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**Chosen Problems  
in the Process of Building  
Social Relations**

edited by

**Emilia Garncarek  
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## EMPOWERED PATIENT AUTONOMY IN THE NETWORK IN THE SELECTED AREA OF THEORETICAL REFLECTION AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

**Abstract.** The aim of the article is to perceive the understanding of autonomy by conscious, empowered patients through an awareness of responsibility for their own health and knowledge of their rights. This perception was made by analysing their statements published in 16 online medical forums and portals, which referred to the components of autonomy. One hundred and twenty-seven posts qualified for qualitative analysis. Based on the research findings, it was concluded that the authors of the posts (intuitively) properly identified autonomy (although they did not use this notion as such), paying attention to principal, formative qualities and inherent rights. They identify these qualities based on the course and characteristics of interactions between patients and healthcare practitioners (exposing their deficits), within the context of participants' rights and duties as well as their opinions about physicians' qualifications and desired (mainly soft) competences.

**Keywords:** autonomy, empowerment, perception of empowerment, empowered patient, patient online, network, qualitative analysis.

### Introduction

Much has been written about the role of autotelic values in human life. It is also of utmost importance that they be respected in medical relations, mainly physician–patient interactions. The undertaken research focuses on analysing con-stituent elements of autonomy as perceived by a special group of patients referred to as “empowered patients”.

It is worth pointing out at the outset that a personal, dignified and autonomous approach to a human being should not be determined by legislative decisions,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Art. 23 of the Civil Code, according to which intimacy and personal dignity constitute personal rights of a human being; Art. 20–22 of the Patient Rights and the Patients Ombudsman Act, which obliges healthcare professionals to behave in such a way as to ensure that the patient's dignity and intimacy are respected; Art. 36, section 1 of the Act on Doctor and Dentist Professions, which

although this form of safeguard is applied in the context of healthcare. Nor should axionormative interpretation be decisive, although respect for the right to intimacy and personal dignity is enshrined in patient rights, which are included in the principles and duties of medical professional ethics (Medical Code of Ethics: Art. 120). As with most interactions, a dignified, personal and autonomous approach to a human being is part and parcel of medical care. And it is up only to the participants in this interaction to ensure that these values are actually respected. Indeed, these values become particularly important in the course of medical interactions, in which there is an inherent lack of symmetry between participants. Further considerations address relations between physicians and “weaker”, dependent people, suffering from temporary or chronic ailments, or those whose diagnosis and course of treatment are hampered by systemic, diagnostic or financial constraints. Therefore, it seems all the more important to continuously monitor the course of these interactions, to study the needs and feelings of patients, and to emphasise the importance of respect for fundamental, autotelic human rights.

Irrespective of why a relationship with a physician was initiated, patients expect respect for their autonomy and inherent subjectivity, which fosters the formation of the expected empathic attitude. The empathic attitude presupposes understanding of the will, feelings, experiences and the entire life situation of another person without identifying oneself with that person, which allows for objective assessments and conclusions (cf. Aring 1958: 447). It is noteworthy that “empathy is always a beneficial relationship in contact between a physician and patient” (Gaertner 1997: 40). Empathic behaviour is beneficial not only to the patient seeking support in a difficult situation but also for a physician when at the crossroads between adopting a paternalistic attitude towards the patient or respecting the autonomy of their choices. At the same time, the humanisation of the medicine movement calling for the holistic treatment of a person seeking medical help or advice also emphasises that it is the individual, subjective approach and special care for the patient that should constitute the highest value in the undertaken treatment.

The humanistic, empathic attitude of the medical community to patients entails a change in people’s attitudes towards themselves: on the one hand, they feel a greater need to exercise their sense of freedom, while on the other their sense of responsibility for themselves decreases. They want to be free and at the same time expect someone else to take over part of the responsibility. With regard to the patient–physician relationship, it can be asserted that patients want medical care to fulfil their expectations and at the same time require that the physician involves them in making important decisions related to their health.

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imposes an obligation on all physicians to respect the dignity of persons using medical services. Furthermore, according to para. 3 of this article, a healthcare professional is obliged to ensure that other medical personnel observe the principle of respect for dignity and intimacy when dealing with a patient.

It has therefore been intriguing to encounter answers to the following questions: how do empowered patients – that is, those equipped with knowledge, conscious of their role, aware of their rights, in control of decisions that influence their health, and motivated to take responsibility for their own health<sup>2</sup> – understand autonomy? How does respect for autonomy manifest in contacts with physicians (in their perception)? Is their online activity of this type (unaffected by outside influence)?

## Moral philosophy as a compatible part of healthcare

From a moral point of view, the principles of medical ethics are grounded in universally binding ethical norms and specify them in more detail (Beauchamp, Childress 1996: 112). It can be said that the norms of medical ethics derive from the principles of universal ethics, rather than being a part of it (Ossowska 1963: 366). Hence this entails that, firstly, behaviour that is not acceptable in a relationship between a non-physician and non-patient is inadmissible in a physician–patient relationship; and, secondly, physician–patient relations must not be in conflict with universally accepted principles of general ethics. However, it is the subjective dimension of the scope and hierarchy of moral norms accepted by the physician and the patient that is noteworthy.

In axionormative terms, the pillar of professional medical care is respect for the patient’s dignity and the principle of subjective treatment (i.e. recognition of them as a specific, single, unique Individual). These values are of particular importance in the context of a physician–patient encounter, since they constitute an immanent part of the diagnostic and, later on, therapeutic procedure. Dignity, on the other hand, can be analysed in the context of different fields of science; in semantic terms, it means “the feeling, awareness of one’s worth, self-respect, honour, pride” (Szymczak 1988: 673). “In law, human dignity is a fundamental issue, since respect for it is the starting point for the **recognition** of each person” (Kubiak 2016: 174). Many legal medical acts mention dignity as an essential value of universal importance that must be respected by all healthcare service providers.<sup>3</sup> Physicians’ legal obligations<sup>4</sup> also include the obligation to respect human dignity and the obligation to ensure that other medical personnel observe the principle of respect for human dignity (Kubiak 2016: 174). The deontological, axionormative, duty-based context of healthcare as well as medical ethics also refer to this fundamental value as immanent in the process of providing care to a patient (Medical Code of Ethics: Art. 3, 12, para. 1).

<sup>2</sup> The author’s original proposal to define attributes of the empowered attitude.

<sup>3</sup> See Art. 20–22 of the Patient Rights and the Patients Ombudsman Act as of November 6, 2008 (Journal of Laws of 2009, No. 52, item 414, as amended; consolidated text, Journal of Laws of 2016, item 186, as amended).

<sup>4</sup> Art. 36, sections 1 and 3 of the Act on Doctor and Dentist Professions as of December 5, 1996 (consolidated text, Journal of Laws of 2017, item 125).

