are psychologically explained as a fear of disability, and therefore they require an active counter-control and communication through encounter.

The inclusive power of the Christian vision of humankind is due to the fact that it devotes particular attention to the injured and handicapped lives, and by doing so perceives dignity as a gift bestowed by God on every human being. This dignity is particularly to be sought out and respected in those who suffer. All Christians are called to do so. In this context, the humanitarian and socio-political calling in the face of the phenomenon of disability means to avoid social exclusion, limit dependency as much as possible, promote inclusion in the processes of communication, and, if possible, support work in a way that enables the maximum of personal integration and autonomy (Speck, 1995, p. 622).

According to the principle of subsidiarity, assistance shall be given in a way that does not weaken self-responsibility and self-help, but enables and strengthens it (from the vantage point of theory of justice it can also be characterized as Empowerment-postulate, Vogt, 2009, pp. 55–63). Instead of disheartening, help is meant to enable a person to live a self-determined life. This can also mean to abolish or moderate the pressure in order to be considered “normal”, whereas normal means to meet the requirements of what is socially considered as usual and ordinary [when Otto Speck calls for “normalization” as an ethical-pedagogical guiding maxim (Speck, 1995, p. 623), it appears to me problematic or at least misleading from today’s point of view; the concept of inclusion routinely dispenses with strivings for normalization in the sense of adopting to the prevailing societal standards; one can also interpret normalization in the sense of the increase in societal tolerance for deviation, and thus reconcile it with the concept of inclusion].

### **The disabled as a blind spot in classical theories of justice**

This rather formally undefined character of “inclusion” is compensated in the ethical debate by placing a claim on equality of opportunity. With regard to social policy, which deals with people with disabilities, this is possible only to a limited degree: the full equality of opportunity will never be attainable, and it should not be promised, as a basic normative claim. When disability is created by an individual or collective cause (for example, by

a traffic accident or by obstetric error), such an occurrence is a justified reason for a claim for compensation, and it is addressed to the perpetrator. However, the compensation will rarely be up to the level of a full compensation. Beyond this, the theory of equality shall not be used for compensation, but rather is to be used for the binding goal, namely, to minimize social exclusion caused by disability (on the differentiation from the vantage point of theory of justice with regard to goal compensation, Kersting, 2005, p. 75). From the vantage point of a theory of justice, the postulate for the state to have a general obligation to compensate for handicaps associated with disability would lead to the demand for “improvement of the work of the Creator” (Kersting, 2005, pp. 67–78; Vogt, 2012b, pp. 132–134). The normative focus of the CRPD is not equality of care, but an increase in opportunities to participate in social life, as likewise the justice of participation.

In his theory of justice, which has been a dominant theme for decades, John Rawls excludes explicitly the disabled. Since his theory comes from a social contract of cooperation for reciprocal advantage and conceptualizes the maximin principle, which gives priority to the needs of the most vulnerable, merely as a modification in the given framework, the handicapped person does not generally fit into his ethical model. This blind spot in his theory of justice is often overlooked. Thus, the ethic of inclusion cannot refer to John Rawls. His question, whether the exclusion of the disabled is a fundamental weakness of his theoretical model, or whether it can perhaps be thought of as a supplementary marginality, is open to discussion (on this topic: Ostheimer, 2016).

Martha Nussbaum, who in her book “Frontiers of Justice”, deals extensively with the problem of justice raised by disability, criticizes the Rawls’ theory of justice, which in her model of the social contract assumes symmetrical relations between equal individuals (Nussbaum, 2010, pp. 138–309). However, crucial problems of justice in the 21st century are marked essentially by asymmetrical relationships that cannot be modelled properly by a social contract for reciprocal benefit. She points to neediness as a central anthropological starting point in the theory of justice. As in contemporary contract theories people with severe disabilities are excluded from establishing fundamental political principles, their status of being citizens is structurally endangered. In accordance with Amartya Sen, she offers a model of capability justice that underscores prerequisites for the developing of abilities, and proposes it as an ethical criterion for the inclusion of people with disabilities (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 2010, pp. 218–309, particularly 218f and 229–241; on education pp. 276–294).

The idea of justice cannot be adequately derived from a contract of a fictitious “equal-one”, but it must come from the responsibility for a concrete “other-one” (Levinas, 1989; Vogt, 2016). In this case, the “other-one” appears in a real singularity, and not merely as a particular case of a generality. This is the starting point for situations of responsibility. The radical otherness of the “other-one” is shifted by the presence of a third person to a different perspective, which forces one to generalize, to compare and balance the claims. Thus (1) the perspectives of inclusion that tend to satisfy the other in his singularity without making comparisons, and (2) the perspective of justice which balances generalized claims and needs, are two perspectives that cannot be traced back to one another.

If inclusion is primarily understood as a legal principle, the “other-one” comes only into view as a generalized other. Admittedly, such legalization of the idea of inclusion is indispensable for the shaping of a social order, but it also entails the danger for the aspect of individual responsibility to be ignored. “The realization of inclusion through legalization will fail, if inclusion is not at the same time a value that is embodied and lived by a sufficient

number of people” (Dederich, 2013, p. 9). With reference to Levinas, Dederich asserts that, from an ethical point of view, the non-compromised and unconditional responsibility for the other one is an indispensable constitutive element. Policy, on the other hand, focuses on the sphere of conditional and regulated relations (on the relations of responsibility and freedom for the foundations of ethics, cf. Vogt, 2016).

### **Attempts to synthesize anthropological and theoretical justice aspects of inclusion**

Justice is a process, not an attainable order. The biblical call to strive for “greater justice” (Mt 5: 20) should not only be interpreted by means of theological reinforcement, but also with a certain distance to the term itself. The passage from Matthew 5 can also be translated as “more than justice”. This signals an awareness, that not all problems are solvable by means of the normative, general and legal categories of justice, and that ethics need to be supplemented by impulses of mercy and love, which are related to the individual case, and cannot be generalized (Epikie). Franz Dirlmeier translates in the Reclam-edition ἐπιείκεια as a „goodness in justice” (cf. Aristoteles, 1985, 1137).

However, in the biblical-prophetic tradition, the concept of justice also entails a political claim to the formation and transformation of social orders. This is an original biblical impulse that has contributed considerably to the further development of the concept originally associated with actions motivated by virtue. This is indispensable today, since the phenomena of constantly growing, massive inequality on a global scale, social exclusion and ecological destruction have been generated by major structural causes. Therefore, dealing with them requires a legislative approach.

From a socio-ethical perspective, the indissoluble tension between equality and difference is to be regarded as a core of the problem of justice (to the literature on this widely divergent philosophical debate, Vogt, 2012a). The decisive factor here is not the levelling of differences in material supply, but provision of fair interaction, as well as the avoidance of humiliation and exclusion. The passages on equality in German basic law are prescriptions for treating everyone the same way, despite their existing differences. The treatment-related limitation of the commandment to treat everyone equally in every single reference point (situation), opens up a perspective for equality that is not to be understood as the levelling of differences, but as the enabling of interaction („On the one hand, the normative sense of equality is the equivalence of the members and the unity of a community, on the other hand it is the autonomy and spontaneity of the members. [...] The sense of equality cannot be identified with evening out, but first of all with the safeguarding and increase of the interaction opportunities”). It is about looking at, picking up and constructing a particular aspect a comparison is to be made or should be made of (*tertium comparationis*).

The authoritative *tertium comparationis* for the equality of men is to be found in the Constitution art. 1,1: human dignity. Constitution perceives people not as a species, but as individuals in their uniqueness, originality and otherness.

I suggest to systematically distinguish three different types or three categories of equality as indispensable and mutually complementary dimensions of justice, and to combine them with the classic theories of justice developed by Aristotle, legal, distributive and commutative justice:



- equality of people as subjects of law; which is followed by the formal equality of rights, such as legal security or “fairness” (legal justice);
- equality of people in their basic needs; which is followed by the right that implies provision of basic care, according to respective cultural standards (distributive justice);
- equality in the recognition of interests; which implies that the goods and services that are being exchanged in interactions should be at least equivalent to each other (commutative justice).

There is no uniform criterion of justice. Instead, the respect for boundaries between different forms of interaction and social spheres constitutes the prerequisite for creating a “complex equality”, as a variety of different opportunities and reciprocal power control (Walzer, 1992). Hence, the manifold overcoming or rejection of uniformity becomes the guiding criterion of what is just.

Especially the variety of the view points on what is considered as “just” in the individual spheres of society facilitates various chances and limits one-sided dominance. Therefore, the differentiation by the theory of justice between the spheres, cultures and culture dimensions is an essential feature of justice, as Michael Walzer stresses in his critic on John Rawls (Walzer, 1992). In various social areas – from the vantage point of a theory of justice – the principle of responsibility for the weak is to be taken into account, as well as the principle of commutative justice in the sense of equality of giving and taking, and also the aspects of productivity incentive. The idea of agonal competition has been fundamental to European thinking about justice since the ancient times (basically on this topic Kirchoff, 2015). A football team without the division into sub-groups would be unthinkable. It is precisely due to the fact that the sole matter of a football game is the final achievement, and this – perhaps in dealing with migrants – could bring about vital integration functions. The balance matters.

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## CHAPTER 2

### Social principles in the inclusion of young ex-prisoners

*Stanisław Fel, Marek Wódka*

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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to identify a set of social principles that contribute to the inclusion of young ex-prisoners. The presentation of those principles is preceded by an outline of the analysis of approaches to the category of inclusion, i.a., in the context of integration, and a sociological profile of young ex-prisoners and their perception by employers. The authors seek a solution that would avoid both the individualistic approach that leaves ex-prisoners to their own devices in their attempts to return to society, and the approach that makes the State and other social categories responsible for this. As a result, we opt for a solution falling somewhere between the two, and based on collaboration between empowered young ex-prisoners and the involvement of a number of social groups and institutions on the basis of the necessary principles of social cooperation. The article describes the principles of personalism, solidarity, subsidiarity, openness, social justice, and social partnership, and provides examples of their application.

**Keywords:** inclusion, young ex-prisoners, social principles

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Social inclusion is the process of including individuals, groups or social categories in society. This term is often equated with the notion of integration. Markus Vogt, German social ethicist, argues that inclusion and integration are two separate terms, even though they are often used interchangeably in colloquial speech. He claims that those notions differ in terms of the so-called ethical content (Vogt, 2016, p. 10). The starting point for understanding integration is to assume the existence of a specific form of society, with which an excluded individual or group is to be integrated. This interpretation of inclusion focuses on the elimination of social conditions that cause exclusion, and on efforts for immediate inclusion, without taking the social system as a whole into consideration. Vogt notes that the contemporary socio-political debate generally addresses inclusion in relation to people with disabilities, while integration is associated with outsiders or “those on the fringes of society” (Vogt, 2016, p. 11).

Talcott Parsons' Systems Theory introduces the category of inclusion to describe the functions a social system has to fulfil, namely adaptation, goal attainment, latency pattern maintenance, and integration, as the inclusion of new subsystems into society. In view of the above, inclusion is the opposite of exclusion. It is about including the previously excluded actors of social life into social subsystems, hence the notion of reintegration seems close to that of inclusion (Vogt, 2016, p. 10; Baratta, 2001, pp. 4–5). In the field of sociology, social inclusion is understood as the process of secondary socialisation, or reclaiming individuals or groups for the benefit of society.

Main terms associated with the application of inclusion to specific socio-economic and cultural conditions include, i.a., civic society, open society, and information society. The above-mentioned categories are listed by Piotr Szczepaniak when he describes the social context of exclusion. Civil society is characterised by collective consciousness, and its products are civil traditions and institutions. This concept includes the notions of community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*), introduced by Ferdynand Tönnies, and is complemented by ideas advocated by communitarianism (harmony, unity, coherence, brotherhood). This society produces involved and cooperating people (*Homo cooperativus*). Open society, on the other hand, is characterised by social mobility, especially in relation to professional and social advancement opportunities. Karl Popper exemplifies this society with democratic societies, which are open to accepting and including all human beings (inclusive) (Szczepaniak, 2014, pp. 150–151). Finally, as shown later in this article, information society, whose development is based on universal access to broadly defined information, plays an important role in the context of inclusion, which requires appropriate development of social awareness of the marginalised and the excluded.

The majority of strategies for the inclusion of the excluded have generally been implemented by national agendas or public bodies, and much less frequently by the stakeholders themselves, their support groups, or other initiative groups. Authors support the increased participation of stakeholders in this process, i.e., their empowerment. Currently, this approach has many advocates (Becka, 2016, pp. 265–371). The implementation of this approach is noticed by Szczepaniak, who declares for the subjective inclusion strategy. He argues that, in practice, subjective approach should be dominant, but objective approach is more common. Social work has a system for addressing social problems through support and empowerment, which builds on similar ideas as the subjective inclusion of individuals who experience problems with social functioning and are aware of their inalienable right to address such problems with a view to being included in the broadly defined social life (Szczepaniak, 2014, pp. 149–150).

The idea of inclusion and its standards characteristic for the subjective approach provide for extensive cooperation between various entities in relation to efforts for the inclusion of the previously excluded social life actors. The success of such efforts largely depends on the principles followed by the parties involved in the process of inclusion. This issue will be addressed in this study, which specifies fundamental social principles behind the process of inclusion of a specific group, namely young ex-prisoners.

## **Social profile of young ex-prisoners and attitudes of employers to their employment**

This attempt to identify the social principles behind the process of including young ex-prisoners shall start with the construction of the social profile of social actors involved in the process of helping young ex-prisoners enter the open labour market. The application of practical solutions should take into account that the generalised character of the presented profile of the individual actors naturally includes some simplifications and requires each case to be addressed individually.

According to the results of selected sociological studies, an average ex-prisoner appears to be a person with relatively low social capital resources. Ex-prisoners have relatively poor networks of social connections, even in respect of family relations. As a result, they do not receive any support, even from their immediate family, when they attempt to enter the labour market. Ex-prisoners are characterised by the lack of professional experience and relatively low level of education, which, in a way, might seem obvious in the analysed age group. This group has no knowledge about navigating the labour market, and generally lacks resourcefulness. This profile, based on empirical knowledge, portrays an average young ex-prisoner as having relatively poor professional, social and personal skills. The initial position of this category of people on the labour market is further complicated by their relatively high payment expectations, disproportionate to the above-mentioned skills and the actual situation on the labour market.

Employers are another leading social actor. This study considers their attitude towards prospective employees, who have a criminal record. There seems to be certain variation in this respect. But the stereotypical (negative) attitude to candidates with a criminal record can be considered dominant. Positive, or at least neutral, attitudes to this category of people are characteristic of the employers who have previously hired persons who have been imprisoned.

## **Social principles as the rules for the development and functioning of modern societies**

Individuals who have been excluded, for whatever reason (disability, criminal record), usually do not feel sorry about their own physical, intellectual, or mental limitations, or those connected with their difficult past, but rather about the disturbed social interactions, and the experienced discrimination and stigmatisation (Vogt, 2016, p. 13). In view of the above, for this problem to be solved, the relevant strategy must be based on the norms and principles that underlie social order and whose essential objective is the successful inclusion of the excluded.

Efforts for the inclusion of young ex-prisoners in the labour market should be based on the social principles that constitute the rules for the development and functioning of modern societies. Those principles serve to reduce the multitude of the manifestations and requirements of social life to simple, fundamental relationships. Ultimately, efforts to formulate such principles are to identify the basis for solutions that improve the quality of measures, and help to explain, organise and shape them. However, they are not actionable principles, executive regulations or prescriptions, but basic rules that are important for cre-

ating frameworks and procedures. Therefore, they are more general in terms of their application and reliability. They are particularly relevant for high social dynamics and transformation processes, which make society lose, or at least reduce, its understanding of previous ways of explaining reality and frames of reference (Baumgartner & Korff, 2009, p. 225).

It needs to be noted that fundamental social principles that are the basis of the socio-economic system were identified in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 1997. As early as in its *Recitals*, it calls on everyone to respect the inherent human dignity<sup>1</sup>. The person, who has dignity, is the absolute value, the measure of all things. This status is the basis of the personalist principle, which requires that social life and the law that governs it be designed in a way that serves the person and facilitates their optimum growth. The *Recitals* also refer to the principle of subsidiarity. This part of the Constitution states that the Polish legal system is based, i.a., “on the principle of subsidiarity that strengthens the powers of citizens and their communities”. In addition, the *Recitals* explicitly refer to the principle of solidarity. Article 2 of the Constitution invokes the principle of social justice (“The Republic of Poland shall be a democratic State ruled by law and implementing the principles of social justice”). Article 20, which provides guidelines for the economic system, invokes, i.a., the principles of solidarity, dialogue, and cooperation between social partners (“A social market economy, based on the freedom of economic activity, private ownership, and solidarity, dialogue and cooperation between social partners, shall be the basis of the economic system of the Republic of Poland”). The common good is mentioned several times. In the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, the *Recitals* address the fundamental social principles in the context of respect for inherent human dignity.

Further on, this study will attempt to substantiate the claim about the applicability of the above-mentioned social principles in the field of inclusion. It seems that especially the application of the subsidiarity principle in relation to the partnership between public bodies and third-sector organisations in the field of inclusion of young ex-prisoners in the open labour market would support the transition from the dual model of such relationships to the collaborative model (in line with the typology proposed by Benjamin Gidron, Ralph M. Kramer and Lester M. Salamon, 1992). As a result, the above-mentioned constitutional provisions would no longer be considered merely as “ceremonial rules”, which are just part of a façade, and, instead, actual social mechanisms would be introduced, building on those principles.

## Principle of personalism

As argued by Markus Vogt, the inclusion of the excluded is based on the most fundamental conviction about the dignity of the person. This value has grown to become the personalist principle associated with human rights, and has formed the basis for the modern concept of social ethics (Vogt, 2016, p. 14). This principle builds on the dignity of the person. It is what makes the person special, an end in themselves. They must not be treated instrumentally in any social, economic, or political frameworks. This is emphasised, e.g., by

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<sup>1</sup> We call upon all those who will apply this Constitution for the good of the Third Republic to do so paying respect to the inherent dignity of the person, his or her right to freedom, the obligation of solidarity with others, and respect for these principles as the unshakeable foundation of the Republic of Poland (*Recitals*).

Article 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland: “The inherent and inalienable dignity of the person shall constitute a source of freedoms and rights of persons and citizens. It shall be inviolable. The respect and protection thereof shall be the obligation of public authorities”. Any social solution is justified only as long as it serves the person and creates conditions conducive to their growth. The subjective approach to the person as the source, creator and goal of each social institution, builds on the premise that social institutions, social structures, and systemic solutions are not solutions designed by nature, or ones based on some sort of a biological code, or previous practices. They are man-made and developed as a result of various circumstances.

The application of the personalism principle requires solutions that will contribute to human growth, not humiliation or degradation. In respect of rights, the dignity of the person requires equal treatment for everyone. Article 32 of the Polish Constitution states that “1. All persons shall be equal before the law. All persons shall have the right to equal treatment by public authorities. 2. No one shall be discriminated against in political, social or economic life for any reason whatsoever”. The role of the most objective test for the respect for the dignity of the person in social life is played by human rights (Fel, 2015, pp. 132–133; Kupny, 2007, p. 82). The degree to which such rights are respected corresponds to the level of respect for the dignity of the person in social life.

### **Principle of solidarity**

The development of society is the most effective when it is based on collaboration. On the one hand, the individual requires services from society, and on the other, society depends on the services provided by its members. The principle of solidarity builds on multiple interrelations between all members and on various responsibilities that stem from this fact. In society, social groups, with various relationships between them, interact with one another. Solidarity can be manifested as the awareness of the membership of communities connected not only emotionally but also through shared interests. This is the source of the obligation to be responsible for one another, and the exclusion of any individual or group goes against the principle of solidarity.

Therefore, there is a number of motivations behind the responsibility for the weaker members of society. These range from religious, to humanistic, and economic. Solidarity, as a principle, is universal in nature, and it does not admit any form of exclusion. In contemporary European societies, solidarity is oriented mainly towards socially vulnerable, exploited and excluded individuals (Baumgartner & Korff, 2009). Specific cases include, i.a., those who have been marginalised and those who have lost in social competition.

Relationships between people result in mutual obligations. Such obligations are found in all the communities we are members of, and they have three forms: obligations between individuals and groups, obligations of individuals and groups in relation to society as a whole, and obligations of society as a whole in relation to individuals and groups. Therefore, solidarity excludes selfish separation and ruthless pursuit of individual interests. It always requires the interests of the community to be taken into consideration as the common good. Consequently, the achievement of the objectives set as part of the solidarity principle requires something more than just moral calls for action. As a social principle, it should be the structural element of institutions. Solidarity should be applied as a legal principle, or,



more specifically, obligations imposed on the individual by solidarity should become legally enforceable in some crucial areas. And conversely, undertakings whose status garners support from the ethical/social point of view, should not be subject to the “kindness” of the authorities, but rather become a legally sanctioned entitlement.

The principle of solidarity is inseparably linked to the principle of subsidiarity, which is intended to secure the implementation of the common good and human development through the appropriate cooperation between public bodies, NGOs and individual members of society.

## Principle of subsidiarity

The principle of subsidiarity governs the rights of individuals and small communities (“from the bottom”), and responsibilities of the State and large communities (“from the top”) (Spieker, 1995, pp. 35–37). It regulates social relationships between large and small communities, and between communities and individuals, so that large communities provide supplementary help to small communities (individuals) (Millon-Delsol, 1995). The principle of subsidiarity defines the skills that serve as the basis for the allocation of responsibility. Socialisation should always be beneficial for the person, and it should contribute to their individual well-being. Since this is best achieved through own action, it is important to act and help in such a way so as to facilitate own action. The purpose of the role of the State and society as support providers to the individual and small communities is to allow the individual and communities achieve their objectives.

This theory distinguishes between the following aspects of subsidiarity – negative, positive, and the associated gradual withdrawal of assistance. In its negative aspect, the subsidiarity principle requires that the support not be provided, so that social actors (individuals and small and large communities) do not have their initiative and responsibility stifled. In its positive aspect, it is to be implemented when individuals or small communities, operating according to their place, position and rules, lack something. In practice, this means that assistance is provided on a one-off basis and as effectively as possible, to help the individual or medium-sized groups operate independently. This is known as helping people help themselves. Gradual withdrawal of assistance, on the other hand, requires that such help be reduced as the supported entity begins to succeed in its objectives on its own (Dylus, 2016, p. 55).

Therefore, the principle of subsidiarity ensures that responsibility is taken for one’s own actions. It safeguards the natural rights of individuals and small communities. It regulates the competence of authorities and the distribution of power. The State must not have the competence that restricts people’s freedom and responsibility. The State should not be interested in, or interfere with, the things that individual citizens or small communities are capable of doing. This is reflected in the following saying that synthetically describes the principle of subsidiarity – *as much State as necessary, as much society as possible*. The principle of subsidiarity stands against any demands for absolute social or national competence, thus safeguarding pluralism in a free society. However, this does not mean that the principle of subsidiarity calls for a weak State. It is more about organising the State in a way that allows it to achieve its specific objectives. In the welfare State, which is now represented by the majority of countries in the Western Hemisphere, this seems particularly valid. Indeed,

such societies are likely to burden the State with the responsibility for all possible services. At the same time, they show less and less understanding (in terms of their readiness for funding) for the central objectives of the State, such as legal protection and security.

In relation to the inclusion of young ex-prisoners in the open labour market, the principle of subsidiarity has several applications. The first concerns the distribution of tasks and competence between the public sector and NGOs in respect of the provision of professional assistance. Even though the distribution of responsibilities between public institutions and civil society, based on the principle of subsidiarity, favours NGOs to some extent, it does not absolve public administration bodies of all responsibility. Ultimately, the latter remain responsible for the systemic solution of problems on the basis of the subsidiarity principle, and for the effective functioning of the solution. Clear distribution of competence requires that public bodies remain responsible to persons seeking support, regardless of whether they have delegated their functions to third-sector organisations, or merely included them in their fulfilment. This means that public bodies should not be solely responsible for the objectives related to the integration of young ex-prisoners on the labour market, because they are not able to cope with it. Instead, they should choose the most suitable entities to complete each task related to such integration (Millon-Delsol, 1995, p. 60). Such suitability is both about economic effectiveness and appropriate support quality. Experience of Germany, a country with a long tradition of organising social services on the basis of the subsidiarity principle, shows that neither public sector institutions alone, nor the social sector alone, can meet the obligations in the area of social services, both for financial and organisational reasons (Leś, 2000, p. 171).

The second application is associated with the facilitation of independent action, as postulated by the subsidiarity principle. Nothing brings people so many benefits to the development of their personality, as their own actions and achievements. Each individual capable of independent action achieves growth and excellence through their own actions (e.g., athletes through sport activities, craftsmen through professional activities). The achievement of professional and social competence, through one's own actions, results in both improved self-esteem and social recognition. Therefore, the process of inclusion should seek to implement the aspect of the subsidiarity principle that rises in the defence of individuality, subjectivity, and independence of each person.

In addition, the principle of subsidiarity is the basis for determining the order in which various communities are asked to provide assistance. The first community that provides help should always be the one that is the closest to the person in need, and whose resources are sufficient to provide the required support. This suggests that professional support should be provided by the entities that are the closest in qualitative (first smaller, then larger ones) and quantitative terms (that have the actual contact, according to G. Küchenhoff's proximity principle) (Küchenhoff, 1959, pp. 201–206).

The last aspect of the discussed principle is known as the gradual withdrawal of assistance. Assistance provided on the basis of the subsidiarity principle should be gradually reduced. This means that, as beneficiaries' ability to function independently improves, support providers gradually withdraw from the provision of assistance to young ex-prisoners.

So far, this analysis has arrived at the following postulates, that should be the consequence of the application of the subsidiarity principle in the inclusion of ex-prisoners: 1. Create systemic solutions, which will allow small communities and individuals (in this case, public bodies that act as employment agencies at the regional level, NGOs and indi-

viduals) cope, without the need for the State to interfere and “manually control” the process of developing solutions to problems. 2. Provide the above-mentioned social actors with financial and professional instruments and tools for informing the public. 3. Create opportunities for undertaking professional work in open labour market institutions. 4. Gradually withdraw support as the defined objectives are accomplished, until no support needs to be provided any more.

## Principle of openness

The inclusion of ex-prisoners in the open labour market seems to rely on the principle of openness. In this case, it must not be limited to its narrow, legal understanding, which refers mainly to the openness of administrative procedures and access to public information. In its narrow sense, it is about making the information about administrative procedures and the available public funds and their allocation public<sup>2</sup>. Such information is subject to public scrutiny. Sometimes, the principle of openness is differentiated from the principle of transparency. The latter is understood as a situation, in which the framework for the funding of undertakings, and the distribution of responsibilities and competence, as well as the use of procedures and code of conduct, including the publication of performance results for individual public bodies, are all made public and clearly defined. In a way, transparency is the precondition for openness, as it makes the available information comprehensible and interpretable.

The principle of openness in relation to the inclusion of young ex-prisoners, and especially the cooperation between public and social partners, should be understood in a broader and multifaceted way. In its narrow sense, openness seems to be relevant at the administrative stage in public bodies that serve as employment agencies. To be precise, when jobs are offered by employers, it is important that they accurately define the skills they expect their future employees to have. The clarity of such criteria can help eliminate, or at least reduce, discrimination on the grounds of the candidate’s criminal record. The issue of personal data openness, which might be in conflict with personal data protection and every citizen’s right to privacy, is much more complex<sup>3</sup>. What makes it so, among other things, is the scope of information about young ex-prisoners’ complicated past to be revealed by them, and the respect for their right for privacy in their relationships with colleagues. In addition, this issue is complex due to the combination of social (stereotypical prejudice), organisational (need for trust at the workplace), and legal problems (personal data protection law).

In relation to the principle of openness, it seems justified to increase employers’ awareness of the benefits they could derive from the employment of young ex-prisoners. Such benefits can be obtained as a result of new trends that have emerged in corporate man-

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2 Public authorities include commune, district and province bodies, and their organisational units. In its ruling, the Supreme Administrative Court stated that this category shall also include “... entities, which, in the organisational sense, are not part of administration, but are established by law to manage and implement public tasks” (SAC ruling of 6 March 2008, I OSK 1918/07, LEX Legal Information System No. 505424).

3 For more information about the right to openness and its restrictions, please see B. Dolnicki, R. Cybulska, *Realizacja zasady jawności i dostępu do informacji publicznej w samorządzie terytorialnym (The principle of openness and access to public information in local government)*, <http://antykorupcja.edu.pl/index.php?mnu=12&app=docs&action=get&iid=14840> (accessed on 20.12.2016).

agement, such as corporate social responsibility (CSR). Indeed, the employment of young ex-prisoners might become one of the ways for companies to put this more and more prominent idea into practice. Corporate social responsibility is about expanding company's operations beyond its narrow, basic, "conventional" objectives, and supporting stakeholders, i.e., entities affected by the company, and vice versa, those that affect the company, and, as a result, determine the achievement of its primary objectives (Adamczyk, 2009). This approach stems from the growing social awareness of the fact that economy is not a fully autonomous area, but functions as part of a broader social system. This awareness translates into the social expectations that businesses take responsibility for their stakeholders. Some businesses consider responsibility as their social obligation, while others accept social responsibility merely as part of their efforts to create a positive corporate image, or a marketing strategy. In both cases, the employment of young ex-prisoners has a beneficial effect on the implementation of corporate social responsibility by businesses. In practice, this should be combined with a social outreach campaign, presenting the situation of young ex-prisoners as a social problem, and their employment as the fulfilment of corporate social responsibility.

A specific way to apply the principle of openness in social life is through a massive educational campaign to inform society about current social problems, including those closely connected with economy. The application of this principle to the area addressed here should produce a social outreach campaign that presents this problem objectively. A successful outreach campaign should result in changes in the stereotypical image of young ex-prisoners among the general public, and in the development of the attitude of social responsibility for the resolution of this problem.

### **Principle of social justice**

The principle of social justice covers the norm of relationships between individuals and social groups, and between social groups themselves, governing their rights and mutual obligations by requiring that everyone get what they deserve. What someone deserves is understood "socially", i.e., it takes into account the position of individuals in broader social relationships, and the requirements of social order, which manifests itself in the common good. While justice is the quality of a specific entity and a positive social trait, social justice is a value that is fostered in social life as a result of specific individual behaviour. Due to the dynamism of social life and its growing complexity, rather than a satisfactory social reality, social justice continues to be a desire shared by a large number of people, and a leading idea in the efforts of individuals and social groups, who aim for a more humane society. Nevertheless, as an idea, social justice has a positive effect on the operation of social forces and the functioning of social structures (Sztompka, 2016, pp. 232–234). In addition, there is always the issue of social justice interpretation, both in relation to its content and ways of its application. Social justice, that takes into consideration the individual good achieved through the pursuit of the common good, is the foundation of efforts intended to respect human dignity in social order. Its function is, firstly, to make sure everyone can exist and develop, and enjoy basic freedoms. Therefore, the goal of social justice is to give each person what they deserve as humans, based on their inalienable dignity. This goal is achieved through order aimed at the common good. Anna Kieszowska takes this into account in her inclusive-catalactic model for the rehabilitation of convicts, arguing that, in practice,

the convicts' perception of the world, and the perception of convicts by society, vary considerably. In society, relationships and interrelations are often not considered in terms of the common good, and antagonisms and exclusion are very strong in many environments. In the above-mentioned rehabilitation model, convicts are given a chance to become entities that function autonomously, participate in rehabilitation programmes, try to change their perception of the world, redevelop or acquire interpersonal, prosocial and professional skills, which are necessary for functioning in their families and social and professional groups (Kieszkowska, 2012, p. 16). The effects produced by such efforts contribute to the broadly defined common good.

### **Principle of social partnership**

Public-social partnerships should play a key role in the development of mechanisms for the inclusion of young ex-prisoners. Such partnerships are fostered by legal regulations concerning cooperation between public bodies and NGOs. The multitude and diversity of social aid and integration institutions and NGOs that support ex-prisoners on the labour market, make it necessary to have and enhance systemic and permanent solutions for the mode, scope and form of their operation. The individual powers, objectives and missions of public and social partners should not overlap but complement each other, based on cooperation without the domination of any organisation.

It is important to note some practical consequences of the structure of the Polish NGOs that provide post-penitentiary assistance. In addition to a large number of small NGOs which operate in this area, there are several major organisations. Large organisations are usually more professional, have greater human and infrastructural resources, and an impressive track record, and, as such, they can be "better" partners for public sector institutions. As a result, they might be provided financial support and might have a large number of projects commissioned to them. However, the more numerous, smaller NGOs operating in post-penitentiary assistance provision, increase the chances of introducing innovative solutions. In addition, their range of operations, usually more local in nature, is more likely to take local labour market conditions into account.

In respect of the need for help, the principle of partnership is complemented by the subsidiarity principle, which requires action from the communities that are the closest, in qualitative and quantitative terms, to the support recipient. In this case, these are the smaller NGOs that are closer to young ex-prisoners. Possible risks here include competition between NGOs that could attenuate smaller organisations, whose reach is limited, also geographically.

### **Principle of effectiveness**

The principle of effectiveness is understood as the most positive relationship possible between the resources used to achieve the established goals, and their outcomes (Nowak, 1994). In relation to the process of supporting the inclusion of young ex-prisoners on the labour market, this principle has two meanings – a narrow one, which means as effective an access to support as possible, and a broad one, where effectiveness is understood as the

achievement of the goal of providing optimum social and professional skills that allow the support recipient to function on the labour market in a comparable way to people without a criminal record.

In relation to this principle, it is important to consider at least its two aspects – the most fundamental, economic aspect of effectiveness, and its broader, social aspect. It is crucial to avoid short-term solutions, because certain systemic approaches might seem too costly in the short run, and only the complete launch of the system in the long-run produces comprehensive, including economic, effects (Vogt, 2015, p. 108). The professional growth of young ex-prisoners can contribute not only to the individual improvement in their quality of life, but also to the reduction of social and economic costs of their being unemployed.

## Conclusions

Efforts for the inclusion of young ex-prisoners in the labour market should be based on the social principles that constitute the rules for the development and functioning of modern societies. Those principles serve to reduce the multitude of the manifestations and requirements of social life to fundamental relationships, and, ultimately, to identify the basis for solutions that improve the quality of measures, and help to explain, organise and shape them.

Undoubtedly, the application of the principles described above in the area of the inclusion of young ex-prisoners in the labour market, contributes to the achievement of the objectives established as part of social inclusion. Many efforts are being taken to foster social inclusion, or even integration of various groups of the excluded. Despite ambitious regulations, convicts who go out of prison are yet to be covered with an effective and comprehensive programme for their inclusion in the open labour market, although such solutions are already being developed. It seems necessary to take the described social principles into account not only to make such solutions effective, but also to give society a sense of social responsibility, which should lead to cooperation in this area.

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## CHAPTER 3

### Inclusion of future generations from the perspective of intergenerational justice

*Lukasz Marczak*

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#### ABSTRACT

The inclusion of future generations is prerequisite for intergenerational justice, which manifests itself in the access to resources across generations. On the one hand, responsibility for future generations seems obvious, but on the other, it creates a number of dilemmas, as such generations do not exist in the present. This responsibility has made it necessary to establish rules for the exploitation of natural resources to satisfy the needs of current generations without compromising the development opportunities of future generations. The purpose of this article is to present the category of future generations in view of the ecological crisis, and to identify the responsibility we have towards them. The article concludes with an attempt to define practical rules for the management of natural resources, while taking the interests of future generations into account.

**Keywords:** social inclusion, future generations, intergenerational justice, Catholic social teaching

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#### Introduction

The processes of inclusion focus on providing various social groups with rights that they have not enjoyed before. Those processes are characteristic of contemporary societies, which have seen a marked shift from exclusiveness to inclusiveness (Słaboń, 2010, p. 72). This transition will also affect future generations – people who are yet to be born. People of the future, who do not exist yet and have no identity, do not have any rights yet (Lewandowski, 2015, p. 13). Therefore, on the one hand, the category of future generations, or rather their real absence, creates many dilemmas, but on the other, it is the subject of study which has become more and more prominent in the Catholic social teaching (CST) as part



of ethical considerations concerning the protection of the environment in view of the responsibility for future generations.

This study starts with the presentation of social justice as the central value in the organisation of social life. Later on, it presents the category of future generations against the backdrop of the ecological crisis, and defines responsibility to them on the basis of Dieter Birnbacher's theory about the representation of future generations' interests. Birnbacher argues that the "generation" category is a group of people born in a specific period of time, whose interval corresponds to the average period in which children become parents and parents become grandparents (Birnbacher, 1999, p. 17). Therefore, the category of "future generations" means the future children of specific people, i.e., generations, that will exist after the current generation (Lewandowski, 2015, p. 13). In the context of rules for managing natural resources, this study views "future generations" as generations that are more distant in time. The article concludes with an attempt to define practical rules for the management of natural resources, while taking the interests of future generations into account. For this purpose, it will use the elements of the circular economy proposed by Markus Vogt in an attempt to combine them with the logic of gratuitousness advocated by Pope Benedict XVI in his *Caritas in veritate* encyclical.

### **Social justice – central value in the organisation of social life**

The constancy, continuity and topicality of the CST are all based on the transcendental human dignity, and the continuous verification whether the conditions for human development are fair or not. The dynamics of the social teaching of the Church are linked with the emerging, new issues, which now apply not to individual people, local communities or States, but to humanity in general. In this sense, Franciszek Mazurek uses such phenomena as extreme poverty in Third-World countries, international debts, terrorism, and degradation of the natural environment, to demonstrate the lack of respect for the person (Mazurek, 2007, p. 14).

Dynamic approach to the category of social justice adjusts the norms of justice to the changing social reality (Bogusz, 2013, p. 148). While social problems that are faced by the specific participants of social life can be resolved with the basic ethical and social principles in order to stand up for the rights of the unemployed or people excluded from social life, in the case of people who will only exist in the future, our moral duty generally boils down to the category of responsibility. In this respect, social justice and solidarity acquire intergenerational, future dimensions, while at the same time becoming difficult to define clearly as a result of the lack of reference to any specific social reality.

Social justice, understood in the CST as one of the primary moral virtues, an ability involving readiness to give all people what they rightly deserve, in the perspective of future generations requires respect especially for the inalienable dignity of the persons who will come to be, and the provision of conditions for their decent life and growth (Żeleźniak, 1993, p. 171). It would be unfair to put more emphasis on the intergenerational aspect of social justice, thus limiting the rights of the people who live now, and depriving them of growth opportunities. A perfect approach to the priority of intragenerational justice, while also expressing concern for future generations, is presented by Pope John Paul II in his Social Triptych, which comprises three social encyclicals, namely *Laborem exercens*, *Sollic-*

*itudo rei socialis* and *Centesimus annus*. The Pope reconstructs the socio-economic order brought to ruin by real socialism. The reconstruction of the social and moral order, reflecting fair living conditions of contemporary people, and presenting an attitude of responsibility for future generations, is achieved through the acknowledgement of the real concept of the person, subjective importance of human work, balance of power in the context of a democratic State, and human ecology. Social justice is implemented when people regain their central position across all areas of life.

Social justice can be categorised according to synchronic and diachronic categories. The intergenerational aspect of social justice is considered in diachronic terms, where the living conditions of generations separated by time intervals are compared. As argued by Joachim Wiemeyer, it is the issue of intergenerational justice, which focuses on future generations, that is now the most frequently addressed in relation to the environment. In addition, it is important to consider intragenerational justice, categorised synchronically and expressed through the traditional types of legal, replacement, or distributional justice, all of which refer to a closed time frame (Wiemeyer, 2011, pp. 72–74).

### **Future generations in the context of the ecological crisis**

In view of the growing ecological crisis, the category of future generations has been given special focus in scientific dispute since the late 1980s. It corresponds to the concept of sustainable development, which combines social justice in its intragenerational, synchronic aspect, and intergenerational, diachronic aspect, with economic growth and ecological sustainability (Vogt, 2009). Below, you will find a description of future generations during a shift from intragenerational justice, expressed in global social inequality, to intergenerational justice, illustrated with climate change, and even a proposal to recognise a new geological era.

### **Global development inequality**

The existence of future generations has come into question as a result of the irresponsible management of natural resources, whose extraction and exploitation have been determined, i.a., by the excessive consumption and production by contemporary generations. In addition, the domination of affluent countries, many of which have grown rich as a result of the overexploitation of resources, and which have ignored their moral duty to respect fair division of global resources, has contributed to growing neocolonial dependence, characterised by various degrees of technological innovations and level of value added, as a result of which poor countries struggle more and more with the problem of social exclusion, resulting from poverty, unemployment, housing shortage or illiteracy (*Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 1987, 14–15). Clearly, such injustice, which affects current generations in intragenerational terms in relation to the socio-economic area, must be addressed, especially given the growing risk of injustice in intergenerational terms.

The more explicit the huge, global development inequality between economic and social growth, industrial production and services, and technological-economic growth and the state of the environment, the more imperative it is to take action for the development of

tools for bridging such gaps (Mazurek, 1993, p. 93). This requires appropriate international cooperation, “which does not exclude profit, but considers it a tool for the achievement of humanistic and social goals” (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 46). The overexploitation by some countries, and unfair economic relations, have negatively affected not only the development of poor Third-World States, but also former Communist republics (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 49). In the second half of the 20th century, the lack of responsibility for one another have made “starving nations desperately turn to the affluent nations” (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 17; *Populorum progressio*, 1967, 15).

The concept of consistently implemented sustainable development is an attempt to reconcile the responsibility for contemporary and future generations at the levels of individual States and the world as a whole. Its global character and long-term perspective results from the noticeable degradation of the environment, which, however, sometimes seems to be overemphasised or ideologically motivated with the use of catastrophic narration, which often focuses on non-anthropogenic factors (Łużyński, 2013, p. 51). On the one hand, it is a fact that the ecological crisis has been observed since the second half of the 20th century, but on the other, its actuality and the seriousness of risks for human existence have been called into question. Even though current generations of people living in the 21st century are proud of the technological progress that has created favourable opportunities and prosperity, without the comprehensive and responsible management of scientific progress, and the containment of the associated risks, technological and scientific advancements might endanger all generations (Veith, 2004, p. 305). Ecological disasters, including nuclear power plant accidents, which have become the reason for seeking new ways of obtaining energy and management system modifications, might serve as warnings for contemporary generations (Vogt, 2014, pp. 19–37).

## Climate change

In addition to disasters – sporadic, yet having devastating consequences, the ecological crisis is explained by the more and more often questioned climate change resulting from increased greenhouse gas emissions. Scientists who explore climate change believe that the future of coming generations depends on the continuously growing temperature of the globe, whose increase by 2°C compared to the pre-industrial times, is expected to have catastrophic consequences. Climate change, its forecasts, and dangerous consequences, have also been acknowledged by the Holy See in the long-awaited first ecological encyclical, in which Pope Francis argues that “if present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us” (*Laudato si'*, 2015, 24).

However, the most serious consequences are expected to be faced by developing countries, which struggle with poverty. Many poor people, who live in areas affected by phenomena associated with climate change, migrate. Max Planck Institute has warned that the increase in temperature in some regions around the world might even lead to mass migration. Pope Francis, too, has associated the migrations with the destruction of the environment, claiming that “there has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation; they are not recognized by international conventions as refugees” (*Laudato si'*, 2015, 25).

## **Anthropocene – are we there yet?**

In his recent social encyclical, Pope Francis notes that “climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods; it represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day” (*Laudato si'*, 2015, 25). The London Geological Society has proposed that a new epoch of geological time, anthropocene, be recognised to account for the impact of human activity on the environment. The Society argues that this new epoch, resulting from our unquestionable domination over nature, is characterised by irreversible changes in the damaged environment. This is exemplified by geologists with the occurrence of plastiglomerates, matter created as a result of mixing molten plastic and lava flowing out of volcanoes and covering large areas of Pacific islands (Corcoran, Biesinger & Grifi, 2009, pp. 80–84). Even though the idea of anthropocene, identified as a result of the development of urban-industrial society, has become more and more common in literature, stratigraphers argue that there is insufficient scientific evidence to officially accept it (Davis, 2009).

In view of the above, the destruction of the environment has become a serious global problem, which affects the interests of future generations. The inclusion of such interests, as the requirement of intergenerational justice, is advocated especially by global agreements designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, particularly following the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris (*Adoption of the Paris Agreement*, 2015). Concern for future generations is also expressed in the respect for the specific nature of national economies, incapable of transformation on the basis of renewable energy sources, but making efforts for the neutralisation of harmful greenhouse gasses, and developing technologies for improving efficiency in areas such as energy, and resource, material, and waste management. Such efforts, supported through education to increase environmental awareness, actually express solidarity of contemporary generations with the generations that have not been born yet (Małachowski, 2012, pp. 35–44).

## **Responsibility towards future generations**

Responsibility for future generations stems from solidarity and intergenerational justice, and nowadays, as shown by the overview of the ecological crisis, it is global in nature (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 50). A recurring question in the debate on the theory of justice concerns the rights of future generations. Tim Mulgan argues that the theory of generational justice is valid without the discussion about the rights given to future generations. Human rights are not the only starting point for ethical theories, including the theory of justice. Jörg C. Tremmel claims that the theory of justice needs to focus more on issues concerning resources and goods that should be available to future generations. This raises the question *what present generation should leave for future generations?* How many goods do we owe future generations? (Tremmel, 2012, pp. 117–118).

In addition to the emphasis on the importance of intergenerational justice, expressed in care for the environment as a living space for future generations, it is important to establish limits of responsibility. In this respect, M. Vogt asks questions concerning some practical issues related to the potential status of future generations. Can the norm of justice, which applies to human relationships, be used in relation to potential beings, who have not yet

come into existence? In what ways can intergenerational justice be ensured, given that current generations do not know the needs of future generations, or have only a vague idea of such needs? In what way can current generations be encouraged to feel responsible for their descendants, given the fact that future generations will not be able to repay people who live now for the efforts and sacrifices they make for posterity? (Vogt, 2009, pp. 386–387).

In view of the controversy over the limits of responsibility of current generations for those to come, scopes of ethical responsibility are defined. Based on the theory of the representation of future generations' interests, D. Birnbacher, an ethicist who departs from the anthropocentric approach, identified four major scopes of responsibility, namely temporal, ontological, content-related and motivational (Birnbacher, 2009, pp. 91–93, 96–105).