Having insight into specific needs of patients, medical professionals should strive to respect the patient's dignity and **subjectivity** (inscribed in dignity) "at any cost". A relationship filled with empathy, compassion and care for another person is impossible without recognition of the value of human subjectivity. And a meeting between a physician and a patient wherein the latter is always the subject of the interaction should be characterised by such attributes.

## Autonomy, the proposed scope of meaning

Provided that autonomous action is characterised by conscious decision-making, without coercion, persuasion or manipulation, but is not entirely independent of external influence, it seems justified to assume that patients described as empowered are individuals who make decisions autonomously and who recognise autonomy as an important value.

Autonomy can be defined and understood as

individual freedom, the right to decide about oneself, individual sovereignty, independence, exercise of one's rights, independent establishment of moral principles, individuality, taking responsibility for one's own affairs, resilience to other people's influence, being true to oneself, being oneself, honesty, authenticity, etc. (Łuków, Pasiński 2014: 145).

Autonomy can also be described as a capacity or characteristic, right or value. Autonomy can refer to both actions and persons: "Sometimes autonomy describes actions and sometimes individuals" (Łuków, Pasiński 2014: 145).

The etymological context of this notion derives from the word *autos* (self, own, independent) and *nomos* (law, norm, government) and means self-determination, self-government, independence, setting standards for oneself (cf. Nowacka 2005: 24; Kalisiewicz 1995: 291). The notion of autonomy is closely linked to other terms in moral philosophy such as agency, responsibility and paternalism. This is due to the consequences of treating an individual as an empowered person. Only an autonomy person can be considered to be in charge of a given act, and only such a person can be held responsible for committing a given deed. Paternalistic interference in an autonomy person's decision-making requires justification: "the more autonomy a given person is, the stronger this justification must be" (Górski 2012: 2). It is precisely paternalism that treats people as inert and denies them the right to self-determination, which is the main enemy of individual autonomy (Bujny 2007: 18). Medical paternalism is in clear opposition to the fulfilment of and respect for the principle of the patient's autonomy (Wichrowski 1992: 17). Although the aim of paternalistic actions is the patient's well-being, there is no doubt that it forces the individual to fully subdue themselves to the physician's decisions and actions (Brzeziński 2002: 45).

The principle of respect for autonomy is treated as an obvious and fundamental moral principle that constitutes one of the fundamentals of contemporary medical



ethics, and is mentioned alongside the principles of non-maleficence, beneficence and justice. The principle of respect for autonomy recognises the individual's right to hold opinions, make choices and act according to their values and beliefs. This principle requires that the ability of the individual to make autonomous choices, to overcome fears and other obstacles undermining autonomy be maintained, while respect for the autonomy of others consists in treating them in a way that enables them to act autonomously (cf. Beauchamp, Childress 1996: 134).

From a different perspective, if the phrase "the patient's ability to act autonomously" were to be replaced by "the patient's ability to give informed consent", then the principle could be adopted that the lesser or greater the ability of a person to act autonomously, then the lesser or greater, respectively, is that person's ability to give informed consent to the proposed actions. Although there is no clear definition of informed consent, this does not mean that its elements cannot be identified (see also: Szewczyk 2009: 105–149). Informed consent consists of a series of actions that are inextricably linked to the maintenance of the patient's independence, based on the necessary conditions to be met in order to maintain autonomy. It is a deliberate, conscious action, without influence of external factors determining the patient's deeds (Atras, Marczewski 2004: 350).

Ultimately, it must be assumed that full implementation of the principle of respect for the patient's autonomy is a kind of ideal state (type) at which one should aim and that cannot be fully achieved. Therefore, respect for the patient's autonomy entails dealing with individual cases and setting a benchmark for the patient's essentially autonomous actions and decisions, although they do not fully meet the conditions of thorough insight and the absence of external influence (Faden, Beauchamp 1986: 240, after: Nowacka 2005: 28).

Given that empowered patients are recognised as autonomous subjects empowered through awareness of their responsibility for their own health and knowledge of their rights, it is worthwhile analysing and reflecting on the nature of their online activity (which is an inherent attribute of empowered attitudes). All the more so, since the development of online media has enabled quick access to various sources of knowledge that patients are looking for and are increasingly willing to share and consult with physicians. Patients want to be better informed and it is increasingly easy for them to obtain necessary knowledge (Miller, Washington 2016). So who are the empowered patients?

## **The main assumptions of the concept of empowerment**

Patients have become increasingly active online (47.7% of Poles search the Internet for information about diseases, treatment and physicians (Business Insider 2020). Health managers talk with increasing frequency about a new era of the patient, the era of the empowered patient. This is an ("empowered",

“independent”<sup>5</sup>) patient co-responsible for their health thanks to having gained information and enriched their knowledge of diseases, healthy lifestyles,<sup>6</sup> and ways to navigate through the increasingly complex structure of the healthcare system. Such a patient wants to be a partner in the process of treatment and is consciously involved in changing their own lifestyle and demands the right to their own, free choices.

If (quoting health managers) we were to call today’s patient an empowered patient (although this is certainly a far-reaching generalisation), that would mean that, on the whole, they are well-educated, have access to medical knowledge and preliminary analysis of their health condition, and often carry out self-diagnosis on Internet forums and medical portals (e-diagnosis). The Polish empowered patient is aware of their rights, is empowered by their knowledge, has increasingly high expectations, and raises the bar for medical staff. Such a patient tends to control their health online and manage it online. In this consumerist model of healthcare, they are able to define their needs and take responsibility for their actions and decisions. This is a patient who is to be satisfied with the medical service (Salmon 2002: 25).

The main assumptions behind the concept of empowerment imply a change in the patient’s profile. One should not impose anything on such a patient. They themselves should want to change their own attitude towards their health and disease prevention and should be involved in making it effective. It is the patient themselves who should want to exercise their freedom of choice, which is a manifestation of empowerment. In this context, patients are described as consumers who have the right to make their own choices. The patient should want to be aware, and should want to have control over their own health, but also over the healthcare system.

The scope of meaning of the term “the **empowered** patient”, the patient empowered by knowledge, may, however, be defined differently, depending on who describes such a patient. Most frequently, the notion is applied to emphasise the particular importance of patients having greater control over their health and healthcare. However, WHO defines empowerment as a process through which people gain greater control over decisions and actions affecting their health (WHO 1998; Hohn 1998). Four fundamental components of the process of empowerment or enhancement of patient autonomy are:

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<sup>5</sup> One can find translations of an empowered patient as a “patient–partner”, “patient–decision-maker” or “entitled patient” on the website of the “MY Pacjenci” (*US Patients*) foundation.

<sup>6</sup> A representative, nationwide survey entitled *Poles’ Healthy Lifestyle* conducted by TNS Polska for Headlines from 12.03.–10.04.2012 revealed that Poles had relatively detailed knowledge of a healthy lifestyle identifying it mainly with diet and physical activity. Respondents believed that in order to live a healthier life, one should first of all give up stimulants and addictions (e.g. cigarettes and alcohol) and avoid unhealthy fast food. A decision to switch to a healthier lifestyle is usually made independently or together with a physician or family member. Patients make this decision because they want to change themselves or because they feel bad. Most Poles declare that they use public healthcare although some of them choose specialist private healthcare.

- 1) recognition of the patient's role by the patient (Lyons 2007: 140–142);
- 2) sufficient knowledge to be able to engage with their “healthcare provider” (Coulter, Entwistle, Gilbert 1999: 318–322);
- 3) self-efficacy; the effectiveness of the patient's actions, defined as the belief that they have the ability to achieve desired outcomes (Gallagher 2012a; Gallagher 2012b). Individuals convinced of their efficacy, i.e. having the ability/competences to achieve their goals, are more likely to engage in such behaviour/activities. They are also better motivated and usually undertake difficult tasks more eagerly than people with low self-efficacy (Bandura 1977; Bandura 1997);
- 4) knowledge of health-related literature, which is essential for empowered patients, as well as the existence of a facilitating environment. The ability to understand and use health-related information to make informed health-related decisions and undertake actions within the healthcare system is of utmost importance (Coulter, Ellins 2007: 24–27; Hohn 1998).

Based on these four components, empowerment can be defined as a process in which patients understand their role, and seek and gain the latest medical knowledge. In addition, they acquire the ability to effectively interact with healthcare staff to perform a specific task in a community that recognises social and cultural differences and encourages patient participation in healthcare activities (WHO 2009).

Today's empowered patient “uses the Internet to acquire knowledge about health-related issues, consults discussion forums, expects high quality services and benefits, is mobile, carefully chooses a physician, an outpatient clinic, hospital” (Dolińska-Zygmunt 2001: 274). Due to their engagement in the process of treatment, such a patient is much less likely to receive poor quality health services (Olesch 2012: 11) mainly because, using the knowledge capital they have accumulated, they know where to seek treatment, receive higher quality services and look for the best specialists. Such a patient accumulates knowledge of how to use the Internet for health purposes (see Łaska-Formejster 2014a: 17–29; Łaska-Formejster 2014b: 186–202). They are also more aware of their rights. As the data show, in Poland 20 years ago, only one fifth of Poles declared they had heard about patient rights and knew their substance (CBOS 2001). This percentage is steadily growing, which proves that Poles' awareness of patient rights is increasing (Sprawozdanie 2015).

The empowered attitude is, on the one hand, the result of patients' distrust in an inefficient, increasingly complex healthcare system. On the other hand, it stems from the desire to draw attention to fundamental patient rights (concerning, for example, subjective treatment, respect for rights in the personal sphere, the right to full medical knowledge about diseases, diagnoses and alternative treatment procedures) (Hallisy 2008: 273–286; Cohen 2010: 6–13). Such a patient is independent, co-responsible for their own health and active on the Internet.

## Online research capacity

Nowadays, most people (especially in information-driven societies) cannot imagine their life without the Internet. According to 2018 estimates (see Kulik 2018), 4 billion people throughout the world (about 53% of the total 7.5-billion population) had Internet access. In Poland, 86.7% of households (about 30 million people) use the Internet (Gemius 2018).

Thus, more widespread use of the Internet opens up new online communication possibilities, defines new research areas, e.g. in social research, and makes it possible to reach new groups of respondents (Gregor, Stawiszyński 2005: 333–334).

The Internet is the most important carrier of civilisational change in the modern world [...]. Thanks to the Internet, there is a radical change in the social space and social context in which an individual find himself. [...] The Internet has become the fullest expression of the postmodern, networked information society (Marody, Batorski, Nowak 2006: 5, 18).

The Internet provides an opportunity for inexpensive ethnography (Kubczak 2002: 185) and ensures respondents' confidentiality, which has a significant impact on the quantity and quality of answers (Marody, Batorski, Nowak 2006: 102). It has been observed that in computer-aided research, respondents more often share private or even intimate information with other people because they have a sense of (also visual) anonymity. They can focus on their own attitudes and emotions, and the very act of writing encourages confessions (Staniszewska 2013: 52).

It has also been noted that the Internet influences behaviour of many social groups:

However, from a social point of view, the phenomenon of the Internet is that it is now much more than just information and communication technology. For many social groups, it has become a natural environment for social functioning that satisfies most social needs and motivations. It is used not only to search for information, but also to make and maintain friendships and close relationships. Moreover, the Internet is also an environment for the establishment of new communities, and social and cultural norms (Zajac, Krejtz 2007: 191).

The influence of the Internet on patients' behaviour and activity is therefore worth considering. Certainly, new technological solutions have facilitated the use of medical services to some extent, e.g. through the possibility of electronic registration, obtaining e-prescriptions, or electronic communication with physicians (telemedicine). However, it is noteworthy that not only does the Internet facilitate the patient's contact with healthcare facilities and centres, but increasingly often it also makes the patient refrain from personal contact with a physician. Instead, they seek information about their ailments, symptoms or health on the Internet (the reasons for giving up on personal contacts with a physician are certainly individual and determined by various factors). According to Christine Hine

(1998), social researchers should react to cultural changes. Thus, if potential respondents move their activity to the Internet, the researcher's task is to reach out to this medium and collect as much data as possible (Jurek 2013: 89).

## Sampling and the area of research

The research project and reflections presented here focus on analysing the perception of autonomy among empowered patients engaged in online activity. The aim was not to scrutinise the use of the notion of autonomy as such, but rather the use of terms referring to its constituent parts. Since the empowered attitude is manifested by the desire to be treated autonomously, subjectively and with respect for personal rights, for the right to full disease-related medical knowledge, full diagnosis and alternative treatment options, it seemed only natural to study these attributes in statements published in medical forums. The answers to the following questions were sought: what components of autonomy do "informed, knowledgeable", empowered patients pay attention to, which components do they recall? How (in their perception) is respect for autonomy manifested in contacts with physicians? And what characteristics of physicians do they pay attention to in descriptions of interactions? Openness, tenacity and courage in publishing their assessments and opinions, without changing their mind under the influence of the statements of other users, are treated as an indicator of the autonomous nature of patients' activity on the analysed portals and medical forums.

Medical portals and forums have thus become an area of research. In order to choose a suitable data collection site, the researcher should be guided by an assessment of adequacy, access to valuable information, the degree of (physical and emotional) risk, ethical considerations and the assessment of social consequences (see Lofland et al. 2009: 42–60). It was decided that online medical portals/forums meet the adequacy criterion (and are a "natural" area of activity for empowered patients). The assessment of adequacy is based on the mutual alignment of objectives, research problems and techniques. Web portals visited by people looking for information on medical issues are an appropriate place to search for answers to the indicated questions within the problem area (sample selection was therefore purposive). The use of the selected research technique (content analysis) is suitable for online analysis, and makes it possible to obtain this information.