### **Temporal scope**

The category of future generations covers people, whose existence we are able to forecast. Birnbacher notes that people from the future will have to come to grips with the fact that certain resources are unavailable to them because they have been depleted (Birnbacher, 2009, p. 96). This is inevitable, but at the same time it confirms a certain intellectual human capability, which allows us to create technology for using the resources available during our lifetime in order to survive. Markus Vogt argues that, in this sense, history is a teacher, that teaches current generations that technical innovations have often proved crucial for the ways resources have been used (Vogt, 2015, p. 1). In addition, the temporal scope shows one of the fundamental functions of social obligations, which is to expand responsibility to include people from outside the circle of emotional proximity (Birnbacher, 2009, p. 97).

### **Ontological scope**

Responsibility for future generations in the ontological scope refers to the anthropocentric approach, which is based on responsibility for posterity. In this sense, the anthropocentric ontological scope diminishes the importance of biocentric, patocentric and ecocentric interpretations and suggests that future non-human beings have a certain instrumental value that serves the well-being of future human generations (Birnbacher, 2009, p. 97).

### **Content-related scope**

The content-related scope of responsibility is associated more with ensuring the well-being, and satisfying the potential needs, of future generations, than with the obligation to ensure their survival. Moreover, the content-related scope, which refers to the improvement of the well-being of future generations, supports the utilitarian model of intergenerational justice. It is based on the distribution of wealth, whose size varies between historically different generations. As a result, current generations, which, for various reasons, strive for the satisfaction of their primary needs and well-being, are less obliged to secure the future of subsequent generations (Birnbacher, 2009, pp. 98–100).

It is also important to bear in mind that responsibility for future generations in the content-related scope must not be a minimalistic option that is to secure the resources left by ancestors for future generations. Each generation is required to use the available resources in a way that leaves the appropriate quantity and quality of resources for prosperity (Birnbacher, 2009, p. 100). Vogt claims that the implementation of intergenerational justice should result in the so-called world left behind, in which the innovative capacity is sustained and similar opportunities for well-being and growth are provided (Vogt, 2009, p. 389).

### **Motivational scope**

The motivational scope of responsibility for future generations is essentially about the development of a connection between generations. Birnbacher argues that this should be achieved through gratitude to our ancestors (Birnbacher, 2009, p. 104). In relation to this requirement, Wojciech Lewandowski identifies two rules, namely intergenerational golden rule and intermediate gratitude rule (Lewandowski, 2015, pp. 125–126).

In view of the presented scopes of responsibility for future generations, the last part of this study focuses on the inclusion of future generations' interests in the principle of sustainable development. This principle is applied through practical rules for resource management, which take into account the responsibility for people who are yet to be born, based on the circular economy concept. This model of resource management is combined with the logic of gratuitousness advocated by Pope Benedict XVI in his *Caritas in veritate* encyclical. The encyclical formulates proposals for the long-term bridging of global development gaps, and the principle of sustainable growth, which is yet to be explicitly advocated in the social teaching of the Catholic Church, is expressed in the combination of the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity.

### **Logic of gratuitousness and the circular economy**

Responsibility for future generations is expressed in the principle of sustainable development. Various habits of contemporary people, manifested, e.g., in national debts and excessive use of natural resources, contradict intergenerational justice. Vogt considers structural mistakes as the source of such problems, hence requirements for the responsibility for future generations must be associated more with the issues of politics and economic management (Vogt, 2009, pp. 390–392). This social ethicist from Munich, Germany, argues that, generally, there are no clear criteria for the implementation of global solidarity with future generations (Vogt, 2009, p. 374), so his ethical-social principle of sustainable growth calls for management rules oriented towards the inclusion of future generations in the contemporary socio-economic reality.

The contemporary cultural and moral crisis, which manifests itself in development disparities and destroyed environment in certain regions around the world, requires a far-sighted, profound revision of the resource management model (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 32). The conditions for the actual growth of each person can be created in sustainable systems, which comprise a market, a State, and a civil society, and do not preclude the logic of responsibility and gratuitousness. However, this logic cannot be actualised without the unanimous

responsibility for one another among the people who live now, especially in the economic entity management practice. The logic of gratuitousness is the precondition for social justice, which is manifested in organisations who pursue social objectives and provide help (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 38–42).

One of the proposals that could follow the logic of gift-giving and gratuitousness is the concept of the circular economy, which is becoming a crucial reference point for the well developed economies of EU Member States. The concept of the circular economy was introduced by David Pearce and R. Kerry Turner in early 1990s (Andersen, 2007, p. 135). The first of its two pillars is the principle known as *cradle-to-cradle*, which concerns the design and manufacture of items with the intention of reusing them. This requires that non-renewable resources be used less extensively, and replaced with alternative, renewable resources. The second pillar of this concept is *industrial symbiosis*, which involves cooperation between economic entities, which are excluded from the network of interactions (Persson, 2015, pp. 3–4). A number of areas where the circular economy can be applied are presented by Joseph Huber in his book on environmental sociology (Huber, 2011, pp. 174–177).

While industrial symbiosis refers to the imitation of processes found in nature, and, from the point of view of the anthropocentric trend in the CST, it can be questionable, natural symbiosis could, in a parallel fashion, reflect the nature of economic cooperation as the result of the created conditions, under which each entity has the right to participate on an equitable basis in economic processes, while taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the economic system. However, economic cooperation, understood in a similar way, as economic symbiosis, should exclude any form of fighting against one another or even parasitism, and it should be rooted in the function of the State as the provider of aid to economic entities oriented towards supportive cooperation. The analogy to symbiosis must not create an economic system that would follow spontaneous rules, similarly to the self-regulating market. At the centre of its network of interdependencies, the analogy should put the person, considered as the regulator of economic processes, which resonate with the social and ecological systems (Vogt, 1998, pp. 209–210). Based on the ethical principle of *Retinität* (German – *thinking and acting in networks and systemic relationships* – translator's note), such a symbiotic economic interdependence considers human dignity as the fundamental value in the processes occurring in interdependent systems – economic, social and environmental. This principle of interconnectedness, based on *Retinität*, encouraged the system of ethical-social rules to incorporate a new ethical-social rule, i.e. that of sustainable development, which, as argued by Władysław Piwowarski in his system of rules, is a specific social principle designed to create normative order. As a social rule, it is a specific social justice principle (Piwowarski, 1993, pp. 64–68). In addition to introducing the sustainable development rule and expanding qualitatively the common good category (Schallenberg & Menke, 2016, pp. 173–174), this social principle is the ethical key to the interpretation of economic processes focused on the protection of the environment using technologies based on the generation of power from renewable resources.

Efforts to create environmentally oriented economies, characterised by their focus on low carbon dioxide emissions, must bear in mind the continuous coexistence of nations, where the development and reconstruction of statehood and economy is still a key factor in their growth (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 41). Well developed States must not forget about solidarity with countries that develop at a slower pace. In view of the ecological policy, this global solution is mainly the responsibility of well developed States (Dylus, 2005, p. 152–153).

## Principles of the circular economy

The circular economy is based on the substitution of natural resources and “weak” sustainable growth, which assumes that non-renewable resources can be replaced by other resources (Weiß, 2014, pp. 315–316; Hauff, 2014, p. 60). As argued by Holder Rogall, a supporter of “strong” sustainable development, since the 1980s, recycling has developed considerably, but in the early 21st century, the amount of recycled materials has decreased, and the recycling rate dropped (Rogall, 2010, pp. 529–534). Nevertheless, Vogt claims that the circular economy is more about the implementation of research programmes designed to develop principles for the substitution of resources, rather than about the emphasis on the effects of previous measures. Consequently, Vogt uses the following advice as the fundamental rules for the circular economy: 1. No renewable raw materials are to be used during their regeneration; 2. The amount of harmful substances and waste materials produced is not to be higher than the processing capacity of ecological systems; 3. The use of non-renewable resources should be compensated by the creation of substitutes, so that future generations are provided with similar opportunities for their welfare; 4. In order to avoid risks, the damage to ecological systems is to be so small that it can be controlled (Vogt, 2008, pp. 411–412).

The above-mentioned rules for the management of natural resources according to the circular economy, put special emphasis on intergenerational justice, which takes future generations’ interests into account.

## Subjectivity and responsibility of current generations

On the one hand, the concept of the circular economy advocates the implementation of new technologies as a result of technological and economic progress, but on the other, there is a high risk of excluding the poor, the sick, the elderly, refugees and migrants from social life (*Centesimus annus*, 1991, 57). In view of the above, it is important to bear in mind that the intergenerational justice dimension is closely connected with the intragenerational justice dimension (*Laudato si’*, 2015, 162). Respect for human rights in the economic domain and the encouragement of mutual responsibility in society for the development of a State ruled by law, which ensures the “subjectivity” of society and reaffirms the transcendent dignity of the person, are the preconditions for social growth (*Centesimus annus*, 1991, 46–49). In the context of the care for the environment and welfare, at the core of social growth is innovative low-emission economy based on the latest substitution technologies. In addition, well developed States, which follow this policy in their resource management, must not forget about the redistribution of wealth and profit. Otherwise, resource management will contribute to increased inequalities and poverty (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 42).

What guarantees social development, which safeguards the dignity of each person, in respect of both the future and the present, is the constant vigilance against any results of social exclusion, and appropriate laws, the compliance with which ensures social order. Any structural injustice, that leads to the exclusion of social entities, whose certain rights are based on the inalienable dignity of the person, is the example of the failure to respect fundamental ethical and social principles of the natural law, including in particular the guiding principle of subsidiarity. The combination of this widely accepted social principle with ethical and



social principles of the common good and solidarity makes it possible to clearly introduce detailed organisational principles of social life at both local and global levels (Piwowarski, 1993, pp. 64–68). This regularity supports the proposal for the full inclusion of the poorest countries in the world into the human community. This proposal has been advocated in the social teaching of the Church since the *Populorum progressio* encyclical (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 54–59).

The social responsibility of current generations that respect fundamental moral values, is necessary for democratic stabilisation, which provides a solid basis for the security of interests, also those of future generations. However, attempts to address the issue of economic production or legal organisation, when made alone, are insufficient. They have to be supported by reference to ethical values that will guide economic efforts towards the logic of gratuitousness (*Centesimus annus*, 1991, 52, 60). Of all the values related to quality human life that is worthy of man, the one whose importance has been growing is the environment. This is due to the importance of the person, who is strongly connected with the environment, which is their natural setting. Through work, nature is transformed to harness it and use for human purposes – it becomes an instrumental, rather than an intrinsic, value. However, it is important to bear in mind that, from the CST point of view, the logic of gratuitousness on the one hand considers the environment in relation to the private property of economic entities, and on the other to the property generally intended for the common good of all people.

## Conclusion

Even though there are certain inadequacies in the implementation of intergenerational justice in terms of the fair distribution of, share in, and exchange of, resources, such implementation must not be abandoned, as it stands up for the interests of future generations, demanding that they be taken into consideration in innovative resource management solutions. Intergenerational justice is manifested in the approach to resource management, which follows the principles of justice, as adopted by current generations, who are ever more convinced that their successors will also refrain from violating the dignity of the person (Wiemeyer, 2011, p. 78). Therefore, the provision of development opportunities to future generations is the result of respect for the dignity they deserve.

While no rights can be attributed to social life actors who do not exist yet, in a spirit of responsibility for them, they must be provided with similar opportunities for growth and welfare. Such responsibility for future generations is fulfilled through the above-mentioned practical management rules, which, in the long term, provide people of the future with opportunities for access to natural resources. However, for future generations not to be burdened with the consequences of irresponsible management, current generations of consumption-oriented people need to change their mentality and adopt new lifestyles that put more emphasis on such things as consumption economy, wise economic investments, and the logic behind the redistribution of profit (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 51; *Laudato si'*, 2015, 23).

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## CHAPTER 4

### Adult Children of Divorce (ACOD) – personal adjustment and preferred coping strategies

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#### ABSTRACT

This article focuses on Adult Children of Divorce (ADOC), i.e., adults who have been caught in the middle of their parents' divorce in their childhood. Difficult situations they have gone through as a result of the divorce continue to affect their lives, and influence their cognitive and emotional functioning, and social adjustment. The article addresses the relationship between personal adjustment and preferred coping strategies in this group. This questionnaire-based study covered 35 young adults. The obtained results show that adult children of divorce with poor personal adjustment tend to prefer avoidance strategies, avoid independent decision-making, and are afraid of getting involved. A significant correlation was also established between high level of adjustment and rare use of the support-seeking strategy, which could suggest that those ACOD are self-sufficient but distrustful.

**Keywords:** personal adjustment, coping strategies, adult children of divorce, ACOD, divorce, family

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### Theoretical background

Divorce, as a social phenomenon, was first addressed as late as in late 19th/early 20th century, when marriages were observed to be dissolved on a mass scale. At that time, divorce was considered a family dysfunction. This phenomenon has continued to be on the rise ever since, and people's attitude to it has changed. Wallerstein (1986) describes divorce as a crisis, Lazarus (1987) thinks of it in terms of stress, and Moss (1986) characterises it as a series of tasks and skills. However, regardless of nomenclature, they all agree that this is a stressful experience, whose impact can be compared to a natural and final loss caused by death or natural disaster.

Psychological studies on divorce generally focus on how spouses and their children experience and cope with this difficult situation. It has not always been clear whether parents' divorce affected their children. Long and Forehand (1987), and also Kurtz and Derevensky (1993), showed that divorce has negative consequences for children. They claim that such consequences persist for up to two years. However, other studies showed certain long-term after-effects of parental divorce. These can be observed in the social, emotional or behavioural sphere, even after many years (Aro & Palosaari, 1992; Kalter, 1987). Those findings gave rise to scientific endeavours to explore a whole range of effects that divorce might have on functioning and adjustment among children coming from single-parent families, also in adulthood. The term Adult Children of Divorce (ACOD) was coined on the basis of the Adult Children of Alcoholic (ACoA) syndrome. Both syndromes are related to Adult Children, so "Children of Trauma" (Gravitz & Bowden, 1987), who, despite the external façade of being adults, deep inside still consider themselves to be small, naughty children. Jim Conway (1995) describes ACOD as follows – "adult persons, whose life continues to be devastated as a result of the emotional or legal divorce of their parents, or dysfunctional marriage prior to divorce" (Conway, 1995, p. 32). Conway emphasises that this syndrome can also affect persons whose parents never divorced, but have never actually lived together but alongside each other; these are families with disturbed relationships, involving many arguments, or completely lacking contact. Even though they live together, such families can be divorced emotionally for a long time. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (2005) define this group as persons who have been deprived of childhood as a result of their parents' divorce, which gave them a certain identity and self-image which have an important influence over their current and future lives. Kaja and Wróblewska (2013) also developed a definition that describes Adult Children of Divorce. They characterise ACOD as adult persons who share similar problems, difficulties and experiences they had to go through. All those definitions have four main aspects, namely (1) the fact of being an adult, (2) the experience of divorce, or family break-up, in childhood, (3) the impact of past situations on current functioning of the person, and (4) adjustment problems. To sum up, Adult Children of Divorce is a syndrome that is present in adult people, who have experienced the divorce of their parents in childhood; difficult situations they have gone through as a result of the divorce continue to affect their lives, and influence their cognitive and emotional functioning, and social adjustment.

### **Adjustment among Adult Children of Divorce**

Cognitive adjustment of ACOD is characterised by excessive sense of responsibility for other people (Conway, 1995), giving up one's needs to satisfy the needs of others, the desire to be accepted by everyone (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2005), the fear about the durability of relationships, in which they are involved, the belief that arguments bring no good, but are a disaster for the relationship (Kaja & Wróblewska, 2013), and low self-esteem. According to a study by McGuire (1987), 58% of the studied population, whose parents had divorced, still sought external approval. ACOD reasoning is based on the conviction that they will be accepted and liked, and they will feel good if they meet all the requirements of other people, and if they make other people happy. This is impossible to achieve, causing frustration and only reinforcing their belief that they must do even more. The perception Adult Children of

Divorce have is disturbed by the deep fear concerning social relationships. The experience of being abandoned and betrayed is an inseparable part of their life and is also carried over to friendly or intimate interactions. They consider each relationship a high-risk one, and analyse various situations against the possible danger of relationship break-up (Conway, 2010).

This social maladjustment of the Adult Children of Divorce is visible not only in their attitude to important persons, and their efforts not to lose them (Conway, 1995; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2005), but also in major problems with asking for help, inability to establish close relationships (Franczak, 2011), to maintain and foster long-term friendships (Kaja, 1993), unwillingness to have relationships formalised (Beer, 2005), or to have children (Kaja, 1993, 2013). A study by Franczak (2011) shows that Adult Children of Divorce are socially maladjusted. As a result of family break-up, they develop a maladjusted personality with inadequate social relationships. The deficiency of emotions, presence of negative situational factors, emotional and health-related disorders – they all put children from single-parent families at a serious disadvantage when it comes to entering social roles, such as that of a daughter, a son, a friend, a student, and an employee (Velleman & Orford, 1990). The feeling of guilt experienced in childhood, and the burden of responsibility for parents' problems and family break-up, can lead to emotional disorders and contributes to the development of many asocial behaviours (Cudak, 2010). A longitudinal study by Zill, Morrison & Coiro show that the negative effects of divorce manifest themselves in children approx. 12 to 22 years after the divorce.

The fear of becoming fully involved in a relationship is associated with the feat of making the same mistakes one's parents have made (Wallerstein, 1986), i.e., fear of cheating on, or being cheated on by, one's spouse. ACOD often say that "if you do not marry, you will not get divorced" (Knox, Zusman & DeCuzzi, 2004). Therefore, ACOD stay longer in relationships before they decide to marry, compared to a control group of adults from complete families (Knox, Zusman & DeCuzzi, 2004). In a way, this fear is justified. Research shows that Adult Children of Divorce do divorce more often (Kulka & Weingarten, 1979; Wallerstein, 1986; Krein & Beller, 1988; Crowder & Teachman, 2004). Kaja (1993, 2013) shows that the likelihood of divorce or separation is two times higher for this group. But when they decide to marry, it is a deliberate and well-thought-out step, taken in the sure knowledge that their partners feel the same way (Conway, 2010). However, other analyses show that the daughters of divorced parents are more likely to start their own families very early, often before they turn 20, and to have children early, even before they marry (Wallerstein, 1986). A study by S. W. Whitton and his colleagues (2008), conducted on a group of 161 women and 94 men, confirm that Adult Children of Divorce are more distrustful and reluctant to marry. These adjustment characteristics are more often observed in women than in men, so the lack of trust and commitment is as likely to occur in relationships where both partners have divorced parents, and in ones where only the woman comes from a single-parent family.

In addition to the fear of making the same mistakes as their parents, and the general fear of failure, the Adult Children of Divorce are characterised by impatience (Kaja, 1993, 2013), often a sense of helplessness (Conway, 1992; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2005), excessive emotional control, including the suppression of anger and bad temper (Kaja, 1993, 2013; Conway, 2005; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2005), and the sense of not being worth of love, because you are not perfect (McGuire, 1987; Conway, 1992; Kaja, 1993, 2013; Wallerstein

& Blakeslee, 2005; Trent & Weeden, 2006; Cudak, 2010; Franczak, 2011). For ACOD, negative emotions, such as anger, hostility, emptiness, and grief, are more painful (Conway, 1995; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2005). Most of them report deriving less satisfaction from their life and experiencing more mental discomfort, compared to persons raised in complete families (Wallerstein, 1986). The feeling of loneliness, harm, and betrayal, which are first experienced in connection with the divorce, as a result of failure to receive love from one's mother and/or father, continues to be felt in adulthood (Cudak, 2003). A study by McGuire (1987), shows that 51% of adults whose parents have divorced, have felt different and alienated since their parents' marriage broke up. This indicates a specific emotional illiteracy, i.e., a substantial deficit in the ability to express emotions, which results from insufficient social and mental interactions, but also the lack of emotional bonds with parents (Bragiel, 1996). This illiteracy is also associated with huge problems with identifying and naming negative emotions, both in oneself and in other people (Cudak, 2003).

### **Coping strategies preferred by ACOD**

Adult Children of Divorce are persons who experienced many, different difficult situations in their lives. Their experiences have been inseparably linked with chronic stress in major spheres of their life. The coping strategies used in childhood often continue to serve as the preferred ones in adult life, and the difficult situations experienced in childhood affect coping in this group. The most typical coping method among ACOD is avoidance – ACOD prefer not to get involved, are afraid of active measures, which, in their opinion, lead to disappointment and pain, they use such strategies as quick withdrawal, delay in decision-making, and withdrawal from social life (Beer, 2005; Trent & Weeden, 2006). The area where the functioning of Adult Children of Divorce is distinctive are interpersonal relations, characterised by a substantial degree of caution, limited trust, and prudence (Cekiera, 1985; Farnicka, 2013). The strategy involving cautious action is typical for the described syndrome, but is limited to friendly and intimate relationships. In their interactions with other people, ACOD tend to contemplate each step and behaviour. They are afraid to open up and to trust other people (Cekiera, 1985). In difficult interpersonal situations, this strategy is used by the majority of respondents (Farnicka, 2013). Despite the considerable degree of caution and prudence in interpersonal relationships, Adult Children of Divorce need and seek social, and especially emotional, support. A study by Kaja (1992, 2013) shows that ACOD seek social support as much as the control group made up of persons raised in complete families. They seek support from their close relatives and want to be cared for (Cudak, 2010). The need for intimacy and love, unsatisfied during their childhood, follows them every step of the way. In order to satisfy it, ACOD would do anything to win approval and love (Kaja, 1993; 2013, Burrett, 2006). This strategy also includes loyalty towards other people (Farnicka, 2013), and honesty, or lies, depending on the situation, so as not to lose their position in the group (Cudak, 2003). Often, they would also pretend to have a neutral, or even negative, attitude towards their loved ones, to protect their relationships and avoid any conflicts, as they do not accept them (Burrett, 2006; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2006). On the other hand, Adult Children of Divorce are often forced by the situation at home to assume the role of a parent. The need to look after their siblings, support their parents, and do household chores, causes such persons to accept too much responsibility (Conway, 1995,

2010; Burrett, 2006). They approach difficult situations in a task-oriented manner, perceiving the problem as an obstacle to be overcome, thus reducing the role and involvement of emotional processes (Farnicka, 2013). The COPE Inventory describes such rapid action intended to remove the stimulus as Active Coping. Hobfoll (2006), in turn, considers them as assertive action.

### **Moderators of the relationship between coping and personal adjustment in ACOD**

Adult Children of Divorce constitute a rather diversified group. Their adjustment, behaviour and social relationships depend on many things. One of major factors is their experience of the divorce situation and relationships with family members. As argued by Paulina Boss (1991), it is not the divorce itself that affects the child, but their perception of it. The literature on the subject describes many social and personal moderators of the relationships between coping and adjustment in the group of Adult Children of Divorce. These include the atmosphere of family life prior to the divorce, as the element that affects its impact on children (Smith, 1995; Ensign, Scherman & Clark, 1998; Burrett, 2006; Hart, 1996; Joedje, 2006; Kaja & Wróblewska, 2013), the mental well-being of the parent who is given custody over the child (Raschke, 1988; Amato, 2000; Pruett, Williams, Insabella & Little, 2003), and the maintenance of a good relationship with at least one parent, which cushions the impact of the conflict between parents on children, and positively influences their adjustment (Ensign, Scherman & Clark, 1998). Another social moderator variable is the reason for the divorce (Beer, 2005). When children discover the motives behind their parents' decision, this has positive impact on their adjustment. This knowledge produces higher self-esteem and life satisfaction in children, and reduces their efforts to suppress depression (Kaja & Wróblewska, 2013). The number of children in the family and the order of births also matter (Burrett, 2006).