The research under discussion was carried out in the first quarter of 2019, and only those forums that met the following criteria were included in sampling: active forums with a high number of registered users and entries (which means that users were very active). The research sample (obtained via the Google search engine<sup>7</sup>) included 16 medical portals on the following topics: disability, multiple

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<sup>7</sup> Key words and their combinations were used for search, e.g. "most popular medical portals", "information search on medical portals", "medical portals on contemporary diseases", "patient seeks

sclerosis, gynaecology and obstetrics, oncological diseases, mental illnesses, dentistry, eating disorders, allergy, pregnancy and trying to have a baby, cluster headaches, dermatology, heart and cardiovascular diseases, psoriasis, forums for people on dialysis and after kidney transplantation, ophthalmology, and surgery.

In terms of forum users' activity, only manifestations typical of empowered patients were identified and qualified for analysis. Generally speaking, the activity of users of the analysed forums and portals was characterized by such aspects as: sharing personal experiences, opinions and emotions; passing on individually obtained knowledge about diseases and ways to receive help; providing mutual support, or support to the families of patients; or obtaining information. Moreover, expert and advisory statements appeared in many forums. Both patients and specialists provided valuable advice on the symptoms and treatment of diseases, or on coping with everyday life. Internet users exchanged information about good/competent/recommended specialists, physicians who could help them overcome the disease or improve their quality of life. They also sought information about "good" medical practices. In addition, they exchanged their experience on treatment methods for given diseases, drugs used, their side effects and the treatments they had undergone. Some of the portals contained legal information related to the search for help in the case of a physician having violated patient rights. It is noteworthy that in a few cases patients' complaints about physicians' behaviour and the general functioning of the healthcare system appeared on the web portals.

With reference to earlier reflections and in the context of the results of the analysis presented below, let us define the characteristics of empowered patients that qualify them as study participants. The key selection criterion was their high (and informed) activity on medical portals. In fact, these respondents were active on forums almost every day, sharing the knowledge gained from the Internet and giving advice to other users about physicians, treatment or opinions about medical facilities and the healthcare system (cf. Salmon 2002: 25). Despite the high level of patient activity on medical forums and portals (some of them had several or tens of thousands of registered users), only a few people on each of them could be defined as empowered patients (their activity fluctuated temporarily during the study). Other Internet users undertook a rather pragmatic approach and were active occasionally or intermittently; they treated portals or forums as a source of information. They searched for specific solutions, answers to questions; they rarely participated in discussions, unless they concerned a problem related to their individual situation.

A detailed analysis of user activity revealed that leaders were active almost every day, but the nature of their activity was very diverse and depended on the dynamics of the narrative and needs indicated by other forum users. Therefore,

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help on portals", "health forums", "patients and health", "active patients on forums", "most popular health forums", "patient helps on forums", "medical portals – patients most active online".



there is no methodological justification for recalling figures about this activity. Finally, 127 statements of 31 users – empowered patients – meeting the selection criteria were classified as source material.

Because the results of the preliminary analysis did not reveal separate themes concerning the undertaken subject matter but these themes appeared in the context of descriptions of interactions, the final set of analysed material comprises statements that describe: 1) the motive of the desired pattern of physician–patient relationship, the way physicians communicate with patients, expectations concerning the quality of the assistance they receive, the desired traits of a physician or characteristics cited as attributes of professionalism and competence of the medical personnel. This category also includes statements describing physicians' inappropriate attitudes to patients, indicating a deficit of certain values; 2) statements indicating the authors of the posts have awareness and knowledge of patient rights; 3) statements that contain any of the earlier mentioned attributes of autonomy or its constituent characteristics were also qualified for the analysis. The constituent characteristics include: dignified and benevolent treatment, active involvement in the treatment process, respect for patient rights, e.g. recognition of the right to have one's own views, the right to make one's own choices, providing patients with reliable information, and respect for the principle of intimacy and physician–patient privilege. Even preliminary reflection on selected categories of analysis leads to the conclusion that these statements are not disjointed and mutually exclusive, which determines the area and subject of the study. All of them directly fit into or define the axionormative context of interaction between the medical personnel and the patient.

The presentation of the results of the study should be preceded by a description of the nature and type of the narrative of posted information. Statements qualified as the source research material are mostly laconic, slogan-like, characterised by a lack of care for precise wording and sometimes inconsistency of argumentation. Internet users apply abbreviated and informal linguistic forms (e.g. they refer to others on a first-name basis). They often use slogan-like appeals (e.g. “it is your right, they have to copy the documentation” [statement 43 Gynaecology and Obstetrics]). There are far more descriptive statements (not included in the analysed collection) in which Internet users describe their experience of a disease, their state of health and attempts to improve their quality of life, give practical (almost therapeutic) tips, answer questions about the functioning of facilities run by the National Health Fund, or describe modes of action or procedures, e.g. those needed to obtain a referral for a medical examination without additional explanations. Empathic and friendly statements serve as consolation and reassurance.

Indicators/components of autonomy were finally classified according to the above mentioned (3) categories, since the issues included in the area of research emerged mainly in these contexts. It is also noteworthy that this is a qualitative analysis. Quantitative analysis does not apply here when it comes to statements

that often supplement previous posts (e.g. “it’s your right, you’re entitled to it” [statement 49 Surgery]), or confirm previous information (“yes, it’s true, first of all ask for a diagnosis and talk about possible treatment options, it’s important” [statement 37 Gynaecology]).

### **Results of the analysis; the components of empowerment identified by an analysis of comments and entries from empowered patients**

Given that the components of the identified research area are almost exclusively referred to in the context of interactions, the interactional frame is the basis for interpreting the final findings. This approach is also justified in the traditional conception of medicine, where the analysis of the physician–patient relationship is the basis for reflecting on the personal qualities of a physician. It was pointed out that the main principle behind the desired interpersonal attitudes was conduct contributing to the satisfaction of an individual’s socially accepted needs and avoidance of consequences incompatible with those needs. These interpersonal attitudes include **respect for human dignity, subjectivity, respect for health and life, tolerance, care, reliability of information, empathy, and devotion of time and attention to the individual**. Satisfying all these needs (which also constitute the value or principle of autonomy) is of particular importance in the process of providing medical care to an individual, whether they are ill or convinced of their illness, or want to eliminate doubts related to their health condition or to monitor it (Czarnecki 2008: 69; Słońska 2010: 64–83; Ostrowska 2010: 23–47; Gałuszka, Legiędź-Gałuszka 2008: 54–106).

The importance of these values is also evidenced by the fact that for more than three decades, ever more information about difficulties encountered in relations between the patient and physician has been described in the literature (e.g. Gordon, Edwards 1999: 106–125, 162–180; Barański 2002: 162–167; Więckowska 2005: 259–266; Łaska-Formejster 2002: 150–177). Discontent, dissatisfaction, disrespect for patient rights and failure to meet patients’ expectations significantly affect the treatment process and the implementation of a physician’s recommendations. It can extend the convalescence period, raise doubts as to the competence of the physician, or increase the number of cases of litigation against physicians for their mistakes or for behaviour that violates the rules of the ethical context of interaction.

Entries (recommendations) by Internet users earlier defined as empowered patients with reference to key values or distinctive features of autonomy (i.e. the above-mentioned values and desired attributes of medical interaction) were included in the analysis. However, the preliminary analysis covered a wider range of users’ (not only empowered patients’) activities, as their response (their statement) fitted a specific narrative context (e.g. a request to indicate a specific course



of action when the attending physician did not provide any guidance in this respect). In a separate theme of “being treated by a physician who does not provide information, devote enough time to interaction, a diagnosis and justification of the proposed treatment”, the authors of the posts most often point out the lack of respect and adherence to the principles inherent in the value of autonomy. Most of the Internet users quote descriptions of “typical” visits in the context of an inquiry posted in the forum to recommend a *good physician the internet user is familiar with*, because, in their opinion, the one that had so far been providing services either did not have proper qualifications or did not satisfy basic needs and failed to meet minimum expectations. Some of these inquiries were related to situations in which patients learned that they had to use the help of a specialist, but they did not know one, and none was indicated by the analysed attending physician.

Posts containing descriptions of previous visits indicate that their course undermined and contradicted the seemingly universal (in the area of analysed material) respect for fundamental values, principles and rights that should be enjoyed by everyone. These are some examples provided by the analysed Internet users:

- the lack of appropriate, polite and dignified treatment e.g. “loud comments about my appearance (weight) in the presence of the support staff” (Surgery);
- physicians are in a rush, there is not enough time to talk: “no time for anything, he comes late, leaves early, always in a rush – he won’t even look you in the eye, only eyedrops, a prescription” (Ophthalmology); “he won’t explain anything, he won’t say anything – won’t say a word, I don’t know what’s wrong with me” (Allergy);
- jumping to conclusions: “... you certainly didn’t take medicine” (Psychiatry);
- criticising: “how can you be so selfish” (Eating disorder);
- referring to a patient in an impersonal manner: “one has to... buys... goes...” (Gynaecology);
- not passing on basic information, e.g. “No information about the diagnosis, just a statement that it’ll be fine. It wasn’t until the next day that I learned the diagnosis and the expected procedure from another physician” (Ophthalmology);
- abruptness, unfriendliness: “there’s nothing human or nice about him, won’t even reply to »good morning« and won’t repeat himself when you ask him to” (Surgery);
- the lack of respect for rights: “...I can’t give you your records” (Surgery);
- a diagnosis made without a detailed interview and examination;
- physicians’ unwillingness to agree to additional consultations or specialist examinations and their lack of empathy and care.

And yet the benefit of empathy is mutual: it makes it possible to reach an agreement that enhances trust. An empathic physician becomes more caring, analyses the patient’s condition holistically and is able to understand their needs. In turn, the patient, thanks to the established interaction, speaks freely and honestly

about their feelings, ailments and doubts. The empathic relationship empowers the patient – they become a real human being and not just another case (a classified disease). Empathy makes it possible to establish a relationship that makes the patient's well-being the ultimate good. An empathic physician is a sensitive doctor who uses comprehensible vocabulary, they are responsible, understanding, bringing hope of recovery (Dolińska-Zygmunt 2001: 283–289). It has been proven repeatedly that the very course of physician–patient interaction can have a beneficial therapeutic effect. The physician's personality and positive traits may be an effective treatment for the patient. A friendly atmosphere in the physician's office encourages patient's openness, and facilitates the process of diagnosis and choice of appropriate treatment (Sokołowska 1986: 91).

Internet users' requests for help and identification of the right professional or facility where they can be found always elicit a positive and fairly quick response. Help, guidance and advice are provided both by active forum leaders (empowered patients, among others) and those who join the discussion later (which constituted a certain analytical difficulty, as some of the statements had to be referred to several times). Quite a characteristic feature of the entries of "leaders" is "not to discuss" and not to comment on the behaviours of doctors in the context of the described negative experiences. And if they do, it is rather in the "objective" tone of the narrative, indicating that, as in any other profession and among physicians, there may be incompetent people or those experiencing difficulties, e.g. "Don't worry and don't take it so personally, after all, he is also a human being, although he shouldn't behave like that [...]" (statement 12 Surgery); "You can come across incompetence in any profession, the most important thing is to get the right treatment now" (statement 13 Ophthalmology); "You're right, such situations shouldn't happen, but slandering Mrs. X is of no use now, let's find a solution" (statement 110 Eating disorders). The leaders try to tone down emotions and offer specific, helpful hints by providing the names of good specialists they know. Sometimes they ask other users, residents of a given location, for information, if the patient has limited mobility. In most of their posts that recommend specialists and medical facilities, the leaders describe physicians' soft skills, emphasising that they treat patients individually and respect their rights, including the right to full medical knowledge about a given disease, full diagnosis and alternative treatment options. Here are examples of such statements:

I recommend doctor (X), she inspires trust, has a great attitude, is warm, cordial, understands the patient's situation and alleviates suffering. She doesn't dismiss you, she talks, explains, is very kind and polite, asks about your needs, mentions different possibilities, shares the results of latest studies in the world (statement 53 Surgery).

Go to (X), no one has helped me like him, an excellent expert, looks into your eyes, he sees you and speaks to you, you understand everything and he repeats and explains things, if necessary. He orders tests, makes sure you can afford medicine and asks whether there is someone to take care of you, he also believes in alternative medicine, you can trust him (statement 97 Neurological diseases).

Most numerous references to taking care of relations with patients were made on the portal “Pregnancy, trying to have a baby”. When recommending a gynaecologist, not only do they describe the desired course of the physician’s relationship with the pregnant woman and her family, but also (or rather especially) the personal traits of a recommended physician:

She’s warm, kind, patient, competent – you immediately trust her, she is eloquent, looks at a woman’s situation holistically, takes into account her capabilities (statement 7 Pregnancy).

Mr. X is a professional, he doesn’t stress you, has a nice voice, he’s patient, orders the necessary examinations, checks everything, thinks it’s better to be safe than sorry, you can be open with him (statement 13 Pregnancy).

He always listened carefully, advised, often wanted me to make the final decision, although he shared his opinion, he would hold your hand if necessary, he is benevolent, knowledgeable about the latest developments, treats you like a human being, asks about and considers various options (statement 29 Pregnancy).