Despite the profound importance of social, family moderators, the greatest impact on personal adjustment and coping preferences is exerted by personal factors. The way the individual functions and copes depends on their idiosyncrasies, and personal and mental characteristics (Burrett, 2006; Kaja & Wróblewska, 2013). Many studies consider the age of children at the time of the divorce (Allison & Furstenber, 1989; Amato & Keith, 1991; Brągiel, 1996; Burrett, 2006; Kaja & Wróblewska, 2013), or their gender (Emery, 1982; Amato & Keith, 1991; Zill, Morrison & Coiro, 1993; Smith, 1995; Brągiel, 1996; Kaja & Wróblewska, 2013) as factors that determine their functioning in the future. An important element that determines personal adjustment and coping preferences in the group of Adult Children of Divorce is the perceived social support (Brągiel, 1996; Sęk & Pasikowski, 2006; Kaja & Wróblewska, 2013). The severity and duration of the long-term consequences of parents' divorce depend on children's capacity to establish and use support systems (Amato & Keith, 1991).



## Own research methodology

The following question was raised on the basis of the literature on the subject *What is the relationship between personal adjustment and coping preferences in the group of Adult Children of Divorce?*

### Tools used

Personal adjustment was measured using Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blank. The questionnaire comprises 40 sentence stems, to which respondents are required to add endings. Adjustment is measured as the score obtained across all items; higher results correspond to poorer adjustment. Test reliability in the adult version is approximately 0.92, with significance level  $p < 0.001$ . Test result analysis also took into account the factors identified by Kalinowski and Niewiadomska (2010), including non-family relationships, family relationships, attitude to oneself, desires and goals, and experienced problems.

Preferences for coping strategies were examined using three questionnaires, namely the Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS) by S. E. Hobfoll, the COPE Inventory, a multidimensional coping inventory, by Ch. Carver, M. Scheier and J. Weintraub, and the Brief RCOPE, a measure of religious coping with major life stressors, by K. I. Pargament.

The Strategic Approach to Coping Scale is used to examine the coping strategies preferred by the individual. It identifies 9 subscales, which can be divided into 3 major factors, or profiles, namely Active-Prosocial Coping, Active-Antisocial Coping, Asocial Coping (Hobfoll, 2006). In this study, the Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS) was used together with items from Brief RCOPE that assess two coping strategies – Positive Religious Coping and Negative Religious Coping. COPE is based on the model of stress developed by Lazarus, and on the behaviour Self-Regulation Theory. It is designed to examine the individual in terms of their coping with stress, distinguishing between “Dispositional Coping” and “Situational Coping”. The questionnaire comprises 15 scales, which make up the following coping styles: Active Coping, Avoidance, seeking of support and emotion-focused coping (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989).

In order to examine the hypotheses, the study used Pearson's  $r$  for the purposes of the statistical analysis of the obtained data. It defines the linear correlation between two variables. Its value is in a closed interval and ranges between  $-1$  and  $+1$ .

### Study group

The analysis covered questionnaires filled in by 35 persons (29 women and 6 men) who were Adult Children of Divorce in their early adulthood. The majority of people in the study group (71.4%) lived in cities with more than 100,000 residents. Most respondents were learners (82.9%), and some of them also worked (28.6%). The lowest number was represented by young adults who were only professionally active (17.1%). The majority of respondents declared that they were single (54.3%), some were in an informal relationship (34.3%), and only 3 persons were married (8.6%). One person got divorced (2.9%) and there were no widows/widowers.

Another important variable is the time that has passed since the divorce of respondents' parents. On average, divorce took place 11 years ago, and standard deviation was 6.23 years. The majority of respondents witnessed their parents' divorce between 11 and 15 years ago (28.57%). When asked about the reasons for their parents' break-up, 17.14% of respondents responded that they did not know. Other answers included unfaithfulness (40%), alcoholism (40%) and incompatibility of temperament. After the divorce, a substantial majority of respondents remained in the custody of their mothers (80%). No one lived only with their father, but 14.3% of respondents lived with each parent in turn. In more than half families, mothers did not build up a new relationship (51.42%). No respondent reported frequent changes in their mother's partners, and the least frequent scenario was remarriage by the mother (11.43%). Divorced fathers, on the other hand, were the most likely to establish informal relationships (45.71%). However, there was a significant differentiation, because the following two answers received the same result: *My father did not establish a new relationship* and *My father has had many partners* (25.71%).

In order to address the research question, the study formulated the following hypotheses, based on the analysis of the literature on the subject:

- H1: There is a correlation between a low level of personal adjustment and frequent use of avoidance strategies by ACOD.
- H2: ACOD characterised by a high level of personal adjustment often use support seeking strategies.
- H3: A high level of personal adjustment in relation to experienced problems and desires and objectives correlates with frequent use of active strategies.
- H4: A higher level of personal adjustment correlates with frequent use of positive religious strategies.

No significant correlations were observed for the last two hypotheses. This might be due to the considerable diversification of the group in terms of coping. Studies show that hardships can be perceived by ACOD as intolerable, catch-22 situations (Kaja & Wróblewska, 2013), which can dishearten and discourage them from overcoming such obstacles. On the other hand, ACOD must become very responsible and independent as early as in their childhood (Conway, 1995). Personal adjustment in these areas is an individual matter and depends on one's background and experience. Similarly, positive or negative attitude to religion, or using it as a coping strategy, depends on one's personal experience and is not something characteristic of the study group, as a whole.

Hypothesis 1 was confirmed. There is a strong positive correlation between the use of avoidance strategies and personal adjustment in the study group. This correlation is characterised by considerable statistical significance.

Table 1 *Correlation between personal adjustment and avoidance strategies in the group of Adult Children of Divorce*

<i>Preferred coping strategies</i>	<i>Personal adjustment</i>	
	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p</i>
Avoidance behaviour*	0.562	0.000
Avoidance**	0.464	0.005

\* Measured using the COPE inventory \*\* Measured using the Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS)

Total score for personal adjustment shows strong positive correlation with avoidance behaviour measured using the COPE inventory. Correlation coefficient is 0.562 and  $p = 0.000$ . In addition, the study investigated correlations between personal adjustment and Avoidance strategy from the Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS). Correlation also proved significant with  $p = 0.005$ , and  $r = 0.464$  indicates that the correlation is moderate.

Based on these results, the study rejected the null hypothesis and formulated an alternative hypothesis about the existence of a one-way correlation between the variables. The stronger the tendency to opt for avoidance strategies, the poorer the personal adjustment in the study group. This hypothesis was supported.

Fearing failure and that they will make the same mistakes as their parents, ACOD refuse to take action, which is associated with their poor personal adjustment (Kaja & Wróblewska, 2013). As a result of parental divorce, this group might stop actively seeking solutions and escape into the world of fantasy and dreams instead (Finzi, 2007), which is not conducive to successful adjustment. ACOD tend to be helpless, postpone their decision-making, withdraw from social life, and often back out or put things off, waiting for a better time (Beer, 2005; Trent & Weeden, 2006; Coway, 2010), which is associated with their poor personal adjustment in emotional, social and cognitive terms.

The analyses showed a correlation between support-seeking and personal adjustment in the group of Adult Children of Divorce.

Table 2 *Correlation between personal adjustment and support-seeking and emotional focus strategies in the group of Adult Children of Divorce*

<i>Preferred coping strategies</i>	<i>Personal adjustment</i>	
	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p</i>
Seeking emotional support*	0.498	0.002
Seeking instrumental support*	0.369	0.029
Seeking social support**	0.416	0.013

\* Measured using the COPE inventory \*\* Measured using the Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS)

The hypothesis formulated on the basis of literature predicted a negative correlation between the explained and explanatory variables. Findings show an inverse correlation. The Seeking social support strategy, measured using the Strategic Approach to Coping Scale

(SACS), shows significant positive correlation. Strategies measured using the COPE inventory, too, show significant positive correlations with the total score for personal adjustment.

This remarkable but significant correlation between frequent use of support-seeking strategies and poor personal adjustment can be associated with the specific nature of ACOD as a group. Due to their poor personal adjustment they tend to insist on seeking emotional or instrumental help from other people (Kaja, 1993, 2013; Burret, 2006; Farnicka, 2013). As a result of having dysfunctional families, ACOD lack some personal resources, have no self-confidence, and feel powerless. Consequently, they seek support from other people, but often do not receive it. The ways in which they seek support are ineffective, so they feel even more maladjusted.

Our findings might also indicate a significant correlation between high levels of adjustment in such aspects as Relationships outside the family, Desires and goals, and Experienced problems, and rare use of support-seeking strategies. This could suggest that Adult Children of Divorce are self-sufficient. Literature shows that such people tend to be very responsible and independent, because they need to grow up fast (Conway, 1995, 2010; Burrett, 2006). When their family breaks up, children are often left to fend for themselves, so they have to take care of themselves, see about the house, or help their siblings. ACOD can be self-sufficient in the sense that they do not need support in situations in which they feel they are doing well and feel well adjusted.

Table 3 *Correlation between social support-seeking and personal adjustment aspects in the group of Adult Children of Divorce*

<i>Personal adjustment aspect</i>	<i>Seeking social support**</i>	
	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p</i>
Relationships outside family	0.427	0.011
Relationships within family	0.106	0.546
Attitude to self	0.138	0.430
Desires and goals	0.489	0.003
Experienced problems	0.449	0.007

\* Measured using the Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS)

Table 3 shows correlations between personal adjustment aspects and social support-seeking strategy, measured using the Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS). Significant correlations are observed in such aspects as Relationships outside family, Desires and goals, and Experienced problems.

Table 4 *Correlation between social support-seeking and personal adjustment aspects in the group of Adult Children of Divorce*

<i>Personal adjustment aspect</i>	<i>Seeking emotional support*</i>		<i>Seeking instrumental support*</i>	
	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p</i>
Relationships outside family	0.367	0.030	0.263	0.127
Relationships within family	0.205	0.237	0.078	0.656
Attitude to self	0.128	0.463	0.159	0.362
Desires and goals	0.433	0.009	0.411	0.014
Experienced problems	0.490	0.003	0.373	0.027

\* Measured using the COPE inventory

Table 4 presents correlations between personal adjustment aspects and Seeking emotional support and Seeking social support strategies, measured using the COPE inventory. There are significant correlations between Relationships outside family and Seeking emotional support, and between Desires and goals and Experienced problems, and both described strategies. All the correlations are moderate.

Both methods show an inversely proportional correlation between personal adjustment aspects Desires and goals and Experienced problems, and support-seeking strategies. When ACOD are well adjusted in relation to their plans, goals, and problem-solving, they rarely seek support. As shown in a study by McGuire (1987), ACOD find it difficult to ask for help, so they prefer to cope on their own, using their own resources and abilities, believing that no one else can help them. On the other hand, poor adjustment in these areas might be associated with frequent, but ineffective, seeking of social support. Significant correlations are also observed between seeking support and personal adjustment in terms of relationships outside family. In social interactions, whether intimate or friendly, poorly adjusted Adult Children of Divorce seek social or emotional support. However, no such correlation is observed for instrumental support.

The above-mentioned findings offer new psychological insights about Adult Children of Divorce, their functioning, personal adjustment, and preferred coping strategies. These conclusions can be used to help this group of people develop their coping strategies. Special attention needs to be paid to the effectiveness of the support ACOD seek. Knowledge of personal adjustment can also be tapped to provide various forms of therapy. Such efforts could help ACOD change their preferred coping strategies, reduce their anxiety and avoidance in relationships and behaviour, and, consequently, contribute to their positive adjustment and improved quality of life.

It would be advisable to broaden the knowledge of the problem addressed in this study. Further analyses and larger study groups would help verify these findings and provide more information about Adult Children of Divorce. The issue that needs to be explored further is the direction of the correlation between personal adjustment and support-seeking preferences in this group. This study focused solely on young adults. If middle-aged and older adults were taken into consideration, this could help identify correlations resulting from the passage of time from their parents' divorce. Last but not least, it would also be advisable to

further explore the support experienced and sought by ACOD, as well as their resources, in order to develop more effective support measures.

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## CHAPTER 5

### The adjustment of convicts to prison confinement – an overview of selected concepts

*Anna Wójciuk*

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#### ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the article is to analyze factors affecting adaptation of prisoners to prison conditions. Early researchers suggested that imprisonment had mostly negative psychological and physical effects on its inmates, leading to psychological deterioration. More recent research, on the other hand, has suggested that imprisonment is not as detrimental as first thought. At the beginning is presented definition of total institution and main way of prison adjustment coined by Erving Goffman. Goffman identifies four lines of adaptation to prison confinement, namely withdrawal, rebellious line, colonization and conversion. There is also cold calculation, which is a compilation of all the above-mentioned alignments. Next are presented some of the most important variables of prisonization such as: someone's background, the type and character of correctional facility, overpopulation, criminal record. For some people prison is “a school of criminal life”. The other factors which may have influence to prisonizations are: social support, coping and the locus of control.

**Keywords:** prisonization, prison adaptation, total institution, locus of control

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Life in the 21st century can be rather stressful for an average individual. Thomas Holmes and Richard Rehe, psychiatrists from the Washington University in Seattle, have developed a scale based on a list of stressful life events which create a need for readjustment (as cited in: Kader, Borys, Wiktor & Bianga, 2009). The first four such events include, in descending order of their impact, Death of a spouse, Divorce, Marital separation, and Imprisonment. Other events include Personal injury or illness, and Pregnancy.

Detention in a correctional facility, as a new and initially alien place, requires the individual to adjust to those conditions. No wonder that such conditions tend to be perceived as unfavourable, since prison itself is a total institution. The term *total institution* was coined by Erving Goffman (2006). He argued that total institutions were the ones that influenced

the live of the individual comprehensively. While staying in such institutions, people share every moment, whether it is work, entertainment or sleep, with others. For a substantial majority of time, people stay together in one place – they sleep, rest, work, and eat together. Each day has a specific schedule and is well planned, and many of the activities are performed under duress. Goffman argues that total institutions try to restrict the freedom of their members, e.g., using physical barriers, such as closed doors, high walls, plexiglass windows, and barred windows, which largely hinder contact with the outside world (Goffman, 2006). A characteristic feature of total institutions is supervision – there are the staff (who guard, educate, punish, and reward the inmates), and the subordinate inmates. The beginning of the stay in a total institution is always similar. First of all, the individual is deprived of nearly all personal possessions, provided with an institutional ID (usually a reference number in the system) and a uniform, and notified about the local rules and regulations. But in addition to the formal rules in force at the facility, there are also informal rules, established between inmates, and between inmates and the staff. It takes new residents some time to familiarise themselves with all the rules and to adjust to the new situation. Goffman identifies the following five types of total institutions (Goffman, 2006):

- institutions established to care for persons thought to be both incapable and harmless (e.g., nursing homes);
- places established to care for people felt to be incapable of looking after themselves and a threat to the community, albeit an unintended one (e.g., mental hospitals);
- institutions organized to protect the community against what are thought to be intentional dangers to it (e.g., jails, penitentiaries, juvenile detention centres);
- institutions purportedly established the better to pursue some technical task and justifying themselves only on these instrumental grounds (e.g., army barracks, work camps);
- establishments designed as retreats from the world or as training stations for the religious (e.g., monasteries, sects).

Total institutions differ in terms of their permeability, i.e., the degree to which standards enforced within the institution are different from those applied in the outside world, which, in turn, affects inmates' coping after they leave the total institution. As a rule, the less permeable the institution, i.e., the greater the disparity between the rules inside and outside of it, the more difficult it is for the former inmate to deal with the outside world. This causes people leaving prisons, mental hospitals or monasteries to often have some initial problems with dealing with the "new, free" reality, so in many cases they go back to the institutionalised setting, as a place they "know well". Moreover, they might be stigmatised and labelled as "a convict", "a thief", "a psycho", or "a nun".

Moreover, Goffman identifies four main adjustment approaches, or *adaptation alignments*, as he calls them; these include withdrawal, rebellious line, colonisation, and conversion (Goffman, 2006).

Withdrawal is a type of adjustment involving radical cutting off from the environment, and focusing solely on oneself, one's matters and anything that concerns the individual directly. It means indifference to other people's affairs, social disengagement, lack of interest in what happens around, "switching off". This line of adaptation can lead to the overuse of defence mechanisms, and in particular to escaping into one's dreams and idealisation, and, subsequently, to excessive self-centredness, prison infantilism, and even severe depersonal-

isation. In psychiatry, it is known as “regression”, and in prison confinement conditions as “prison neurosis” or “prison infantilism”, and in concentration camps as “severe depersonalisation”.

The second adaptation alignment identified by Goffman is the rebellious line, where inmates completely refuse to cooperate with staff, either through uncompromising, determined and open resistance and hostility to staff, or a more subtle aversion to the management, manifested in participation in a second life, e.g. prison subculture (Goffman, 2006). However, usually both of those forms occur concurrently. Paradoxically, often a firm and implacable negation of the total institution leads a much greater need for the involvement of that institution’s management in the inmate affairs. The readiness of prisoners of war to riot is a typical short-term reaction, observed especially during the early stages of their stay at a P.O.W. camp, which is later replaced, e.g., by withdrawal.

The third standard alignment takes the form of colonisation and involves attempts to achieve within the institution a certain freedom to act, and relatively stable and decent living conditions. People who take this line too obviously can be accused by their fellow inmates of “having found a home”, which, in turn, engenders mixed feelings. In prison confinement conditions, this line is characteristic of habitual offenders. Moreover, it is assumed that the majority of such inmates are psychopaths. On the outside, such people seem cordial, winsome and accommodating, which helps them win fellow inmates and staff over.

Conversion is when inmates appear to completely take over the staff or institution’s views, they are obedient, disciplined, meet the institution’s expectations, in short – they act out the role of perfect inmates, who cause absolutely no trouble. Contrary to colonisation, converts take a more disciplined and moralistic line.

In addition to the above-mentioned adaptation alignments, Goffman argues that the majority of inmates use “cold calculation”, which is the combination of all the aforementioned lines of adaptation, mainly colonisation, conversion, and loyalty towards fellow inmates, depending on circumstances, as it increases the chances of leaving the institution without any major physical or mental damage (Goffman, 2006). For example, they take advantage of secrets and weaknesses of the staff, various legal loopholes and chicanery, as well as habits of other inmates, only to obtain some officially forbidden benefits.

A study by Iwona Niewiadomska (2004) shows that the most popular line of adaptation among habitual offenders is withdrawal (Niewiadomska, 2004). This is associated with emotional, intellectual and behavioural problems of such inmates. As an adaptation alignment, withdrawal can be compensated through integration with an informal inmate group and/or colonisation. The third type of adaptation to prison confinement is conversion. The inmate denies any difficulties and fails to acknowledge the selfish motives behind the actions of the prison staff.

Another adaptation approach used by inmates is suggested by Jadwiga Sikora. She describes it as slowing down the process of experiencing a painful situation, which, in the case of convicts, would involve them trying not to think about home and freedom, avoiding conversations on those subjects, taking the approach of indifference to the life outside prison walls, and spending their time in the penitentiary on other available forms of activity (as cited in: Kanarek-Lizik, 2013). This way, they defend themselves against some painful emotions in a situation which they cannot change for the better.

The term *adjustment* has been approached in many different ways in psychological literature. Zbigniew Skorny (1976) treats adjustment and adaptation as equivalent terms, while

noting their external aspect, which boils down to considering adaptation as assimilation to the environment and as adjustment to serving various social roles; and their internal aspect – concerning the individual themselves, whose personality is developed in the course of adjustment. Many other authors also emphasise the internal transformations that take place in human personality during the process of adjustment and allow the individual to keep up with the changing world. The state in which human personality does not undergo any changes, or these are not appropriate to the situation, can be considered as maladjustment. Andrzej Lewicki and Ondrej Kondas argue that this makes it impossible to fulfil the regulatory function of behavior (as cited in: Aleksandrowicz, 1998). Tadeusz Tomaszewski (1975) claims that, in addition to action, adjustment is one of the most important psychological regulatory processes. ICD-10 emphasizes the importance of personality in the process of adjustment, defining it as a set of fixed thought, experience and behaviour patterns characteristic of individual lifestyle and adaptation (as cited in: Aleksandrowicz, 1998).

Adaptation to prison confinement is determined by a number of variables, from sociological to psychological.

An important role is played by one's background. Many people who border on crime, and so-called "small-time criminals or petty thieves" in particular, are aware that, sooner or later, they will have to face the consequences of their "easy money" approach to making a living, and are less scared of the imminent imprisonment, compared to average law-abiding citizens. The very fact of hanging around with dissolute people, who often have already been in a correctional facility, makes the individual familiar with its specific subculture, norms and rules, and teaches them how to cope on the inside. Consequently, it is easier for them to accommodate themselves to prison conditions (Crank, 2010).

In recent years, there was no overpopulation in Polish prisons, but cells provide room for two to thirteen people, which negatively affects the adaptation of inmates, and there is hardly any space for intimacy, which might lead to increased violence and feeling of alienation, despite staying in the cell with many people. Shover claims that adjustment is also affected by age and previous time served (Crank, 2010). Older people, given their age and experience gained during their stay in a correctional facility, are better adjusted to those peculiar conditions, because, thanks to their life experience, they are able to identify and avoid possible threats better. Convicts who had received long sentences develop a certain "sixth sense", or "third eye", if you will, which allows them to recognise potentially dangerous situations and serious threats. Moreover, young age often provokes violent behaviour, mainly due to the tendency to act impulsively and the love of freedom in all its forms, which might be perceived by older inmates even as self-destructive. Older people, who have been in a correctional facility before, will handle their next stay in such a facility better, since they have at their disposal the mental and physical coping methods they have developed or learned earlier, which gives them an advantage over younger people, who have not been in such a facility before (Crank, 2010).

People who have a criminal record are less likely to perceive prison as a harsh or hostile environment. When they go back to criminal activities, they are well aware of the possible consequences of their decision, they understand that their lifestyle and the choices they have made come at a cost of future incarceration, which they often start to perceive in positive terms, since prison provides them with regular meals and contact with "old friends", while also offering a certain stability, compared to the unpredictable life on the streets. Given their

lifestyle, standards and values, imprisonment itself is treated as part of their criminal world, or a norm (Crank, 2010).

People who strongly identify themselves with the criminal subculture and prefer this lifestyle over the conventional one, tend to perceive imprisonment as a satisfactory alternative to their previous lifestyle. Akerstrom notes that criminals develop a new identity, comparing themselves to other criminals and people living the traditional, conventional lifestyle, which has nothing to do with the correctional facility (as cited in: Crank, 2010). They tend to consider the life of the average Joe to be boring, believing their lifestyles, as criminals, to be much more appealing and attractive, which makes them consider themselves not as prisoners, but quite the contrary, as free people, who do whatever they like. People who have not assimilated into the criminal subculture, or who have received short sentences, usually isolate themselves from other inmates, whom they might consider dissolute convicts, and perceive the correctional facility as a hostile and scary place, and they are the ones for whom the imprisonment might actually serve its purpose.