Ensuring the transparency of the results of the analysis of empowered patients’ statements requires that traits, qualities, values and principles (which comply with the concept of autonomy, given the context of theoretical considerations) are defined as components of autonomy, catalogued and presented in terms of the following thematic strands:

- 1) “The course of a physician-(+personnel)-to-patient relationship”; this category includes statements containing descriptions and terms referring to interactions taking place in physicians’ offices and hospital wards. According to empowered patients, the following aspects of interactions are particularly important (and mentioned in first place): trustworthiness, respectfulness, professionalism, reliability, a friendly atmosphere, benevolence, humane treatment, respect for dignity, and showing patience and respect for physician–patient privilege. Internet users also point out the constructiveness of the relationship when they write about a physician’s proper response to patient’s needs and the need to conduct a dialogue. The adjectives used to define the proper course of an interaction include: warm, open, nice, good, as it should be, calm, patient, trusting, caring, comfortable. The ideal attributes refer to situations in which a physician arrives at decisions about treatment together with a patient; explains and agrees the ways to proceed with them.
- 2) Statements that refer to the characteristics of the conversation, and ways of conveying information are included in the category of “the way physicians communicate with their patients”. Empowered patients introduce the following features of communication as components of the desired nature of communication (the researcher is looking for autonomy-related values): comprehensible (clear), factual, slow (in the context of the pace of speech), friendly, “as detailed as possible”, “partner-like” (“without showing superiority” [statement 94 Psoriasis]), calm, in no hurry, open to questions, ready to explain

and illustrate, patient. When referring to the course of patients' conversations with physicians, the leaders pay attention primarily to the friendly but factual tone of the conversation, credibility, trustworthiness and professionalism. There are statements emphasising an individualised approach and the need to make sure that the patient properly understands the information provided ("the physician must make sure that you've understood it properly. After all, there is a fundamental difference between candida and cancer" [statement 13 Oncology]). The importance of a smile during a conversation is mentioned in some entries because "it can be soothing, comforting" [statement 153 Ophthalmology]. This category also includes posts of leaders who give advice and guidance to those users who complain about the lack of opportunity to talk to a physician ("he issues a prescription and that's it" [statement 14 Multiple sclerosis]), lack of information about the diagnosis, therapy and treatment options. They advise:

ask him, you have the right to; ...if you don't understand, ask and demand an explanation; if you don't remember, [...] let Dr. X repeat or write it down; after all, you can prepare your questions beforehand, you won't be nervous about forgetting something; don't be impatient, the physician also needs time to gather his/her info.

They quote descriptions of their own experiences as a form of support and consolation:

I, too, have come across various behaviours. Some of them wouldn't devote more than 5 minutes to you. The examination was short, superficial, and the interview was not too insightful. Something like: "here you're – I'll tell you what's wrong with you, here's a prescription". Some physicians don't like it when you suggest something to them because they treat it as lese-majesty. I've been in contact with a good doctor recently – he asks me questions, he's interested, doesn't dismiss me when I ask something, when I need an explanation. It's nice for a change... and I recommend him (statement 117 Disability forum).

- 3) "Physician's traits and qualities cited as attributes of professionalism and competence of the medical personnel" is another category identified within the analysed thematic strand. Although the quoted terms have already appeared in previous categories (in the context of interaction), one can come across them in over a dozen posts as more detailed "attributes" of recommended physicians or their desired qualities. Thus, professionalism and competence of a physician and medical staff depend above all on: medical knowledge – reliable, broadly defined (which can be considered a synonym of holistic or interdisciplinary), knowledge of the latest developments and technological achievements in medicine; practical skills ("efficiently performed procedures"; "overcoming difficulties in treatment or surgery"); ability to "keep their cool" (and "...relieve pain and suffering"); professional communication ("a physician's professionalism is manifested in the way they communicate, explain things. Having incredible knowledge, they can illustrate the prob-

- lem and talk about it” [statement 67 Premature baby]); but also benevolence, showing attention, care and empathy (“the professional can understand the patient, maybe not exactly put themselves in your shoes, that would not be too good – but understand you, empathise, feel it” [statement 53 Lung diseases]).
- 4) The last of the outlined categories is “awareness and knowledge of patient rights”. The previous categories also include statements referring to patient rights, e.g. the right to dignified and kind treatment, reliable information, respect for the principle of privacy or physician–patient privilege. There are posts whose authors point to the following patient rights while giving tips, advice and consolation:

the right to dignity, information about treatment, giving consent to treatment, right to intimacy and privacy, physician–patient privilege, the right to be discharged from hospital upon one’s request, the right to be visited, the right to a meal, medicines, complaints, the right to confidentiality about the disease and confidentiality of personal data, access to documentation (one’s own medical case record), to information about one’s own health condition, free treatment throughout the country.

Although not all of these rights are legally regulated, it must be admitted that they intuitively form part of the catalogue of rights that each participant in an interaction – especially of a medical nature – has, and they constitute a convincing argument in favour of the existence and importance of respecting the autonomous values.

## Summary

As has already been indicated, in the context of ethical considerations, attention is paid to values to which an individual is entitled, in their autonomous dimension, e.g. all people have a sense of personal dignity that has to be confirmed, and want empowerment and respect for their rights. Respect for life and health is also one of the fundamental values expressed for example by relief of physical and mental suffering. Have users of medical portals and forums considered them as fundamental in medical interactions?

The results of the analysis made it possible to formulate the thesis that the idea of empowered patients, which emerged partly in response to a lack of trust in the increasingly inefficient healthcare system and out of a desire to draw attention to fundamental patient rights, is reflected in users’ activity. In fact, the leaders of the analysed medical forums and portals play the role of “guides” who describe and provide guidance as regards the course of formal pathways and diagnostic procedures. They also share previously acquired knowledge about individual diseases (e.g. by quoting professional publications), point to responsibility for decisions concerning one’s own health (through gaining knowledge, implementing appropriate actions and participating in health decisions), and make decisions

affecting their health (by declaring that they are switching to a healthy lifestyle). On the other hand, in the context of the analysed comments with reference to autonomy, the rights, principles and values of empowered relations are of utmost importance, although they are expressed in a rather colloquial and intuitive manner and knowledge. The concepts of *autonomy* or *subjectivity* did not explicitly appear in any of the analysed forums, but a search for these concepts was not the objective of the analysis. The results of the analysis clearly show that the studied Internet users properly understand the notion of autonomy.

When answering the posed problem questions, it should be pointed out that the authors of the analysed posts draw attention to the essential qualities, values and principles that define autonomy and the rights that constitute its fundamentals. The published posts (mostly concerning courses of interactions) contain components of autonomy such as freedom to decide and exercise one's rights; the right not to be influenced = the recognition of the right to have one's own opinions; the right to be treated with respect, dignity and kindness; and the right to receive proper care and attention, which enables empowered actions. It is also noteworthy that Internet users observe these qualities in medical interactions (as a sign of respect for autonomous values) and, whenever necessary, expose their deficit. They attach great importance to the interactional competences of physicians, their qualifications and their ability to provide professional aid. They pay attention to the friendly atmosphere of the visit and the physician's trustworthiness, friendly and caring attitude towards the patient, provision of comprehensive information, and dispelling of doubts (doubts that aggravate fear, suffering and the patient's feeling of loneliness). The fact of publishing opinions on these issues, and not changing opinions under the influence of other users' statements, is treated as an indicator of the autonomous nature of their activity on the analysed medical portals and forums.

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## AUTONOMICZNOŚĆ PACJENTA W SIECI – W WYBRANYM OBSZARZE REFLEKSJI TEORETYCZNEJ I ANALIZY EMPIRYCZNEJ

**Abstrakt.** Celem artykułu jest percepcja pojmowania autonomiczności przez wzmocnionych wiedzą, upodmiotowionych poprzez świadomość odpowiedzialności za własne zdrowie i znajomość przynależnych praw pacjentów (*empowered*). Owej percepcji dokonano poprzez analizę ich wypowiedzi opublikowanych na 16 forach i portalach internetowych o tematyce medycznej, w których pojawiały się nawiązania do komponentów autonomiczności. Do analizy jakościowej zakwalifikowano 127 postów. Wyniki badania umożliwiły sformułowanie wniosku, że autorzy wpisów autonomiczność (choć nie przywołują tego pojęcia) identyfikują (intuicyjnie) w jej właściwym znaczeniu, zwracając uwagę na pryncypialne jej przymioty, które ją określają, i uprawnienia, które stanowią jej filar. Percypowali oni owe przymioty w przebiegu i cechach interakcji pacjent-personel medyczny (demaskując ich deficyt), w kontekście posiadanych przez uczestników relacji uprawnień i obowiązków oraz w opiniach o kwalifikacjach lekarzy i pożądanym ich kompetencjach (głównie miękkich).

**Słowa kluczowe:** autonomia, autonomiczność, percepcja autonomiczności, *empowered patient*, pacjent w sieci, sieć, analiza jakościowa.



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## PEOPLE WITH EXCESS BODY WEIGHT AND WEIGHT DISCRIMINATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

**Abstract.** This article addresses issues associated with the perception of obesity and being overweight in the labour market, and the issue of weight discrimination. Excess body weight has become a very serious social problem. The increase in rates of obesity and being overweight is a serious problem both for individuals and social policies in advanced societies. In some countries, over 50% of the population have excess body weight. The literature to date indicates that people struggling with being overweight and obesity are discriminated at work. Research shows that these individuals are believed to have lower leadership potential, a lower IQ and lower effectiveness compared to individuals of normal weight. For this reason, people with excess body weight are subjected to stigmatisation and discrimination, have limited chances of occupying managerial positions, and earn lower incomes. The article also shows whether and how overweight and obese people can defend their rights.

**Keywords:** overweight, obesity, excess body weight, stigmatisation, discrimination, stereotypes, labour market.

### Obesity and being overweight as a social problem

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the number of people with excess body weight in developed countries is constantly growing and is currently one of the most widespread health problems (WHO 2018a: 24). These conclusions are based on analyses of values of the Body Mass Index (BMI) in several dozen countries. BMI is calculated as the body mass (in kilograms) divided by the square of the body height (in meters) ( $\text{kg}/\text{m}^2$ ). According to the WHO standards, a person is overweight when their BMI is equal to or greater than 25, and obese when their index is 30 or greater (WHO 2018a: 24).

The WHO estimates that, worldwide, more than 1.9 billion people over 18 are overweight and 650 million are obese. Excess body weight is not only a problem for adults. The statistics show that as many as 380 million children and young people

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are overweight or obese. According to WHO data, from 1975 to 2016 the number of people with excess body weight tripled (WHO 2018b: 17) and is expected to grow.

More than 58% of Europeans are overweight or obese, which means that Europe is in second place when it comes to the highest percentage of people having excess body weight worldwide. Similar tendencies can also be observed in Poland. According to data from the Polish Central Statistical Office (GUS), the percentage of Poles with excess body weight in 1996 amounted to 27.7%, it rose to 29.6% in 2004 and reached nearly 54% in 2014 (GUS 2006; GUS 2016). In the case of Poland, men are more likely to be overweight or obese; in 2014, 62% of Poles had excess body weight, of which 44% were overweight and 18% – obese, while in the case of Polish women, the overall percentage was 46%, of which 30% were overweight and 16% were obese (GUS 2016). According to national forecasts, as many as two thirds of Poles will be overweight or obese in 2030.

According to the WHO, the main factor responsible for people being overweight and obese is an unhealthy lifestyle i.e. unhealthy eating habits and limited physical activity. The statistical data show that EU citizens have a daily intake of 500 kcals more than 40 years ago, which is accompanied by a more sedentary lifestyle; the average European citizen spends at least 5 hours a day in a sitting position, while the daily metabolic rate at work has decreased from 1,500 kcals to 1,400 kcals over 40 years in the case of men, and from 1,300 kcals to 1,200 kcals in the case of women (UMWŁ 2019: 2). In addition, stress, fatigue and irregular working hours may result in a tendency to consume more calories than the individual needs.

An individual does not live in a vacuum. The surrounding and financial standing of an individual plays a huge role in their life, which is why the perception of the causes of obesity and being overweight through the prism of socio-cultural and economic factors characteristic of a given community is becoming increasingly common. The popularity of highly processed food and all sorts of fast food also impacts our body weight.

The myth that excess weight and obesity is a plague of affluent societies has been persistent for years, but the WHO is warning that obesity is, on the one hand, a manifestation of inequality and, on the other, a factor that exacerbates it. According to Forbes, French scientists estimate that a portion of fruit and vegetables providing 100 kilocalories, has about five times the nutritional value of other types of food equivalent in energy terms, but it is also about five times more expensive (Krukowska 2015). Moreover, people on low incomes cannot afford specialist sports equipment or gym season tickets. As a rule, such people also do not have time to prepare balanced meals. Therefore, less developed countries and low-income members of society face the problem of gaining extra kilogrammes. The gap between the richest and aspiring middle class and the rest of society is also deepened by the media and the Internet which promote the slim/fit body model as an indication of self-fulfilment and success in life.

Not only do such tendencies cause a systematic growth of the number of people with excess body weight, but they also lead to polarisation and divide individuals into two groups, those who fit culturally imposed beauty patterns and those who do not meet the norm of the average body size. This, in turn, generates stigmatisation, stereotyping and, consequently, discrimination against people with excess body weight in various areas of social life.

## **Body as a project**

As a social being, an individual functions simultaneously in many dimensions of social life, such as family, school and work. In each of these areas, not only obese people, but also those who are slightly overweight, encounter difficulties in interpersonal relations.

This happens because, today, special attention is paid to self-presentation. These days, human corporeality plays the role of a business card in interpersonal contacts and constitutes an active part in what Erving Goffman would call an “everyday life performance” (2005). The body, as our immediate garment, requires constant care and attention to its appearance, size and shape.