People who do not perceive the correctional facility as a powerful deterrent, are much more likely to go back to prison, i.e., to become recidivists. They tend to consider the possibility of going back to prison in terms of “professional risk”, which is problematic for the judiciary, as it makes it impossible for the punishment to serve its purpose, which, as stipulated in Article 67 of the Criminal Enforcement Code, is to “*encourage the convicted person to cooperate in the development of their socially desirable attitudes, and in particular the sense of responsibility, and the need to abide by the law, and, consequently, to stop committing crimes*” (Act of 6 June 1997 – *Criminal Enforcement Code*).

Imprisonment can be considered “a school of criminal life”, a place where one can learn criminal skills, which, paradoxically, constitutes a springboard for further criminal activity. The correctional facility is a place where inmates communicate, learn adjustment, improve and develop their criminal skills, which will later bring them some major benefits, such as climbing up the criminal ladder, as an element of their “criminal maturity” (Crank, 2010).

Gendreau suggests that juvenile detention facilities and correctional facilities should assess prisoners against their attitudes, values and behaviour during their stay in prison in order to determine which of them are more likely to be negatively affected by the prison life (as cited in: Crank, 2010). It is believed that auxiliary factors, such as fellow inmates, might have a negative effect on adjustment, and this, in turn, can lead to increased recidivism. Moreover, Gendreau further notes that there is little knowledge about what happens inside the “black box”, without the supervision, and outside the control, of the staff, which can contribute to recidivism.

Initially, research on the adaptation to prison confinement focused on its negative consequences, both mental and physical, and on the reasons for the deterioration in inmates’ mental well-being. Studies conducted over the last dozen or so years show that prison is not as deleterious as initially assumed. There is a correlation between coping strategies, adjustment and well-being in convicted men. Initially, scholars argued that prison led to mental deterioration. Such deterioration included emotional withdrawal, depression, suicidal thoughts or attempts and increased unfriendliness. The most difficult period for prisoners is at the beginning of their imprisonment. Recent studies show that convicts are more likely to be affected by the loss of their previous, unrestricted, contact with the outside world, and more difficult family relationships, than by the imprisonment itself or the conditions in the correctional facility, to which inmates gradually become accustomed (Picken, 2012).

In prison, the individual is more likely to experience uncertainty, stress, depression, anger, and loneliness, which can lead to lower self-esteem. Previous studies show that inmates tend to have higher levels of anxiety and depression, as well as lower self-esteem, compared to the general population. Liebling confirmed the existence of a correlation between imprisonment, feeling of injustice, self-mutilation, and suicide attempts (as cited in: Picken, 2012). The greatest risk is observed at the beginning of imprisonment, when the individual receives first instance sentence of imprisonment, especially if it is a long sentence. There are certain factors that can encourage suicide in a crisis situation, such as imprisonment. These factors include excessive drinking or drug or substance use, loss of social support, especially from one's loved ones, feelings of guilt and shame, mental disorders, suicide attempts in the past, and upcoming trial. Coping and adjustment can also be negatively affected by the fear of the unknown, distrust of authoritarian environment, apparent lack of control over the future, isolation from the family, shame associated with imprisonment, and consequences of having a criminal record.

The locus of control concept developed by Rotter is reflected also in the way convicts function (as cited in: Bielniak, 2014). Other-direction/outer containment can be observed in people who believe that things that happen to them are independent of them, as a result of which they feel no responsibility for the consequences of their behaviour, blaming various external circumstances; they experience uncertainty, fear the future, and take a fatalist attitude. They have a lower self-esteem and a deeper discrepancy between *the real self* and *the ideal self*, compared to inner-directed/inner containment inmates; they avoid social interactions, show symptoms of emotional maladjustment, and exhibit higher levels of anxiety than people with an internal locus of control. Inner-directed/inner containment inmates, on the other hand, believe that they have control over what happens to them, and that it is all up to them. As a result, in failure situations, they tend to blame and criticise themselves heavily, and in the event of a success they would present themselves in an overly positive way. They like to have everything under control, and if they do not, they fight to regain it. The lack of inner locus of control in inmates negatively affects the way they function, as it impairs their feedback system. Based on external information, observations and specific values and beliefs, experiences and knowledge, the individual develops various strategies and their own ideas about the way they should live their life, the individual feels inhibited when it comes to expressing and defining emotions, they have problems with anticipating the consequences and results of their actions, which can make their behaviour significantly more brutal and increase the number of violent acts. A study on the sense of control in violent criminals, as conducted by Katarzyna Belniak (2014), shows that inmates do not have the sense of self-agency and do not acknowledge the relationship between their own actions and their consequences. They perceive their lives as a string of unfortunate coincidences. Research further shows that the loss of the ability to decide and retain control leads to helplessness and the abandonment of all efforts to regain control over one's life. In addition, study findings portraying inmates as discouraged confirm that the lack of positive reinforcement and difficult experiences prior to conviction cause inmates to clam up.

Imprisonment forces inmates to adapt to those new, stressful conditions. Erving Goffman identifies four lines of adaptation to prison confinement, namely withdrawal, rebellious line, colonisation and conversion. There is also cold calculation, which is a compilation of all the above-mentioned alignments. There is a number of factors which can affect adjustment, from demographic variables, such as age, background, previous life history, and

experiences, to psychological variables, such as attitude to imprisonment, social support, emotional coping, perceived quality of life, and locus of control. Moreover, educators identify other variables, such as the way inmates influence one another, the attitude of the staff, the type and character of correctional facility, the stage of imprisonment, and participation in various forms of penitentiary interventions, such as work, cultural and educational programmes, and therapeutic interventions.

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## CHAPTER 6

# An innovative training programme for the staff of social integration and assistance institutions, supporting their professional qualifications for working with persons at risk of social exclusion

*Maria Beata Nowak*

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### ABSTRACT

This article outlines a proposed innovative training programme for people who work with groups at risk of social or professional exclusion. It is based on extensive empirical research, expert opinions, and social consultations.

**Keywords:** professional competences, risk of social and professional exclusion, court-appointed probation officers, training

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## Introduction

At the European level, support for the development of qualifications and competences was initiated by the Copenhagen Declaration of 2002, adopted in Copenhagen by European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training and the European Commission. In the light of the Declaration, competences can be defined as a dynamic conglomerate of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It also identifies key competences, meaning skills that are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge society, including (European Union, 2007, p. 3):

- *communicating in mother tongue and foreign languages* (these competences regard effective communication);
- *mathematical, scientific and technological competence and digital competence*, designed to develop skills such as logical thinking, formulating and examining hypotheses, drawing conclusions on the basis of assumptions made, and adaptation to computerised world;
- *entrepreneurship and ability to learn independently* – competences that facilitate life-long learning;



- *interpersonal, intercultural, social, and civic competences* that support efficient functioning in social groups;
- *cultural expression and creative thinking competences* – oriented at the adaptation to creative universe, characterised by continuous self-organisation, where it is important to control one's future (Kenny, 2003).

Many international organisations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and supraregional institutions, recognise the importance of competences in the fields of both economics and economy, and social activities. OECD argues that competences perceived from the social perspective significantly increase social cohesion, sense of justice, and participation of individuals in democratic institutions, as well as being a countermeasure for social inequality and marginalisation of individuals and social groups, on both small and large social scales (<http://www.oecd.org>).

In readaptation work, such as support for ex-prisoners, as a group facing special risk at the labour market, it is important that support-providers have specific personal, social and professional competences.

Professional competences are referred to as “hard competences”, because they guarantee the fulfilment of specific functions and determine one's work performance (Smółka, 2008). So-called “soft competences”, meaning psychosocial (personal and social) skills, are different in nature. Generally speaking, a high level of personal competences is crucial for efficient self-management, and that of social competences – for interpersonal effectiveness.

Personal competences are developed on the basis of one's personal disposition. They constitute human capital, which, when combined with motivation understood as the pursuit of more and more ambitious goals, leads to self-realisation and brings people satisfaction from the things they do and the family or work-related responsibilities they fulfil.

In the literature on the subject, personal and social competences are described as personal resources that are significant for coping (Hobfoll, 2006). From a professional perspective, the most desirable skills include:

- flexible thinking;
- creativity;
- openness to change;
- decisiveness;
- coping with stress;
- solving problems;
- conscientiousness;
- analytical thinking;
- independence;
- good own work and time management;
- enthusiasm for learning.

These competences are conditional on having specific *life competences*, such as feeling of social support, openness, internal locus of control, sense of agency, high self-esteem and self-acceptance, optimism and sense of humour (Poprawa, 2001).

***Personal and social skills, jointly referred to as psychosocial skills, determine the performance of, i.a., social workers*** (Kaczmarska & Sienkiewicz, 2005; Cherniss, 2000).

Social competences have been recognised by the European Commission as a key element that contributes to the welfare of European societies and as reliable indicators of their well-being (European Union, 2005). From this perspective, such competences are perceived as a capacity (interpersonal and intercultural) that allows people to live a happy social life (Putnam, 2000). This aspect of human competences has been of interest to many scientific disciplines, which consider them to be skills which are extremely important for adaptation to new conditions and situations, and crucial for the quality of social interactions and relationships between people, and also our effective performance in various contexts and stages in life.

## Competences of people who implement rehabilitation interventions

The problem of social maladjustment and rehabilitation under a non-custodial sentence is addressed by the institution of probation, which serves auxiliary and executive functions to courts. This is one of the most often adjudicated legal measures, used as an alternative to social isolation. Generally, it is optional, but for juvenile delinquents it is obligatory (Gromek, 2002). The general and, at the same time, constitutive purpose of probation is education and prevention. But its rehabilitation (learning desirable behaviours or unlearning undesirable ones) and support purposes (restoring disturbed balance by satisfying the needs of the recipients of rehabilitation interventions) are equally important (Kalinowski, 2007; Kotlińska, 2007).

While performing their statutory duties, probation officers provide family and criminal courts with feedback, carry out correctional and educational interventions in relation to offenders who have been given sentences involving didactic means (minors) or punitive probation means (adults), and who, due to their personal characteristics or the type of offence or crime, either do not have to or should not be isolated from their environment. A related role is played by guardians, who provide support to children, whose parents have had their parental authority limited in relation to the fulfilment of corrective and educational functions. [Translator's note: In the Polish legal system, the functions of probation officers and guardians are covered by a single term (*kurator*). For the purposes of this article, any reference to probation officers should be understood as reference to either probation or guardian *ad litem* services] Probation officers also perform various control functions in relation to people convicted for crimes or offences, who remain in foster families or social care institutions. Within the broad spectrum of tasks carried out by court-appointed probation officers there is room for cooperation with corresponding associations, organisations and institutions on the improvement of living and health conditions of, as well as employment and training for, people subject to enforcement proceedings (*Ustawa z dnia 27 lipca 2001 r. o kuratorach sądowych*, see: Article 174 of the Executive Penal Code; Marek, 2007; Śpiewak, 1999).

The effectiveness of probation officers is affected by their personal characteristics, such as natural aptitude, professional background (reasons for choosing their profession, and their level of education) and professional competence (knowledge and skills), as well as external, legal/organisational, and social/environmental factors (Machel, 2007; Opora, 2006). However, these factors can hardly be ordered in terms of the strength of their impact on the quality and effectiveness of probation work. It is because they form a complex structure

of interrelated elements. In addition, it is important that probation officers have a sense of responsibility for their wards and the outcomes of interventions undertaken in relation to them, as well as for themselves (their own attitudes, behaviour and professional competences). Indeed, the sense of responsibility is the basis for professional conscientiousness, or reliability, honesty and integrity in human interactions, truthfulness, decency, and self-worth, all of which constitute, in addition to the required professional competences, a set of characteristics that make up the basic indicators of constructive professional conduct.

I conducted a study on, i.a., the identification of the levels of social and professional competences among probation officers (Nowak, 2011). Its findings show that there is a need to create a coherent system of specialist training for probation officers, especially in relation to the development and enhancement of their professional and social qualifications and competences. This is due to the fact that professional education varies significantly and a considerable proportion of such professionals (one third of all respondents) have poor social competences. Only 18% of the studied probation officers proved to perform well in close interpersonal contact that fosters the establishment of deeper relationships with people. The majority of them exhibit average (59%) or low levels (23%) of competence. On a scale describing the effectiveness of behaviour in situations that required assertive responses, scores achieved by a substantial majority of respondents (72%) were average. Low (19%) and high scores (9%) proved marginal. Only 5% of studied probation officers were highly effective in social exposure situations and in terms of coping with opinions of others. The majority scored average (69%) or low (26%). These results show that social competence training is indeed required for the enhancement of the professional qualifications of probation officers.

On the other hand, a study by E. Wysocka (2011) shows that probation officers struggle with the proper fulfilment of their professional role. In particular, they show poor assessment skills (Wysocka, 2011). Their knowledge about the essence of assessment is seriously lacking, especially in aspects that are important for the job and related to individual and environmental assessments. The assessment skills they lack include mainly their inability to link assessment to prognosis and recommendations, sporadic linking of assessment and corresponding recommendations, making partial diagnoses (incomplete assessments), and failing to give positive assessments. The examined probation officers were ignorant of the preliminary assessment stage, did not make observations during interventions, and did not review their assessments. What was characteristic of them, was that they focused on collecting information.

A study by A. Karłyk-Ćwik (2009) concerning the self-assessment of professional competences of special education teachers, who often work as probation officers and provide support as part of rehabilitation interventions, shows that they tend to perceive the level of their professional competences to be rather high. The skills they believe they have mastered the best are the ability to create the atmosphere of acceptance and kindness, to control the behaviour of their wards, and to understand, and show empathy to, them (Karłyk-Ćwik, 2009). In turn, a study by M. Heine (2008) shows that probation officers tend to have the highest regard for their competences related to giving and receiving feedback, and to understanding themselves, their wards and their mutual relationships (Heine, 2008). Competences concerning understanding, and giving meaning to, their own actions were assessed as average, while the ability to reflect on the moral and legal legitimacy of their own actions, and to create the atmosphere of acceptance and kindness, were considered lacking.

A study by A. Witkowska-Paleń demonstrated that a substantial majority of probation officers believed their work produced intended results. However, many studies on the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions undertaken in relation to offenders on probation show that it is rather limited (Gogacz, 2002; Kotlińska, 2007).

Major factors for successful rehabilitation and social readaptation of ex-prisoners are (Witkowska-Paleń, 2008):

- natural aptitudes of probation officers,
- theoretical background,
- frequency of contacts with wards,
- applied methods and forms of work,
- scope of assistance provided,
- cooperation with the environment,
- personality traits of offenders (how demoralised they are, where they live).

Given that competences are dynamic in nature and require updating and enhancement, it is necessary to improve the professional qualifications of probation officers in terms of theory, assessment, communication and organisation.

Programmes that support the development of people employed with aid institutions, including probation officers, in personal, social and professional terms, should be adjusted to their resources, attractive – encouraging them to become personally involved and internally motivated to change, and accurate in relation to their needs and social roles.

And readiness to change is indicated by knowledge, skills, preferences, aspirations, values, and development needs.

Therefore, training opportunities should be comprehensive and diverse enough to meet the needs of all employees, and training strategies should be aligned with human resource management policies.

## **Proposed support programme**

### **Training in personal and social competences (60 hours)**

#### ***SOCIAL COMPETENCE IMPROVEMENT COURSE***

Social competences are important for the efficient self-management (ability to motivate oneself and ability to control one's emotions) and high interpersonal effectiveness, which is helpful in many personal and social situations.

#### *Efficient interpersonal communication and establishment of close interpersonal contacts*

The ability to communicate effectively is of fundamental importance for both one's everyday functioning and professional work. Communication competence improvement workshop covers basic skills that ensure efficient interpersonal communication:

- 1. Basic non-verbal communication skills** (Smółka, 2008):

- **emotional expressiveness** – ability to express one’s interpersonal attitudes (communicate one’s status in a relationship or group, or interest in others) using the tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and body;
  - **emotional sensitivity** – the ability to receive and understand non-verbal messages from other people;
  - **emotional control** – the ability to control one’s emotions and their expression (feigning, concealing, disguising).
2. Basic **verbal communication** skills (Smółka, 2008):
- **social expressiveness** – the ability to start conversations and to draw people into social interactions;
  - **social sensitivity** – conforming to the norms related to the behaviour accepted in specific situations or social roles;
  - **social control** – the ability to play various social roles (self-presentation) and to be flexible about adapting one’s behaviour to specific situations;
  - **social manipulation** – the ability to intentionally (on purpose and according to a plan) affect the course and effects of social interactions.
3. **Other skills** that are worked on:
- recognising the responses of one’s interlocutors to one’s messages and anticipating their responses to messages one wants to convey next;
  - successful persuasion – mainly for social workers;
  - focusing on what one’s interlocutors say and how they behave, and sharpening the ability to read between the lines;
  - responding flexibly to verbal and non-verbal communication in various social contexts to achieve one’s objectives in the course of interactions;
  - communicating in situations involving language and cultural barriers; communicating with addicted, older, and mentally disabled people;
  - establishing close interpersonal contacts.

*Effective coping in situations that require assertiveness*

The assertive training course helps develop assertive attitudes and learn the associated assertive behaviours. An assertive attitude means that you are aware of your own rights and you assert them, while also respecting the rights of others. In the course of this training, its participants work on their ineffective behaviours to make them more beneficial for themselves and their relations with others – **learning how to deal with situations involving interactions with colleagues and ex-prisoners**, who often exhibit aggressive and entitled attitudes in assistance/support relationships.

1. Essential preconditions for assertiveness include (Poprawa, 1998):
- knowledge of behaviours appropriate for specific situations;
  - ability to assert one’s rights and express one’s beliefs and feelings;
  - cognitive and affective readiness for assertive behaviour – comparing one’s requirements with situational requirements, a complex structure of fairly fixed beliefs and personal attitudes, ways of self-expression and coping with life’s challenges.

The training should focus on interactions with colleagues and ex-prisoners, who often exhibit aggressive and entitled attitudes in assistance/support relationships.

2. After completing the training, its participants will know how to:
- distinguish between assertive and aggressive and submissive behaviours;

- build positive relationships based on expressing their emotions;
- effectively argue their views and opinions;
- evaluate problems, people, and relationships from the right angle;
- adjust their messages to specific situations and people;
- provide useful feedback instead of criticising;
- relieve stress that reduces self-esteem.

#### *Effective coping in social exposure situations*

In essence, self-presentation skills are about the ability to continuously build and articulate a positive self-image. Factors that hamper self-presentation skills are social anxiety and shyness. Training measures offered as part of this course should rely on Freestyle Repertory Theatre and should focus on:

- mastering methods related to effective self-presentation and professional image development;
- acquiring skills related to coping in social exposure situations;
- increasing the awareness of one's body language.

This training will also address strategies that are helpful in developing one's image through specific forms of self-presentation (as cited in: Szmajke, 1999):

- **ingratiation strategy** – gaining as much credibility as one wishes to be liked (exercised in expressing liking and agreement, and in creating one's attractiveness);
- **self-promotion strategy** – projecting oneself as a competent, effective doer, characterised by considerable general (intelligence, physical fitness) or specific talents;
- **moral perfection strategy** – projecting oneself as a role-model in terms of compliance with moral principles and norms.

#### *Course in improving skills related to coping with stress – mainly for social workers*

Excessive pressure experienced by employees, or the lack of competences associated with task performance, can significantly reduce both quality and effectiveness of such performance. Effectiveness depends on aptitude, knowledge, and personal, social, and professional skills.

High levels of intensive, prolonged stress, when generated internally and by relationships with other people, as well as organisational stress, require remedial measures, which, in turn, require specific skills in coping with stressful situations. Firstly, it is important to recognise one's stress responses and to determine appropriate remedial measures.

##### 1. Major sources of stress at the workplace are:

- **not enough/too much work**, associated with the lack of competences or excessive workload compared to the time allowed for coping with it;
- **organisational changes** – lack of reliable information, abandonment of established behaviour patterns, difficult period of transition, requiring deep involvement;
- **ambiguous role** – an ill-defined scope of activities and responsibilities, and lack of sufficient knowledge of one's job description;
- **role overload** – perceiving one's professional role as difficult in relation to the perceived level of one's competence;
- **role conflict** – difficulties hampering task completion, lack of clear standards concerning task implementation, uncomfortable personal relationships.

2. In this respect, the following heuristic methods are recommended:

- Gordon Synectics,
- De Bono method,
- analytical techniques, forced associations, change of thought patterns, reversal of one's point of view, ideal projection.

In addition, it is important to use special *training to reduce stress and improve self-efficacy* in relation to planning, goal achievement, and time management.

Competence workshop on stress coping skills for readaptation intervention professionals involves workshop and training classes, including:

1. Development of mental resilience building skills
  - building and nurturing constructive relationships with other people,
  - building self-esteem and appropriate self-image.
2. Using coping techniques:
  - **Long-term strategies complemented by short-term techniques** which ensure that specific behaviours are regularly repeated and contribute to self-discovery (identification of typical responses and the most stressful situations):
    - working on changing one's self-image (appropriate assessment associated with the level of criticism, positive attitude to other people and the world in general, proactive approach, stability);
    - changing stressful behaviours using "baby steps";
    - taking care of one's psychophysical comfort – choosing appropriate lifestyle, diet, relaxation techniques (Jacobson training and Schultz autogenous training);
    - maintaining a healthy work-life balance;
    - seeking social support and building alliances;
    - adopting assertive attitudes and using assertive techniques;
    - managing time.
  - **Short-term strategies** designed to help the individual relax and alleviate the effects of stress:
    - taking action in risk situations to feel a sense of release (physical exercise);
    - distraction (seeking pleasure and enjoying life, e.g., by strengthening relationships, entertainment, and developing interests);
    - controlling one's thoughts and behaviour to reduce stress;
    - spontaneous relaxation intended to stop one's mind from racing and to calm one's nerves;
    - slowing down the pace of work – taking time to examine the situation and develop a plan of action in order to perform the same amount of work in the same amount of time in a more systematic and methodical manner;
    - using assertive techniques, such as broken record, drawing boundaries, negative inquiry, fogging, and changing judgements into opinions.

## **Workshop on professional competences for readaptation work (100 hours)**

This workshop on professional competences for working with ex-prisoners is designed to improve participants' ability to work concurrently on readaptation and reintegration with

*individuals* (ex-prisoners), *groups* (ex-prisoners' families), and *local environment* (institutions and local communities) to initiate and manage social measures for people undergoing readaptation interventions (Fig. 1).

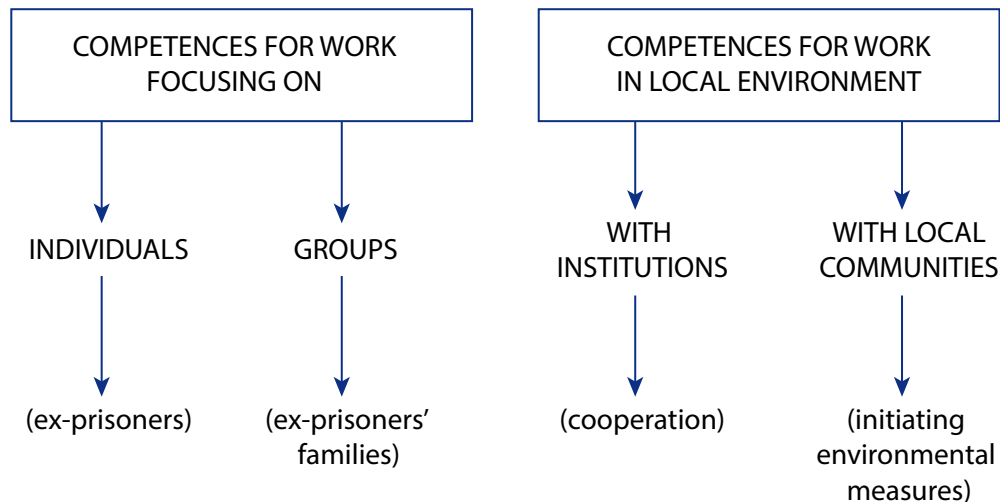


Figure 1. An overview of the workshop on competences for working with a group facing major risk at the labour market – ex-prisoners. Source: Own work.

**The competence workshop is designed, in particular, to**

- improve interpersonal and social skills and foster desirable professional attitudes;
- improve assistance/support provision skills;
- develop and improve analytical, planning and effective cooperation skills related to creating local assistance and social support systems (strategies, programmes, assessments) and to empowering and managing local environment.

The above-mentioned measures are part of various competence workshop courses, and the resulting value added is the counteraction and prevention of professional burnout

- a course in improving **the ability to establish and maintain contact** – 15h;
- a course in improving **the ability to assess the needs of ex-prisoners and support capital, to resolve problems in a creative manner, and to work together as a team** – 20h;
- a course in developing **the ability to handle conflicts while using team support techniques** – 10h;
- a course in developing **the ability to provide individuals and groups with competence training** – 15h;
- a course in improving **the ability to analyse legal documents and to provide support concerning the market integration of people at risk of social exclusion** – 10h;
- a course in improving **competences for working at the local level** – 20h;



- a course in improving **competences for undertaking and maintaining cooperation with positive peer environment** – 10h.

### ***A COURSE IN IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN CONTACT***

#### *Empathy and appreciation*

What determines the effectiveness of relationships based on partnership is the ability to empathise with one's partner to identify their emotions, understand their situation, and to show this understanding (Aronson, 1997; Fromm, 2001; Myss, 2000; Persaud, 2006; Seligman, 1995).

Empathy, i.e., the ability to sympathise with other people, is considered to be a key element in therapeutic interactions designed to provide help (assistance/support).

Words expressing interest or appreciation can increase other people's self-esteem, facilitate communication, and empower them.

#### *Active listening*

In order to ensure good communication and read other people's "maps of reality", it is necessary to be able to listen actively, or "listen to understand" (Egan, 1986). Interactions with wards/clients activate personal and cultural filters that distort the way support providers listen to them. Therefore, clients are often consciously (or unconsciously) labelled. This seriously impairs the ability to listen and understand them, especially when wards/clients and social support and assistance providers differ significantly in terms of their life experience and background.

#### *Building trust*

The process of earning wards'/clients' trust is as follows

- the extent of confidentiality (degree and conditions of confidentiality) is clearly defined;
- unreasonable expectations must not be created;
- projects that might not be successfully completed must not be permitted;
- all promises must be fulfilled.

### ***A COURSE IN IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO ASSESS THE NEEDS OF EX-PRISONERS AND SUPPORT CAPITAL, TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS IN A CREATIVE MANNER, AND TO WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM***

#### *Assessing the needs of ex-prisoners and support capital*

The improvement/compensation of skills related to the identification of the needs of wards/clients will include the following

- **social maladjustment as the focus of assessment** – how to perform a psycho-educational assessment, major assessment techniques, classification of assessment errors and their sources, assessment models and interpretation of assessment results;
- **tools and methods** used to evaluate life and professional situations;
- **family environment assessment strategies** – major indicators of family dysfunctions;

- **effective exploration of living environment** – community interviews (identification of expectations and life and professional goals of wards/clients);
- **SWOT analysis** (heuristic analytical technique used for information organisation purposes) to identify **strengths** (anything that can be considered an asset, advantage, or strength of the assessed person/situation), **weaknesses** (anything that can be considered a weakness, barrier, or disadvantage of the assessed person/situation), **opportunities** (anything that offers the assessed person an opportunity for positive change), and **threats** (anything that poses a risk of negative change in relation to the assessed person/situation).

### *Creative problem-solving*

Designed to improve creative problem-solving and teamwork skills, this course is based on an interactive approach and focuses on

- experiencing advantages and disadvantages;
- realising barriers to problem-solving, including the development of skills related to overcoming thought patterns;
- improving the ability to identify and set goals during problem-solving, and opportunities for making the process more efficient;
- developing habits that foster innovative behaviour;
- developing creative approaches to professional tasks;
- improving the ability to create an atmosphere that supports creative thinking and teamwork, and the ability to come up with new ideas and to solve problems in a creative way;
- developing the ability to use techniques and tools for imaginative thinking and creative group decision-making;
- teaching about mechanisms that affect the reasonableness of decisions, and about various aspects of risk assessment;
- developing the ability to use techniques and tools for overcoming conventional ways of thinking and for generating ideas.

### **It is assumed that this competence training will produce the following outcomes**

- acquired essential knowledge of creative thinking and problem-solving;
- knowledge of how to better apply creative thinking techniques to solving specific problems faced in everyday professional practice;
- reinforced positive attitudes to workplace innovation, supporting creativity and individual and group innovation;
- improved effectiveness of idea generation and ward/client problem-solving;
- flexible adaptation to novel and unusual situations;
- improved ability to create an atmosphere that fosters creativity within teams;
- improved creative potential in difficult problem situations.

### ***A COURSE IN DEVELOPING THE ABILITY TO HANDLE CONFLICTS WHILE USING TEAM SUPPORT TECHNIQUES***

Work with ex-prisoners and their families requires not only the ability to effectively establish personal relations, but also to negotiate and mediate. In each organisation (social group) there are conflicts, which are usually perceived as a fight in which there can only be

winners and losers. A natural response to a conflict situation is to ignore it or to use force, neither of which will lead to a reasonable solution and both of which can only escalate the conflict.

Conflict management is about active conflict handling by taking the following actions

- identifying pre-conflict and conflict situations,
- choosing and using appropriate conflict resolution strategies,
- stimulating constructive forms of competition.

The purpose of conflict management training is to master the dispute resolution methods that produce win-win outcomes and foster good relations between the involved parties. Workshop participants will learn about the nature of conflict, its structure and development, mediation stages, the role of mediator and possible benefits of mediation, as well as exploring such topics as

- improvement of the ability to identify the sources of problems leading to conflict and symptoms foreshadowing conflict, and to recognise mechanisms underlying the conflict;
- developing skills associated with discovering the actual causes of conflict;
- using various strategies for resolving conflicts, including strategies that address the needs of both parties to the conflict;
- developing skills associated with using win-win solutions;
- effective conflict handling with elements of negotiation and drawing up of agreements (contracts).

**Team support training**, on the other hand, should work on the following knowledge and skills

- teamwork methods and benefits;
- effective ways to motivate and support team members;
- ways of overcoming resistance and channelling passive behaviours;
- fostering open communication within the team and overcoming barriers to communication (relations between team members and their role in task completion);
- developing positive attitudes to cooperation;
- formulating questions, persuading, and controlling conversations;
- expressing and accepting constructive criticism;
- working on the cohesion of verbal and non-verbal messages and assertive behaviours.

After this training series its participants should acquire (among other things)

- the ability to focus on addressing the needs of their wards/clients;
- the ability to continuously review their own behaviour and effects of their role as team members (introspection);
- the ability to strictly comply with the norms and rules in force within the team;
- the ability to anticipate the consequences of their decisions;
- the ability to jointly develop the necessary tools and to propose changes.

## ***A COURSE IN COMPETENCE TRAINING FOR GROUPS (WARDS/CLIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES)***

Workshop on competences for working with ex-prisoners and their families covers the development of skills related to training provided on the basis of a creative rehabilitation method, namely Rehabilitation Drama Method<sup>1</sup>. The Method facilitates the destigmatisation of the family, i.e., a new, functional, identity is “superimposed” onto the old, dysfunctional, or deviant, one. The Rehabilitation Drama Method is a great tool for the management of all functional aspects of the family (cohesion, adaptability, disintegration, developmental problems, pathological family roles, mutual understanding between family members), i.e., for constructing its functional profile.

This type of training, based on the assessment of deficits and needs, focuses on the key elements of the creative process (emotions, motivation, perception, memory, thinking, and imagination; Konopczyński, 2006), and produces a series of changes that transform identity to support both individuals and groups in their effective social functioning.

Performances help the actors – family members – accurately define the dysfunctional or pathological roles they or their relatives play, discover adaptation deficits, communication barriers, and many other elements of their individual and family functioning.

The Rehabilitation Drama Method can serve to reorient insecure attachment styles<sup>2</sup>, which in adults significantly affect their social functioning, and are associated with poor social competences and avoidance coping style (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 1997).

In this respect, it is useful to train ***conciliatory behaviour***, i.e.

- attention to good atmosphere within the family,
- ability to use reciprocity,
- ability to show that you care.

What further contributes to the reorientation of the attachment styles that hamper the development of satisfactory social relations is ***behaviour training*** (Kuczyńska, 1998; Wojciszke, 2002), which develops such abilities as

- providing support for community members,
- acting for its benefit,
- supporting the positive, social, image of the family.

The sense of security, in turn, can be heightened through the ***training in caring and nursing behaviour towards children, older people and people with disabilities***.

The trained skills should be adjusted to the specific situation of each ward/client and their family, and their current level of social functioning, and scenarios used during this training should be based on target situations.

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1 This course should be taught by people with considerable experience in hosting drama workshops and proficient in the methodological development of drama scenarios.

2 Attachment styles are internal working models concerning the mother as the attachment figure who provides the child with security, warmth, confidence and intimacy (Bowlby, 2007).

### ***A COURSE IN IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO ANALYSE LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND TO PROVIDE SUPPORT CONCERNING THE MARKET INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION***

This workshop on competences for readaptation work with ex-prisoners and their families includes a training course in improving competences concerning the analysis of legal documents and subsidies for the employment of wards/clients on the open labour market. These competences are crucial due to the fact that Polish labour market is transforming very rapidly, which is the result of the response from Polish economy to the developments on the global labour market, and these socio-economic transformations are followed by changes in legal regulations.

On the one hand, employers expect that employees will have appropriate skills and qualifications and will be able to create value added on this volatile market, both during the periods of economic growth and recession, and seek sources of cheap working and financial capital.

And on the other, job seekers need knowledge about the sources of information and local jobs, and easily accessible, up-to-date, and comprehensive information about the labour market, including details about job demand and supply, forecasts about the local demand for skills and qualifications, and opportunities for acquiring these desirable skills and qualifications.

In terms of the improvement of the ability to analyse legal documents and to provide support concerning the market integration of people at risk of social exclusion, the course will cover

- laws on the formation and functioning of interdisciplinary teams,
- rules for the establishment and operation of interdisciplinary teams,
- standards concerning cooperation between institutions,
- communication within interdisciplinary teams,
- identification and assessment of social resources.

### ***A COURSE IN IMPROVING COMPETENCES FOR WORKING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL***

This training course focuses on **social participation (initiation – supervision – evaluation)** to prepare its participants for providing support to ex-prisoners and their families in order to help people, communities, and institutions unlock their social energy, encourage them to take action, and reflect on the effectiveness of such actions.

The primary objective of those training interventions is to lay the groundwork for the development of partnership between various sectors (social welfare, education, culture, business) for the benefit of ex-prisoners and their families, for the establishment of local assistance and social support systems (strategies, programmes, assessments), and for empowering and managing local communities. The course in the improvement of the ability to analyse legal documents and to provide support concerning the market integration of people at risk of social exclusion will include workshops on

- improving skills related to the interpretation and use of national and European laws;
- extending knowledge on the use of techniques for challenging social stereotypes;
- extending knowledge on social dialogue and cooperation with social partners;
- assessing the professional potential of people from risk groups and estimating their chances of growth and qualification improvement;

- improving and encouraging cooperation between institutions in seeking jobs for ex-prisoners;
- developing competences in assistance in the organisation of support and self-help groups;
- improving competences in professional advice and counselling on
  - assessing and strengthening the professional and psychosocial potential of wards/clients (ability to make choices, evaluate, create projects and life plans)
  - using motivation and empowerment methods and techniques;
  - helping people seeking advice adapt to the conditions around them, and to create their reality;
  - optimising individual professional development paths;
  - preparing wards/clients for job interviews.

Readaptation support providers will develop and improve their competences in

- assessing local communities while making them involved in the process;
- using methods, techniques, and tools designed to help plan and introduce changes to the local community;
- preparing local development strategies;
- social empowerment, with special focus on evaluation and supervision to establish local partnerships dealing with social problems;
- developing local self-organisation, solidarity, and social support networks;
- setting up participatory projects and using public participation tools;
- using supervision methods in readaptation work, and principles and course of supervision work.

In addition, training participants will learn how to use group supervision, and to use supervision to improve the outcomes of their work with wards/clients. This competence training will also cover the development of skills related to the assessment of the usefulness of undertaken measures and in-depth analysis and review of one's professional practice. This will be achieved through a follow-up workshop.

In order to address competences related cooperation between institutions, the course includes a workshop on the establishment and operation of interdisciplinary teams, which covers

- 1. An ex-ante evaluation** (prior to project implementation) carried out for the purposes of identifying the needs and expectations of ex-prisoners and their families
  - identifying the needs and expectations of target groups,
  - evaluating the accuracy and consistency of established goals and planned actions,
  - identifying possible problems,
  - analysing the initial situation as the basis for comparison with the final situation.
- 2. Mid-term/ongoing evaluation** (during project implementation)
  - assessing the quality of implemented measures,
  - assessing the achieved results.
- 3. Ex-post evaluation** (after project implementation)
  - assessing the effectiveness, accuracy, and usability of the project,
  - assessing the degree and quality of goal achievement,
  - identifying the needs that have been insufficiently satisfied,

- drawing conclusions to serve as the basis for the effective designing of similar projects in the future.

### ***A COURSE IN IMPROVING COMPETENCES IN UNDERTAKING AND MAINTAINING COOPERATION WITH POSITIVE PEER ENVIRONMENT***

Due to the fact that peer influence is the strongest predictor of change, the training programme for readaptation providers includes a course in developing the ability of using social capital for producing constructive changes in ex-prisoners. Generally, it focuses on the ability to establish and maintain an informal peer support network in the local community. Moreover, alongside readaptation workers, this course will teach local young leaders – people who are esteemed in their peer environment.

The training will be provided in mixed groups (readaptation workers and young leaders) and will cover workshops on

- building a sense of trust in interpersonal relations (with peers and adults),
- assessing decision-making process and using it in assistance relations,
- using assistance skills in usual and unusual situations,
- building and developing effective teams, team identity, core values,
- developing team cooperation standards and situational assessment skills – defining mutual needs and expectations,
- developing social support networks – local resources, self-help organisations.

## **Conclusion**

It is estimated that every fourth working-age person is socially incompetent, and the rest show serious deficits in their social competences (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). From the social point of view, this requires (in institutional terms) measures designed to develop the social competences of members of professional organisations (courses, training). The development of competences should include both instrumental measures aimed at providing people with professional skills, and measures related to personal development – training in social competences, workshops on time management and coping with difficult situations.

The improvement in social competences at the level of professional providers of social assistance and support will translate into the empowerment of the dysfunctional families of beneficiaries.

Well developed social competences, particularly in the area of interpersonal skills, constitute a foundation for processes leading to the development of strong community relationships. And these, in turn, largely determine the effectiveness of strategies (responses) used in the face of problem or crisis situations.

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## CHAPTER 7

# Distribution of resources and the stress suffered by the participants in mobbing at school

*Iwona Niewiadomska, Karolina Kos, Joanna Chwaszcz*

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### ABSTRACT

This article addresses correlations between the distribution of resources and the stress suffered by the participants in mobbing at school. The study covered 221 people, participants in school mobbing, using the following questionnaires: Demographic data questionnaire, Teenage Adjustment Resources Questionnaire, Questionnaire for measuring perceived stress level in peer violence situations (authors' own method), and Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS). Respondents were divided into three 30-person groups: victims, perpetrators and observers.

**Keywords:** resources, distribution of resources, stress, mobbing, school mobbing

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## Introduction

### Mobbing

School mobbing came into focus in the late 1960s/early 1970s in Sweden, and then rapidly attracted interest in other Scandinavian societies. But it was not until the 1980s that attitudes to mobbing at school changed dramatically (Olweus, 2007). Authors subscribe to the view advocated by Olweus, that *a person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, an injury or discomfort upon another.* This term also covers violence and aggression. These can be verbal (threats, malice, accosting, slander) and direct, or physical, violence (hitting, pushing, restricting freedom). There can also be some negative actions without words or physical contact, e.g., grimacing,

threatening gestures, avoidance and other behaviour intended to hurt or irritate another person (Olweus, 2007). Psychological intimidation of a person or, less frequently, a group, by another person or group is intended to make the former miserable or even exclude them from their peer community. Victims suffer long-term psychological, economic and social violence, are intimidated and humiliated, and have their ability to defend themselves limited. This process has a number of stages, including manipulation, ranging from the most subjective and imperceptible to the victim, to the most drastic, causing social isolation, self-deprecation, feeling of injustice and rejection, helplessness, and, ultimately, severe stress, or even physical and psychological disorders (Orłowski, 2005). This type of violence is long-term in nature. Even if its individual cases could, in certain circumstances, be considered mobbing, the focus here is on the repetitive pattern of such behaviour and the fact that it continues for some time. The purpose of this definition is to exclude sporadic instances of minor negative actions, on one occasion directed at one person, and on another occasion at someone else. The importance of time is emphasised especially by Karl Gebauer (2007), who argues that school mobbing is only when humiliation and harassment are frequent and systematic. The imbalance of power between mobbing participants is emphasised by all scholars investigating the problem. Perpetrators are much stronger than their victims. Therefore, conflicts between one or more people who are more or less equally strong, physically or psychologically, do not constitute harassment (Olweus, 2007). *Bullying* is a similar term to mobbing, and, in practice, the two are often used interchangeably (Zajdel, 2004). The verb *to bully* usually means “to tyrannize in order to hurt someone”. Such aggressive actions are not provoked and are repeated over a period of time. They are described as intentional, repetitive and not provoked aggressive behaviour of one or more perpetrators towards their victim. The purpose of such behaviour is to hurt, upset, humiliate, or terrify someone, usually in the presence of observers; there is a clear imbalance of power, which makes it impossible for victims to defend themselves, and causes perpetrators to think they can avoid punishment. The term *bullying* is much more popular in English-speaking countries, such as the UK, Ireland, Australia, the United States and Canada. The term *mobbing*, used in this article, is preferred in the Nordic countries, Germany and Poland (Orłowski, 2005).

Mobbing involves three groups, namely perpetrators, victims and observers. What is the most characteristic of perpetrators is aggression towards their peers, and often also towards adults, usually parents and teachers. Such people are usually fascinated by violence and ways of inflicting it. They tend to be impulsive and exhibit the need for domination. Characterised by the lack of empathy, they do not sympathise with their victims. They tend to think of themselves as being average or slightly better than average students (Olweus, 2007; Kalinowska, 2014). However, this is not always the case, as some authors argue that perpetrators have high self-esteem and a thirst for personal prestige (Orłowski, 2005). In addition to positive self-worth, perpetrators tend to be very assertive (Guerin & Hennessy, 2008). Other studies show that young perpetrators tend to become bored easily, feel insecure, and be jealous, especially when it comes to sport or school performance, or their younger siblings or newborn babies in their family. Moreover, they are active, energetic and cheerful children. On the other hand, they are more likely than other children to feel humiliated or angry because of violence they have experienced from others (Janowski et al., 2006). Boys who engage in mobbing are usually physically stronger than their peers, and their victims in particular (Olweus, 1978). Psychologists and psychiatrists often believe that people who are stronger on the outside, tend to use this façade of toughness to hide their fear

and insecurity. Nevertheless, a study by Olweus, focusing on the analysis of precisely those characteristics of perpetrators, does not support this common belief. In fact, its findings seem to indicate something completely opposite, suggesting that perpetrators tend to have a very low, or average, at most, level of fear and insecurity (Olweus, 1981). Many studies by Olweus, conducted on upper primary school children, show that perpetrators tend to enjoy average, or slightly-below-average, popularity (Olweus, 1978). They are often accompanied by a small group of friends (two or three), who support and like them. Their lower popularity might be due to the fact that perpetrators are liked more than their victims, but much less than their peers who are not involved in school mobbing. Studies on the school performance of perpetrators show that, compared to their class as a whole, they tend to be average or slightly below average (Guerin & Hennessy, 2008), and they are likely to have learning problems, which makes them angry or frustrated (Janowski et al., 2006; Lovegrove, Henry & Slater, 2012). Physical strength plays a significant role in mobbing. Perpetrators are usually stronger than their victims. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that stronger boys generally oppress the weaker ones. Reality is much more complex and there is no simple correlation between physical strength and aggressiveness. A huge proportion of strong boys are not aggressive at all. What is typical of school perpetrators is the combination of strength and aggression. Moreover, strength is important for increased popularity, which, in turn, makes the person who enjoys respect from their class less likely to be bullied. In addition, strength facilitates successful defence, which is the most effective way to protect oneself against mobbing (Olweus, 2007). These conclusions generally apply to boys, because among girls physical strength is much less important.

Victims of mobbing are usually more timid and less self-confident than their peers. For the most part, these are careful, sensitive, shy, and reticent children. When attacked by their peers, they usually cry and withdraw or run away. They tend to have poor self-esteem, which is often based on their negative self-image as stupid and unattractive. In many cases, they have an erroneous idea about their situation, are unhappy and filled with shame (Olweus, 2007; Guerin & Hennessy, 2008; Kalinowska, 2014). They tend to be gentle and good-natured. Studies show that they are intelligent but lack some social skills, which, in turn, is associated with the fact that they are unable to understand why they have been singled out as victims. Their sensitivity causes them to take all negative comments about them personally (Janowski et al., 2006). At school, such children feel lonely and lonesome. Usually, they do not have any good friends in their class. They are not aggressive or annoying, so mobbing cannot be explained by provocation on their part. Victims denounce violence and any ways of inflicting it. When it comes to boys, they tend to be physically weaker than their peers (Olweus, 1978). Bullied children are usually described as ones that differ physically from others, e.g., they are overweight or wear glasses. In such cases, violence is more likely to take intermediate forms, such as spreading rumours or social isolation. While the fact of being physically different does not always have to incite direct violence, it is often used by perpetrators to maximise the psychological effects of violence (Janowski et al., 2006). Interesting insights are afforded by studies that have focused on similarities and differences in the physical performance and appearance of perpetrators and their victims. Admittedly, in the majority of cases, victims are characterised by some sort of physical disability or obesity, but these were also observed in perpetrators themselves much more frequently than in other children in the classroom. In terms of learning performance, no significant differences were reported between the two groups. Performance of both victims and perpetrators was

average or slightly below average. There are, however, some significant differences between these groups in relation to physical strength. As mentioned earlier, victims tend to be much less assertive and self-confident (Guerin & Hennessy, 2008). This applies especially to the victims referred to as *passive*. Their behaviour shows that they are timid, unhappy, and, when attacked, will not be able to defend themselves. Such people typically respond in a passive and fearful way, and, in the case of boys, also exhibit physical weakness. Another group of mobbing victims are *provoking victims*. This attitude is much less frequent. Such schoolchildren usually find it difficult to focus, are restless, and create an atmosphere of irritation and tension. Their frequent mood swings provoke frequent conflicts. Some of them are referred to as hyperactive. Their behaviour might be perceived by the majority of their classmates as provocative and can cause other classmates to respond negatively. Sometimes, this provocative behaviour involves direct insults to an individual or a group of people. Their quick temper leads to situations, in which mockery and aggression cause conflicts and fights to gradually escalate. If violent behaviour is to some extent provoked by the victim himself/herself, we are dealing with a slightly different problem than in the case of passive victims (Lawson, 1994; Olweus, 2007). Perpetrators are generally easily triggered off by such provocative behaviour of their potential victims. It does not even have to be socially unacceptable behaviour. What is characteristic of adolescence is that sometimes actions that are generally undesirable in society are approved or even strongly encouraged by peer pressure. This can lead to situations in which schoolchildren who do not want to comply with such requirements are bullied, harassed, or even forced to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or take drugs. At this point, potential victims face quite a dilemma, because by choosing to be true to themselves, they are likely to be hurt, and by giving in to pressure, they might have to suffer other negative consequences, which they are not fully aware of. In the latter case, they enter the destructive group, or even change their role from being a person at risk of harassment to being a perpetrator (Kmicik-Baran & Cieślak, 2001). As is the case with most classifications, here, too, it is important to be careful about attributing certain traits to children that can make them more likely to become victims. Especially with the provocative type personality, it is crucial to avoid labelling young people as “natural victims”, which can sometimes be used to excuse mobbing, and, as a result, to shift the blame onto the victim (Lawson, 1994).

Observers are the participants in school mobbing who have received the least attention in literature. There is no doubt that this group participates in mobbing and is probably the most numerous of all three. Still, it is difficult to find studies that would directly characterise observers. These are schoolchildren who passively participate in mobbing and do not take the initiative or any other action that could either cause damage to, or help, victims. There is a special group of observers, who could be referred to as *accessories* (Gebauer, 2007). They are blackmailed by perpetrators, who threaten to stop being friends with them, or even to use violence. In order to avoid this, they support perpetrators and protect them against consequences. What is worse, mobbing is usually common knowledge within the class, who keep it secret from their teachers. When teachers fail to notice this problem, their authority is undermined and the position of the perpetrator is strengthened. One of the reasons why victims and accessories do not ask teachers for help is because they perceive them as weak and helpless. In any discussion about mobbing, it is difficult to clearly distinguish between perpetrators and passive accessories. This is because the group undergoes dynamic processes, as a result of which perpetrators can switch roles with accessories, or the other

way round. They appeal to force to gain control and often use, or threaten to use, violence (Gebauer, 2007). The passive attitude adopted by observers is sometimes explained by their having an external locus of control. Interesting insights about this are offered by studies on correlations between the locus of control and responses to problematic situations. Scholars who have conducted a series of experiments concerning such correlations argue that people with external locus of control are more likely to respond with fear when faced with tasks in which there is a gradual increase in uncertainty. People with external locus of control are more likely to exhibit fear or depression in potentially stressful situations. When this phenomenon is considered from a broader perspective, not only those who directly participate in mobbing, but also any young person who has contact with any victim of mobbing, can be considered as witnesses of peer violence. Those who witness violence often do not even realise that they can be the first, and sometimes the only, person who can confront the perpetrator and protect the victim against continued harm. Depending on the difficulties faced by them, there can be many reasons for the passive attitude of those who witness violence. These include, in particular, not being sure whether the individual is actually the victim, not being confident of the success of one's intervention, considering oneself as having poor skills in, and knowledge of, counteracting violence, not wanting to become, and being afraid of becoming, involved in conflicts, and feeling many strong emotions, ranging from compassion for the victim to a deep fear of the aggressor. On the other hand, inaction on the part of witnesses can also lead to negative consequences for them. Observers who, for various reasons, decide not to respond to the harm suffered by another person, can be haunted by guilt, regret and resentment against themselves. Moreover, this can make them more and more helpless and unwilling to respond appropriately in other difficult situations in life (Majchrzak, Wierzbicka & Cielecka-Kuszyk, 2009).

## **COR Theory**

From the point of view of Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, mobbing is a threat to the resources of all the people involved, including victims, perpetrators and observers. Hobfoll distinguishes between four types of resources which, when limited, can cause stress, and if available, bring people happiness. Firstly, there are *object resources*, which are usually just objects. Their availability or lack decide about the socio-economic status of a person (e.g., house, books, clothes). Another category is *personal resources*, which generally include the structure of one's personality (self-esteem, hope, optimism, temperament, effectiveness) and one's skills (social and professional competences). *Condition resources* are the circumstances that provide access to other resources, so they are desirable and valued (e.g., health, friendship, being well-established at school, inheritance). The fourth type are *energy resources*, which are derived not only from one's effort but also three other types of resources and can be used to accumulate other resources (e.g., knowledge, money). Participants in school mobbing experience stress resulting, i.a., from the actual or expected loss of resources. In line with the rules governing the distribution of resources, they try to protect and gain resources, which, in turn, encourages them to use specific coping strategies.

Resources are used by people to regulate their behaviour, function in social relations, and adjust to organisations and culture (Hobfoll, 2011, p. 117). According to COR theory, distribution of resources is, first of all, about evaluating their importance in human life to

determine whether they are necessary or not; secondly, about gaining resources, and thirdly, about losing them (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 181). Steven Hobfoll formulated two main principles governing the distribution of resources. They are particularly important from the perspective of the research problem addressed here, because they directly show how resource management affects the stress experienced by people, including participants in school mobbing. Hobfoll argues that, in the first place, human efforts are aimed at conserving the available adaptation capital, and only then at collecting it (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 182). The first principle in the Conservation of Resources theory is that *resource loss is disproportionately more salient than resource gain*. In other words, when the perceived gain and loss are the same, the loss will have a much more powerful impact on the individual. It is impossible to specify how much stronger this impact of loss (and motivation to avoid loss), compared to that of gain (and motivation to make gain), really is, but the COR concept stipulates that the difference is significant and depends, i.a., on the type of resources (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 79). In view of this principle, people are much more motivated to protect themselves against loss than to make gain. Consequently, people would employ various strategies to protect themselves against the loss of their adjustment capital (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 182). The second principle in COR theory is that *people must invest resources in order to protect against resource loss, recover from losses, and gain resources*. There are a few different mechanisms for investing resources. The first involves the use of resources. For instance, people invest their time or money to prevent the loss of other goods, protect themselves against greater loss, or gain more resources. Another type of investing is risk-taking. In this case, certain goods can prevent further loss, but, in order for this to work, people have to make returns on their investments. Examples of resources include money and real estate but also trust and friendship. Resources can be invested either directly or through substitution. The first type, direct transaction is a “resource-for-resource” kind of investment. However, resource substitution is more frequent. Failure in one area of life encourages people to seek fulfilment somewhere else (Hobfoll, 2006, pp. 90–91). The principle described above shows that people will invest disproportionately much to compensate for the loss of the goods they value. This, in turn, generates motivation for building up capital reserves (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 182).

In addition to the presented principles, there are several corollaries that particularise COR theory. These corollaries are a set of principles that provide detailed prognoses about the development of resources over time (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 97).

Corollary 1: *Those with greater resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and more capable of orchestrating resource gain.*

Corollary 2: *Those who lack resources are more vulnerable to resource loss and initial loss begets future loss, and those who possess resources are more capable of gain, and initial resource gain begets further gain.*

Corollary 3: *Those who lack resources are likely to adopt a defensive posture to conserve their resources* (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 100; Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, pp. 182–183).

## Stress and coping

According to COR theory, people can experience stress in three situations. Firstly, when they might lose their resources; secondly, when they actually lose their resources; and thirdly, when they fail to gain resources following significant resource investment (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 71). A particularly high level of stress is experienced when the individual invests a lot of resources but can only gain little. If such situations happen frequently, the individual starts to struggle with adjustment. This is the case because as the individual realises their unfavourable position, they lose control of their own life and are likely to exhibit destructive behaviour (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 183). Loss of resources does not necessarily have to cause stress, because any lost resources can be compensated for with other resources. And when such compensation is not sufficient, resource replacement in order to meet challenges is stressful in itself (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010).

In his Multiaxial Model of Coping, Hobfoll describes three coping styles. These have been identified on the basis of factor analysis and are as follows (Hobfoll, 2006, pp. 169–177):

1. **Active-Prosocial Coping.** This style covers four adjustment strategies, namely Social Joining, Cautious Action, Support Seeking, and Assertive Action. These actions follow the observation of the environment. Cautiousness and assertiveness are determined mainly by individual characteristics and environmental requirements. Depending on changing circumstances, in a stressful situation, the same individual might, on one occasion, take more aggressive action, and on another occasion, be rather cautious. All four strategies serve protective functions in the process of coping, and also suggest the anticipated positive impact of the cautious-prosocial style (Hobfoll, 2006; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993).
2. **Active-Antisocial Coping.** This style covers such strategies as Instinctive Action, Aggressive Action, and Antisocial Action. It involves disregard for the needs of other people, and sometimes even aggression, which can be either unintentional or planned (Hobfoll, 2006; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993).
3. **Asocial Coping.** This style is independent of social interactions. Usually, it can be observed in individualistic groups, or during the implementation of individual tasks. Its only strategies are Avoidance and Indirect Action (Hobfoll, 2006; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993).

Coping can be described in more detail by considering it as a strategy. In his model, Hobfoll identifies nine coping strategies. These are (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 169):

Assertive Action (efforts to change the situation or its consequences)

- Avoidance (refraining from taking action)
- Seeking Social Support (advice and emotional support)
- Cautious Action (careful planning of how to solve the situation)
- Social Joining (focusing on satisfying the needs of other people, efforts to establish alliances, actions in partnership with others, expecting assistance)
- Instinctive Action (being driven by impulse and one's opinion only, usually rash and reckless)
- Aggressive Action (focusing on speed, dynamics and strength, directly attacking the source of the problem to dominate)



- Antisocial Action (behaviour that does not consider the possible harm to other people, concerns coping based on betrayal, deceit, or intrigue)
- Indirect Action (coping by manipulating others to maintain harmony).

## Methodology

The study asked the following exploratory research question: What are the correlations between the distribution of resources and the stress suffered by the participants in mobbing at school?

Four hypotheses were formulated:

***Hypothesis 1 – Perceived gains in condition resources correlate with low perceived level of stress in difficult situations among observers of mobbing at school.***

Condition resources are a value which determines access to other adjustment options. Such resources may include the position of students in their peer group and their status in class hierarchy. Research shows that observers of school mobbing tend to be blackmailed by perpetrators who threaten, e.g., to stop being friends with them, or even to use violence. This is why they adopt passive attitudes to mobbing or even protect perpetrators, e.g., from teachers (Gebauer, 2007). Therefore, the reason why teenagers assume the role of observers of mobbing at school can be that they believe they might gain condition resources, such as position in their class or just friendship. According to Hobfoll's COR, which considers gains in, and protection of, resources as a major principle governing their distribution (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 79), the gains in condition resources perceived by observers might be associated with lower perceived level of stress in difficult situations. As observers, they focus on subjective benefits, which, in turn, mitigate the negative consequences of their participation in mobbing at school.

***Hypothesis 2 – Gains in resources correlate with frequent use of aggressive and antisocial actions in perpetrators of mobbing at school.***

The use of aggressive and antisocial strategies can be perceived by perpetrators as a way to meet their needs. If a person copes with a difficult situation using such actions, they prove to be effective for that person and he/she is more likely to repeat them. This way, perpetrators achieve real benefits, e.g., object resources, such as money (Leszczyńska, 1998).

***Hypothesis 3 – Resource loss correlates with frequent use of cautious strategies in victims of school mobbing.***

Victims of peer violence are a group that probably suffers the greatest losses in various categories of resources, so the study was not limited to examining their relation with any selected group of resources when it comes to their preferred coping strategies. This helped identify correlations between deficits in various categories and the most popular ways of coping among victims, i.e., avoidance strategies. Overview of literature shows that victims tend to literally avoid the problem by moving to a different school (Boledovičová & Machová, 2014). Moreover, a typical coping strategy is substance use (Sung Hong et al., 2014). A significant number of students experience psychosomatic symptoms (Boledovičová & Ma-

chová, 2014), and, in extreme cases, long-term health problems (Sigurdson, Wallander & Sund, 2014).

***Hypothesis 4 – There is a correlation between perceived resource gains and frequent use of cautious strategies by observers.***

Since observers are the least studied group, and, as a result, the most “unexplored”, the hypothesis refers to all groups of resources, so that all categories can be considered. By definition, the role of an observer implies the use of cautious strategies. But the choice of this response can be based on perceived benefits. These can involve gains in condition resources, as mentioned in Hypothesis 2, but not only (Gebauer, 2007). When perpetrators offer instant rewards, e.g., for remaining silent, we are dealing with gains in energy resources (money) and object resources (e.g., valuable items, gadgets).

In order to examine these hypotheses, the study surveyed 221 people using the following questionnaires:

- Questionnaire for measuring perceived stress level in peer violence situations (Niewiadomska, Kos & Chwaszcz);
- Teenage Adjustment Resources Questionnaire – Part B, developed on the basis of the Conservation of Resources-Evaluation (COR-E) questionnaire by S. E. Hobfoll;
- Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS) – Situational Form by S. E. Hobfoll; and Demographic data.

***Questionnaire for measuring perceived stress level in peer violence situations (Niewiadomska, Kos & Chwaszcz)***

This questionnaire was developed on the basis of the Evaluate Your Life questionnaire by I. Niewiadomska, and specifically its part concerning the current perceived level of stress in difficult situations. This modification was designed to adapt the method for teenagers aged 16 or more, and to make it appropriate for assessing difficult situations, such as peer violence. For this purpose, we added questions about the frequency of mobbing experiences and specific roles adopted in mobbing situations. Some items were added or extended, while others were removed. All modifications were based on the review of literature on mobbing at school. Based on findings from studies on the problems faced by young people participating in peer violence, we removed items concerning physiological needs and increased the number of items related to the deprivation of psychological needs (Zajdel, 2004; Janowski et al., 2006; Olweus, 2007; Szyszka, 2007). Moreover, under each question concerning one’s attitude to a specific problem, we added an open-ended question about the supposed reasons for it. Answers to those open-ended questions provided valuable input to the qualitative analysis of the questionnaire. Respondents answered questions concerning the frequency of difficult experiences using the following five-point scale: 1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – sometimes, 4 – often, 5 – always.

***Teenage Adjustment Resources Questionnaire – Part B, based on the Conservation of Resources-Evaluation (COR-E) questionnaire by S. E. Hobfoll***

The distribution of resources was evaluated using Part B of the Teenage Adjustment Resources Questionnaire, which was adapted by I. Niewiadomska and R. Zajkowski (2013) from the Conservation of Resources-Evaluation questionnaire by S. E. Hobfoll for the purposes of assessing young people. This tool is based on the Conservation of Resources theory

and measures resource management. The questionnaire comprises 74 items, which are assessed by respondents in terms of resource importance, loss and gain over the previous year. Resources are divided into the following four categories:

1. Object resources (11 items)
2. Personal resources (26 items)
3. Condition resources (28 items)
4. Energy resources (9 items)

Respondents were asked to assess individual resources using a five-point scale. The importance of each group of resources was assessed using the following scale: 1 – marginal, 2 – minor, 3 – average, 4 – major, 5 – utmost. And resource losses and gains were assessed using the following scale: 1 – slight, 2 – minor, 3 – modest, 4 – major, 5 – huge. Conclusions were drawn from the average result for the list as a whole, which helped determine the overall importance of losses of, and gains in, resources for each respondent.

Psychometric characteristics: Internal consistency of “Importance of personal resources” was 0.90. Reliability of the measure concerning perceived “Gains in personal resources” was 0.95. Internal consistency of “Loss of personal resources” was 0.93. Reliability of the measure concerning the importance attached to condition resources was 0.91. Internal consistency of “Gains in condition resources” was 0.94. Reliability of the measure concerning “Loss of resources” was 0.93. Internal consistency of “Importance of energy resources” was 0.67. Reliability of the measure concerning “Gains in energy resources” was 0.83, and that of the measure concerning “Loss of energy resources” was 0.83. Each of these comprises 9 items (Niewiadomska & Zajkowski, 2013).

#### ***Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS) – Situational Form by S. E. Hobfoll***

This tool was developed by S. E. Hobfoll to measure preferred coping strategies. Its statements, which describe possible behaviour in the face of problems, describe both individual and collective coping strategies. The choice of any statement reflects the individual’s approach to the problem and resource management (Hobfoll, 2006).

The study uses the situational form of SACS, which consists of 52 statements describing behaviour in stress situations. They have the form of sentences in the past tense, thus referring to respondents’ previous experiences. Respondents provided answers to each statement using the following five-point scale: 1 – Didn’t do this at all, 2 – Didn’t do this, 3 – Don’t know if I did this, 4 – Did this, 5 – Did this a lot. Nine sub-scales were identified for each strategy to calculate results for the following five dimensions: 1) Assertive Action, 2) Social Joining, 3) Seeking Social Support, 4) Cautious Action, 5) Instinctive Action, 6) Avoidance, 7) Indirect Action, 8) Antisocial Action, 9) Aggressive Action. These sub-scales can be used to identify three factors, described by Hobfoll as coping profiles/styles (Hobfoll, 2006), namely:

1. Active-Prosocal Coping
2. Active-Antisocial Coping
3. Asocial Coping.

Reliability of this method was calculated on the basis of tests on a sample comprising 1697 respondents. Internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for each sub-scale is as follows: Assertive Action ( $\alpha = 0.53$ ), Social Joining ( $\alpha = 0.66$ ), Seeking Social Support ( $\alpha = 0.77$ ), Cau-

tious Action ( $\alpha = 0.70$ ), Instinctive Action ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ), Avoidance ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ), Indirect Action ( $\alpha = 0.47$ ), Antisocial Action ( $\alpha = 0.67$ ), Aggressive Action ( $\alpha = 0.53$ ), (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 32).

## Results

***Hypothesis 1 predicted a correlation between perceived gains in condition resources and low perceived level of stress in difficult situations among observers of mobbing at school.***

Table 1 *Pearson's r for the correlation between the perceived gains in condition resources and perceived level of stress in difficult situations in observers of mobbing at school*

Observers		
Variables	Gains in condition resources	
	Pearson's <i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Perceived level of stress in difficult situations	-.262	.163
Perceived level of stress in relation to obstacles	-.406*	.026

\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 (two-tailed)

Based on conclusions drawn from literature, the study assumed that individually perceived gains in condition resources correlated with low perceived level of stress in difficult situations. The analysis of the total score for our own method, i.e., Questionnaire for measuring perceived stress level in peer violence situations, and Gains in condition resources from Teenage Adjustment Resources Questionnaire, showed an insignificant correlation ( $r = -0.262$ ;  $p = 0.163$ ). However, a careful examination of the scores showed that there was a significant correlation between the gains in condition resources perceived by observers and Attitude to obstacles, a sub-scale of our own method ( $r = -0.406$ ;  $p = 0.026$ ). The correlation is negative, moderate, and significant at 0.05 (two-tailed). This means that the more condition resources observers gain, the less they perceive peer violence as an obstacle. Obstacles included in the *Questionnaire for measuring perceived stress level* were obstacles to plan implementation, and performing tasks that are beyond one's physical or psychological capacity. This conclusion seems particularly valid for understanding why young people who act as observers chose to be passive participants in mobbing at school. On the one hand, by being neutral, they can gain condition resources such as good peer relations and companionship of both other observers and, most likely, perpetrators. On the other hand, by remaining "uninvolved" they do not suffer the direct consequences of participating in mobbing, i.e., they do not have their plans hampered or are forced to do tasks that are beyond their physical or psychological capacity.

**Hypothesis 2 predicted that perceived gains in resources correlated with frequent use of aggressive and antisocial actions in perpetrators of mobbing at school.**

Table 2 Pearson's *r* for the correlation between perceived gains in resources and frequent use of aggressive and antisocial actions in perpetrators of mobbing at school

<i>Perpetrators</i>		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Gains in resources</i>	
	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p</i>
Aggressive Actions	.376*	.041
Antisocial Actions	.363*	.049

\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 (two-tailed)

In perpetrators of mobbing at school, perceived gains in resources correlate with the frequent use of such coping strategies as Aggressive Action ( $r = 0.376$ ) and Antisocial Action ( $r = 0.363$ ). This correlation is weak but statistically significant at 0.05 (two-tailed). The correlation is also positive, which means that as perceived gains in resources increase, so does the frequency of using Aggressive and Antisocial Actions by perpetrators.

It is important to take a closer look at this correlation to consider the above-mentioned strategies as a way of gaining resources. This method of satisfying one's needs can be considered by perpetrators as an effective coping strategy, especially given that as their position is strengthened, the amount of resources gained might increase. This, in turn, might strengthen their conviction that Aggressive and Antisocial Actions bring the expected benefits and should be repeated, which creates a vicious circle and encourages perpetrators to identify more with their role.

**Hypothesis 3 referred to the correlation between perceived loss in resources and use of cautious coping strategies by victims of mobbing at school.**

Table 3 Pearson's *r* for the correlation between perceived resource loss and use of cautious strategies in victims of school mobbing

<i>Victims</i>		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Resource loss</i>	
	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p</i>
Use of cautious strategies	-.500**	.005

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 (two-tailed)

There is a correlation between perceived resource loss and use of cautious strategies in victims of school mobbing. The correlation is moderate and significant at 0.01 (two-tailed).

It is also negative, which means that as the frequency of using cautious strategies increases, the perceived resource loss in victims of mobbing at school decreases. COR theory argues that people with low resources will focus on protecting them and shy away from opportunities which could cause the loss of but a part of their resources (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 72). It can be expected that, having made unsuccessful attempts to defend themselves, and, consequently, losing resources, victims of mobbing opt for cautious strategies to protect their resources. They refrain from taking actions that could expose them to further losses. The level of the resources available to the victims is probably too low for them to risk losing them. This model of resource distribution in mobbing victims could be associated with learned helplessness on the part of victims, but this requires further study.

***Hypothesis 4 predicted correlations between perceived resource loss and use of cautious strategies in observers of school mobbing.***

Table 4 Pearson's *r* for the correlation between perceived resource gains and use of cautious strategies in observers of school mobbing

<i>Observers</i>		
	<i>Gains in resources</i>	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p</i>
Use of cautious strategies	.536**	.002

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 (two-tailed)

Perceived resource gains correlate with frequent use of cautious strategies in observers of school mobbing. This correlation is significant at 0.01 (two-tailed), moderate, and positive, which means that as gains increase, so does the frequency of using cautious strategies. A subjective gain that observers can make by using cautious behaviour is, above all, the feeling of safety resulting from not being exposed to attacks from the perpetrator or their consequences. By remaining passive, they protect their resources, as stipulated in one of the fundamental rules of resource distribution.

## Conclusion

The analysis of the results of this study confirms that participation in school mobbing, whether as a perpetrator, a victim or an observer, is associated with group-specific correlations between the distribution of resources and the use of certain coping strategies. Both among perpetrators and victims, the greatest losses are suffered in condition resources. This is consistent with findings from other research which emphasised health problems faced by young people suffering peer violence (Wolke & Lereya, 2014; Mooren & Minnen, 2014).

The study confirmed a significant, positive correlation between gains in resources and frequent use of aggressive and antisocial actions in perpetrators of mobbing at school. Both

literature on the subject and the findings of this study point to an inevitable conclusion. School perpetrators benefit from their role by using violence and aggression (among others Gebauer, 2007; van Noorden, Haselager, Cillessen & Bukowski, 2014; Benedict, Vivier & Gjelsvik, 2014). In addition, they use the same methods to cope with the pressure they are put under in difficult situations. Peer violence proves to be the less harmful for observers, the higher their perceived gains in condition resources. Therefore, their passive attitude can be explained by subjective benefits, such as protecting their resources by remaining seemingly neutral about mobbing (Gebauer, 2007). A similar explanation can be proposed for the fact that an increase in gains is accompanied by an increase in the frequency of using cautious strategies in observers. Victims of school violence focus on protecting their resources by using cautious strategies.

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## CHAPTER 8

# Occupational therapy and its role in the social inclusion of older people

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### ABSTRACT

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines lifelong learning as efforts aimed at personal and social development in all forms and contexts (Budzyńska, 2004). Lifelong learning is the process of continuous renewal, development and improvement of individual and professional qualifications throughout one's life; it is the whole of cognitive activities undertaken during one's lifetime. From the lifelong learning point of view, physical fitness and psychological well-being of older people are key to encouraging active living and social integration. Health, personality traits, education, living environment, and, above all, activity, are the elements that determine either positive or negative positioning of older people in the social space, and their preference for specific lifestyles. The purpose of this article is to present selected forms of occupational therapy, which prevent social exclusion of older people.

**Keywords:** old age, promotion of active living, active ageing, social inclusion

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### Old age and ageing, and social exclusion of older people

Old age is the last of the seven stages in human life cycle. Often, it fills people with the fear of the unknown and, at the same time, the inevitable. Depending on individual traits, this period can be experienced in a variety of ways. The term *old age* is generally associated with reduced efficiency, in its broad sense, loss of certain social roles, deteriorated health, and decreased number and strength of social bonds. All this results from biological, mental and social changes. The biological and mental processes, and changes in the social domain, especially in relation to behavioural traits, are dynamic, and at the same time synergistic, in nature. This dynamism particularly concerns the time frame of events. Synergy is represented in the concurrent ageing processes, which can lead to a complete exclusion

of the individual from society over a short period of time (Szatur-Jaworska, Błędowski & Dzięgielewska, 2006, p. 45). Biological changes affect significant transformations in functioning, professional activity, and participation in various areas of social life.

In addition, this is an individual process that affects each person differently, so it is difficult to accurately estimate the time when an individual becomes old. The dominant position in the literature on the subject is that old age refers to 60–65 year-olds. Until recently, this age was the retirement age in Poland. However, there has been a discernible upward trend in respect of this age. More and more societies are “growing old”, as a result of which the proportion of older people in the social structure has been gradually on the rise (Błaszczuk & Rynkowska, 2016, p. 28). Older people often have to struggle with physical and mental problems, which affect their social functioning, independence, and ability to take care of themselves. In addition to the impairment of their social functioning, older people suffer from geriatric syndromes, which include cardiovascular disorders, neoplasms, diabetes, dizziness, motor impairment, falls, dementia, depression, insomnia, urinary and faecal incontinence, constipation, poor vision and hearing, night leg cramps and pressure ulcers. Usually, the above-mentioned disorders and their symptoms are chronic, which makes treatment very difficult.

Psychological symptoms of ageing affect one’s personality. It is difficult to distinguish between the traits that are associated with biological factors resulting from ageing, and those that are associated with individual traits of older people. Based on a number of studies, it has been established that impairment affects the majority of mental functions. Such changes usually involve poorer short-term memory. Older people struggle more with remembering new information and tend to have difficulty focusing and committing things to short-term memory. Moreover, ageing is a serious challenge for everybody and requires some adjustment. The situation of older people in society has been changing, or actually deteriorating, significantly. Contemporary society venerates youth, vitality, and physical fitness. Old age appears as the dark side of life – infirm, difficult, diseased, and frustrated. Numerous manifestations of ageism signify dread and fear of the consequences of the natural process of ageing and old age. Older people experience many difficulties and consequences of their old age, also in the social sphere. It is a volatile time and there are many changes related to one’s position, social role, and family, friendly and professional relationships. In this late stage in their life, people tend to decrease their activity, for various reasons, and limit the number of social interactions, which makes relationships with others weaker and more difficult. Old age is also the time when people retire. When older people retire, they gradually lose a number of their social roles they have had throughout their whole life. The end of professional career is usually connected with the losing of contact with colleagues and friends. This withdrawal from social interactions causes the individual to lose emotional contact with society and to clam up, weaken and think about dying. During this period, older people often struggle with many traumatic experiences, progressive disorders and psychological and social problems.

S. Richard identifies five types of adjustment to old age:

- Constructive attitude – the individual shows integrity, enjoys their life, and their relationships with others are positive. They have a good sense of humour, they are tolerant, and accurately assess their weaknesses, achievements and failures. Such individuals accept their old age and approaching death, they enjoy the moment, and do not reject assistance from their loved ones.

- Dependent attitude – such individuals are passive towards their milieu. While they retain physical fitness and psychological well-being, they demand continuous support, compelling the attention of their loved ones and carers. They resemble children in their behaviour, they are distrustful and unable to meet life's challenges. They continuously seek to be the centre of attention. They enjoy the privacy of their home. Their relationships with others are based on the lack of tolerance and suspicion.
- Defensive attitude – taken by people who fear novelty and have problems adapting and accepting any innovative solutions. They are jealous of other people. Usually, they are self-sufficient.
- Hostility directed outward – is adopted by people who are unable to accept their old age, and are irritable, aggressive and confrontational. They consider old age as the end of their life. They are unable to deal with it.
- Hostility directed inward – such people tend to criticise themselves and are ill-disposed to their own life, but they do not want to change their lifestyle and to live their life more ambitiously. They bemoan their own fate, feel lonely and not needed, they are pessimists and have no purpose in life (as cited in: Steuden & Marczuk, 2006, p. 186).

For older people who successfully adapt to old age and can appreciate its good sides, old age can be the beginning, not the end, of their lives (Wiśniewska-Roszkowska, 1989, p. 61). Major problems faced by older people include, i.a., loneliness, chronic diseases, disability, poverty, and the feeling of being useless. The above-mentioned problems show a certain marginalisation of older people as a group. It manifests itself with their gradual elimination from active professional and social lives when they retire. Technological advancements have contributed to a significant increase in life expectancy. The number of older people in society is growing. Unfortunately, as people age, not only their physical but also mental performance deteriorates, leading to some disabilities. These, in turn, directly affect their lifestyles and quality of life. It is important to note that, depending on one's lifestyle, old age and quality of life are closely correlated. Quality of life is associated with life satisfaction. People who are characterised by high quality of life are happy and have satisfactory social relations (Raław, Rosochacka-Gmitrzak & Tokarz-Kamińska, 2012). However, health does not always allow the individual to choose any lifestyle they like, thus preventing them from consciously deciding about the quality of their life. At more advanced stages, diseases and disorders usually lead to disability or invalidism, making the older person dependent on other people and institutions (Pabiś & Babik, 2007, pp. 62–65).

### **Importance of activity in the lives of older people**

One of the most popular methods of positive transition to old age is to be active. People who lead an active life will feel the symptoms of ageing later than their passive peers. An active life is a positive one. It influences communication with society and perception of the world. According to the definition developed by the World Health Organisation, active ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. The idea of active ageing has been accepted,

and is currently promoted, by the European Union (Zgliczyński, 2012, p. 131). In line with EU objectives, active ageing has three dimensions:

- active ageing on the labour market – encouraging older employees to remain on the labour market;
- independent life – living as long as possible in a relatively good health, and improving older people's fitness, so that they can be independent participants in social life for as long as possible;
- social activity – based on providing older people with more opportunities, and better conditions, for contributing to social life, either through voluntary service, or taking care of family members, and for participating in social life, which should help prevent their social isolation and many related problems and risks (Zgliczyński, 2012, p. 132).

In old age, active attitude is not only recommended, but necessary, for having a satisfactory life. If there are various dysfunctions related to advanced age, such broadly defined activity can help alleviate the negative consequences of ageing, and bring out the positive aspects to ageing. In principle, the following types of activity among older people can be identified:

- recreational activities – there are many various forms of active recreation, whether for individuals or for groups, and its intensity needs to be aligned with one's preferences and capabilities;
- dancing – it can take the form of dancing lessons, dancing parties, etc.; as a natural form of movement, and in addition to some physical activity, dancing integrates people and provides opportunities for meeting new people;
- treatment and rehabilitation activities – such activities are designed primarily to help people recover, for instance after an illness, or prevent the loss of fitness (exercises); this includes rehabilitation camps, stays in health resorts and sanatoriums;
- holidays and trips – such activities require social interactions, are rejuvenating and give the individual a feeling of change, provide opportunities for visiting interesting places, walks, hiking, swimming, cycling, and other attractions, all of which help improve one's mood;
- family activities – frequent contacts with one's family can be the source of emotional balance and security;
- hobbies – passions, interests, hobbies; such activities contribute to rational time management and improve manual dexterity and intellectual skills;
- social activities – in some cases they naturally bridge the gap between one's professional career and retirement; they can take the form of various senior clubs and community organisations;
- cultural activities – culture, considered as art, music, literature, etc., is needed in society, as it provides opportunities for active participation in various forms of cultural life, such as old time dance ensembles, dramas, and choirs;
- educational activities – learning is a lifelong process, and it is important to exercise one's intellect regardless of one's age; a particularly popular form are universities of the third age. Other forms include various courses, which usually broaden or extend one's knowledge, education and skills;
- allotment gardening – it is a special form of recreation, as it involves some movement in the open air, which is particularly important for the improvement of the respiratory system; it offers a great way to relax (Rynkowska & Błaszczuk, 2014, pp. 72–73).

Ageing is also a time when one either gradually withdraws from, or redefines, one's social and professional roles. Changes in one's social roles and the end of professional career leave the individual with a lot of free time, and in need of changing the dominant form of instrumental activity (associated with work, where the individual tries to achieve specific goals, deriving benefits and satisfaction from it) to expressive activity (chosen in order to satisfy one's needs and desires).

Social relationships in old age depend on one's mental and physical condition, environment, and the nature of one's activities. Older people are family members but also spouses, parents, and grandparents. They are also close friends, neighbours, members of religious communities or other associations, usually old age pensioners, and less frequently permanent employees. Some of those roles constitute follow-ups to their previous lives, while others are assumed when they reach a certain age, and others still simply disappear. Indeed, there is a certain role reversal, and the older person, who used to be professionally active, now needs help and support from their family. It creates a difficult situation, which leads to many negative emotions and events. Difficulty defining new roles in late old age tends to entail the risk of an identity crisis, negative life history, and mental disorders (Krzyżowski, 2005, p. 30). The quality of life among older people is significantly affected by their health and degree of independence, which allow them to function both within their families and environments. In addition, activity among older people is determined by various factors that can predispose them to either be active or not when they retire:

- education – university graduates are more aware of the positive impact of activity on life, so they are more likely to engage in various activities;
- family environment – family, its ancestry and inter-generational relationships all have a considerable impact on activity;
- shape and health – these are crucial, since good health and psychological well-being/physical fitness facilitate activity;
- financial standing – it determines the types of activities the older person can afford, e.g., travelling, stays in sanatoriums, participation in cultural events;
- gender – women represent the majority among old age pensioners, so they are more likely to be active;
- place of residence (urban or rural areas) – the number of opportunities for older persons living in rural areas is much lower;
- cultural institutions – if the town has a cultural institution that offers some activities for older people, this age group is more likely to show interest in such activities (Szatur-Jaworska, Błędowski & Dzięgielewska, 2006, pp. 161–162).

Increased activity contributes to improved mood, higher self-esteem, and reduced anxiety, while also helping to come to terms with this last stage in life, and leading to increased frequency and intensity of interactions with other people. Generally speaking, activity during each stage of growth helps develop one's personality, boosts self-confidence, and expands one's horizons. These elements build up a positive self-image, and, ultimately, improve one's ability to cope with any problems that one might encounter in life. When faced with a crisis, active persons do not clam up, but tackle it head-on. An important role in the development of such an attitude is played by such factors as personality type, health, family situation, financial standing, education, and access to cultural institutions.

## Occupational therapy and its preventive function

A serious risk in the lives of older people is their discrimination, which affects many areas of their lives and ultimately leads to loneliness and social isolation (Słowińska, 2015). The term *social discrimination* means an unequal treatment of members of a social group or groups, compared to other people. Usually, it manifests itself in the deprivation or restriction of human rights, harassment, prejudice or bias. Social discrimination is usually based on nationality, race, religion, social background or class (Zych, 1999, p. 59).

Older people are usually discriminated on the following grounds:

- conviction and accusation that older people are a liability and a burden for the State budget, the employed, and society as a whole;
- perpetuating stereotypes about the burdensomeness of old age;
- theory prevailing in developed societies about the primacy of two-generational family over the multi-generational one, which led to the popularisation of institutional care.

This causes mental barriers in older people and those who are only approaching old age, which are difficult to overcome. The negative image of older people, coupled with the actual deterioration in their psychological well-being and physical fitness, and the real loss of previous social roles, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, leading to psychological and social breakdown. Their mood drops, initiative and activity decreases, and, as a result, quality of life deteriorates. The discrimination of older people is connected with the phenomenon of an old age subculture, which isolates itself from younger generations. Through this subculture older people express their opposition to the rest of society. Its members share the awareness that they are members of a discriminated group. Members of this subculture are critical of the young, lack interest in current events, and withdraw from helping their families (Zdziebło, 2008; Borczyk, 2012).

We are dealing with marginalisation when some part of society does not participate in its social institutions, and when the dominant type of the social order is either rejected or ignored by that group. Main reasons for the social marginalisation of older people are related to economic factors (small retirement and disability pensions) and socio-cultural conditions (disintegration of global, national, and family communities, technological development, which older people are unable to keep up with). Moreover, the social marginalisation of older people is aggravated by their unwillingness to fight for their rights and privileges, characteristic “humility” and “pride” of the older generation (seeking assistance from institutions suggests that the individual lacks resourcefulness and did not raise their children right), limited access to information, older people and old age being neglected by the media, lack of interest in the rights and needs of older people, lack of social integration and attitudes towards old age. People, as members of society, inherently need the presence of other people. This has its roots in the need for affiliation, which should be addressed from early childhood to very old age. However, rapid socio-economic and custom-related changes have made people spend less and less time with others, including older people, who feel lonely and abandoned. The fear of loneliness is one of the most painful problems faced by older people. Loneliness is often experienced by older people and it has its source in the actual social isolation, which is fostered by advanced age, gender, difficult financial situation, poor education, and widowhood (Błaszczuk & Rynkowska, 2016, p. 100).

The end of professional career and withdrawal from social life, too, can limit social interactions, and, ultimately, lead to social isolation. Of all the currently identified social issues and areas at risk of social exclusion, problems of older people deserve special attention. While social exclusion is more and more often caused by poverty and its associated dysfunctions and limitations, not all poor people are excluded and, conversely, not all socially excluded people are poor. Older people are a group in which, despite guaranteed regular income coming from social services, the risk of marginalisation is much more common than in other social groups. Due to various limitations, older people are considered, both by themselves and by society in general, to have a low social status (Leszczyńska-Rejchert, 2007, p. 77). The rapid development of universities of the third age clearly shows how a wide range of university opportunities can effectively cater to the needs of older people (Turek, 2011; Marcinkiewicz, 2012).

An example of an active approach among older people is their participation in various forms of occupational therapy (Panek, 2007; Spyrka-Chlipała, 2013). Occupational therapy and its methods promote active living among older people and give their lives a meaning, as they allow them to be part of society. This is essential for social inclusion, as it is important to bear in mind that older people are not a separate social group, but are members of society in general. All measures, including integration and culture creation, can change not only social mentality, but also the self-image of older or disabled people (Baum, 2008, p. 11). Institutions providing care and assistance offer various forms of occupational therapy, such as occupational therapy workshops, nursing homes, centres for people with special needs, and vocational development centres.

Overall, occupational therapy involves treatment and empowerment on the basis of specific activities, classes and work, which can serve educational and treatment purposes. In other words, it is treatment “through work”. Occupational therapy can have a beneficial impact on the general physical and mental performance of the individual, or on the topical improvement of the fitness and strength of a specific muscle group or limb. Occupational therapy professionals (occupational therapists) should have special qualifications. Usually, occupational therapy is used for the rehabilitation of the following groups of people:

- physically disabled people; occupational therapists work closely with physical therapists, they know their patients’ condition and help them exercise, e.g., to strengthen their legs and/or back; in relation to people with physical disabilities resulting from accidents, birth defects, or old age, occupational therapists focus on:
  - strengthening muscles,
  - improving coordination,
  - reducing joint stiffness,
  - taking care of physical fitness,
  - empowering them and increasing their self-confidence,
- older, chronically ill, and intellectually disabled people; occupational therapy is beneficial also for older and intellectually disabled people, and helps:
  - protect them from inactivity and staying at home,
  - prevent or slow down the loss of skills and fitness,
  - reduce loneliness and depression (Kozaczuk, 1999, p. 42).

Occupational therapy is particularly beneficial for older people who have problems with everyday activities. Occupational therapy workshops provide training in cleanliness, hy-

giene, social skills, food preparation, shopping, money management (so-called budget training), literacy, appropriate self-assessment and life plan evaluation; as well as opportunities to have a go at new activities to test one's skills, and to recognise the barriers that might prevent the individual from performing the task at hand. The therapy can be an incentive, or a stimulus, for increased independence, while also improving self-esteem and teaching patients easier ways to perform various activities. Such workshops put emphasis on such elements of social therapy as:

- improving self-esteem,
- frequent praising,
- learning tolerance to stress,
- changing the entitlement mentality,
- helping find a soulmate (Kozaczuk, 1999, p. 42).

Occupational therapy is a way for older people to take advantage of their time in nursing homes. Older people have quite a lot of free time, and often do not know what to do with all that time. In nursing homes, occupational therapy can help residents integrate and fosters close contacts through conversations and joint problem-solving. The awareness of one's skills, the feeling of being needed, and the ability to do something useful all have a positive impact on the self-regard of older people, while also helping them rise in esteem and feel more needed.

The first, very important, stage in occupational therapy is the accurate assessment of the performance of the individual and the identification of any deviations from the norm. The assessment should focus on their physical, cognitive, emotional and social performance. The evaluation of cognitive performance includes communication, speech development, reasoning, skills, attention span, memory, emotions and their expression, and interests. The assessment of social performance requires the following elements to be taken into account: the impact of impairment on social roles, interpersonal communication, self-control, and activities of daily living (using the bathroom, washing oneself, eating, cleaning, etc.).

A correct diagnosis is the basis for preparing an individual, tailor-made, occupational therapy programme. Efforts by the personnel should be designed to support nursing home residents who have become helpless against life's challenges. It is about showing them kindness and respect to support them in the areas in which they cannot cope on their own. This also requires assistance from doctors, psychologists, educators and carers. Those professionals make up a therapeutic/educational team, which, based on the observation and knowledge of each individual, as well as their expertise, work together on the development of programmes aligned with the needs of each person (Kott, 2005, p. 151). Occupational therapy, as a major component in social rehabilitation, is designed to overcome the boredom and hospitalism, which can be observed in nursing homes, as well as to include as many people as possible in the normal flow of life at home and in society, and to improve their mental and physical performance. Therapy should be organised and tailor-made in such a way that each individual participates with pleasure and enjoys it. The most popular forms of occupational therapy used with older people are ergotherapy, art therapy, sociotherapy and psychotherapy.

1. Ergotherapy – patients create various objects of everyday use. Possible forms include sculpting, sewing, wickerworking, weaving, embroidering, toy-making, leather craft-



ing, woodworking, pottery, gardening, cooking, photography, etc. The techniques used during the therapy of each person depend on their individual capacity.

2. Art therapy – or therapy through art, based on creating and embracing art. In other words, active and passive art experience. Passive experience is when the individual is exposed to various forms of art, such as painting and music, etc. Active experience, on the other hand, is when art is created by the individual, e.g., through painting, drawing, embroidering, weaving, making music, performing/acting, composing poetry. Such forms of therapy help the individual develop on the emotional, intellectual and social levels. The types of art therapy identified by E. Konieczna (2013) include “*music therapy, bibliotherapy, dance therapy, dramatherapy, film therapy and visual arts therapy*” (Konieczna, 2013, p. 26).
3. Psychotherapy – focuses on positive psychotherapy, which helps the individual learn how to handle and solve conflicts. Positive psychotherapy teaches the individual how to bring out their natural kindness, benevolence and friendliness. Contemporary trends in psychotherapy can be described as follows – there is an increasing focus on the flexibility and openness of personality structures, importance of awareness, and in particular the understanding of emotional phenomena, there is interest in patients’ life history, importance of childhood and developmental disorders, psychoanalysis is no longer considered unilaterally and psychotherapy is associated with plans for the future and with supporting the patient in their efforts; individual psychotherapy is more and more often supplemented with group therapy, and psychotherapeutic techniques are improved to include various games, psychotherapeutic role-play, and discussions in psychotherapeutic community.
4. Socioterapy – gaining recognition in work with older people, socioterapy is adjusted to the needs, abilities and interests of its participants. This form of therapy is generally intended for people who have problems with their behaviour and adjustment. Socioterapy is considered to be one of the ways of mitigating or eliminating negative, or socially undesirable, standards and habits related to social behaviours. It is a form of assistance for people who struggle with personal problems and life’s challenges. It helps develop the mental skills necessary to interact with other people, such as empathy, openness to oneself and others, and ability to express one’s feelings (Kott, 2005, pp. 249–250).

Individual functioning disorders are usually the consequence of unsatisfied mental needs. Recurring difficult situations reinforce inaccurate cognitive judgements, negative behaviour and emotional disorders. In the socioterapy of older people it is crucial to strengthen personality through the achievement of developmental and educational goals. Social milieu significantly impacts on the improvement in the knowledge about oneself and the establishment and development of the perfect self-image.

The application of the above-mentioned forms of therapy substantially contributes to the development of personality and self-expression, constitutes the basis for group integration, supports the establishment of relationships, and helps develop the ability to socialize. The therapy is beneficial as it makes it possible to relieve negative emotions, such as anxiety, fear and aggression, and to exercise self-control, which helps the individual function better in society.

The lack of activity, interactions, and support from others, makes the individual feel helpless, wronged, isolated and lonely. Participation in occupational therapy helps disabled and older people feel accepted and makes them realize that, despite certain dysfunctions, they are valuable members of their communities. They learn to solve their problems on their own, overcome difficulties, and control their emotions to express them appropriately. Participation in occupational therapy encourages the individual to take action, learn new skills, and focus on themselves and their everyday activities (Kott, 2005, p. 130).

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