This trend is undoubtedly reinforced by the central position of human corporeality in modern culture and the media, which promote the ideal of beauty of a young, slim and athletic body. As Mike Featherstone points out:

While the body has permanent properties, such as height or bone structure, there is a tendency in consumer culture to see the qualities of the body as fully malleable. Individuals are assured that through workout and body shaping exercise they will achieve a certain desired appearance. Advertisements, articles and advice columns in magazines and newspapers advise that individuals take responsibility for the way they look (2001: 178).

As a result, the human body is perceived as extremely malleable matter that needs to be shaped, sculpted and beautified (Shilling 2010). Moreover, in the world in which we are responsible for the design of our own body, external appearance is increasingly equated with one’s personal worth (Giddens 2010: 70–72). Such an (unconscious) belief plays an important role in the case of people who do not want or are unable to bring their body in line with the slim/fit model. Huge expectations are placed mainly on women. In the case of women, her looks are a formal characteristic important from the point of view of building her self-identity, self-esteem and relations with other members of society (Hyży 2012: 190–205). However, high expectations are also increasingly applicable to men, who, to the same extent as women, are entangled in contemporary discourses of body discipline (Kluczyńska 2009: 124).

## Excess body weight as social stigma

Individuals who do not meet culturally imposed patterns of a slim/fit appearance are increasingly perceived as different or even inferior. This approach to human differences will be associated with Goffman's concept of social stigma, referred to simply as "stigma" by this author. Thus, in line with Goffman's concept, "stigmatised individuals have a social attribute that is deeply discrediting and are therefore perceived as flawed" (Goffman 2005: 16). Goffman (2005: 34) distinguished three types of a stigma, namely:

- 1) abominations of the body – various physical deformities;
- 2) blemishes of individual character perceived as weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and dishonesty; these being inferred from a known record of, for example, mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism, homosexuality, unemployment, suicidal attempts, and radical political behaviour;
- 3) the tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion, these being stigma that can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all the members of a family.

People with excess body weight can therefore fall into the first and second category of stigma bearers. An individual can be stigmatised based on the first category due to the fact that there is a cultural belief that extra kilogrammes are unattractive and that the neglect of the body is not tolerated in society. On the other hand, the belief that laziness and intemperance in eating results in being overweight or obese stigmatises individuals for "blemishes of individual character".

Let us explore the immanent characteristics of stigmatisation. According to Elżbieta Czykwin, stigmatisation has an axio-normative character and is often irrational and unconscious. It is also characterised by a certain temporal inertia, which makes it difficult to get rid of the acquired stigma. A stigma can also be all-encompassing when an individual is reduced to a stigma itself, their other traits becoming invisible and marginalised (Czykwin 2007: 39–45). Weight stigmatisation is therefore undoubtedly a negative, unconscious phenomenon. Stigmatised individuals are perceived as inferior and flawed from the very beginning of any relationship. This is because the belief in the possibility of influencing the body's appearance leads to a situation in which, according to Elżbieta Czykwin (2007: 190): "[...] the observer is likely to treat obesity as the main personal trait, at least at first sight. In this case, obesity seems to dominate, becoming the central category of an individual as perceived by others".

In the case of individuals with excess body weight, we will be talking about the phenomenon of "fat shaming", that is, stigmatisation of overweight or obese individuals. This, in turn, leads to many weight-based stereotypes.

People with excess body weight are attributed many negative traits such as self-neglect, laziness, lack of self-control and even inferior professional qualifica-

tions. In Western culture there is a wide range of stereotypes about individuals who are overweight or obese. Currently, one may speak of the obesity social stereotype which is often compared by psychologists to a “stereotype of an unattractive person”, which stems from a common belief that people who are overweight and obese are unattractive.

## **Weightism, i.e. weight discrimination**

The concept of stigmatisation is strongly associated with discrimination understood as: “[...] unequal treatment of individuals or social groups by denying them privileges, prestige or power, based only on unfavourable attitudes and bias due to some of their actual or assumed (mostly) qualities e.g. social class, race, sex or religion” (Olechnicki, Załęcki 2000: 49–50). Discrimination is very similar to stigmatisation, but there are also significant differences between the two. One of them is the institutional nature of discrimination while stigmatisation is characteristic of an interactive, intimate form of interpersonal relations. Therefore, unlike stigmatisation, discrimination is a conscious action. It can be said that discrimination is a derivative of stigmatisation and stereotypes. Discrimination and stigmatisation are similar in that they underly the social segregation and isolation of certain groups, as well as marginalisation and categorisation.

It turns out that discrimination based on gender, race, faith or sexual orientation does not exhaust the list of reasons for social bias. The scholarly literature mentions the concept of weightism as a form of discrimination against all overweight and obese people, regardless of their age, gender, race, origin, education, occupation, social position, religion and culture.<sup>1</sup> Weightism leads to the rejection and social segregation of an individual and can take the following forms:

- visual – being looked at with disgust and revulsion;
- verbal – using nicknames, insults, name that ridicule and humiliate, comparisons to large animals (e.g. elephant, hippo, cow or pig);
- physical – nudging, pushing or beating;
- mental – bullying, manipulating their sense of guilt, dependence on loved ones, humiliating, creating situations of humiliation and harassment;
- legal – not including this group of patients in the legislation;
- technological, architectural and social.<sup>2</sup>

Based on the body of literature, it can be concluded that overweight and obese people are often subjected to weight discrimination (both conceptual categories, obesity and being overweight, are included in this general concept used in the literature). Individuals with excess body weight face weight discrimination when

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<sup>1</sup> OD-WAGA Foundation for People with Obesity Disease, <http://www.od-waga.org.pl/dyskryminacja.html> (accessed 1.08.2019).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

looking for a job, e.g. it is much more difficult for them to find their dream job because many employers do not want to hire people who are overweight or obese at all, even though they do not differ from slim candidates in terms of their qualifications or skills. This is especially apparent in the case of white-collar jobs, as individuals with excess body weight are perceived as lazy, inept and less intelligent. Many advertisements contain requirements of “attractive looks”, which, given the existing canons of beauty, almost immediately excludes individuals that do not fit the slim/fit model. In the case of some professions, such as secretaries and salespeople, appearance is often valued more than experience and skills. Women in particular have fewer chances of getting a dream job.

However, when an overweight or obese person manages to get a job, they are often confronted with unpleasant comments from both colleagues and superiors. Individuals with excess body weight are discriminated against because there are many negative stereotypes about them, indicating, for example, that they are less productive, less punctual or take sick leave more often. Employers accuse them of being less enthusiastic about their duties and of having bad manners. At the same time, employees with excess body weight are often assigned additional tasks which are not part of their duties and which they cannot perform well enough or efficiently due to their physical condition, or which are doomed to failure by definition. It also happens that these individuals are ignored when more demanding tasks, promotions or training are involved. It is also common for such employees to be kept away from customers, contractors, etc. as they are “less presentable” and their appearance “has a negative impact on the company’s image”. In extreme cases, individuals with excess body weight are dismissed because of weight stigma, although their body size is in no way related to their work performance. Apart from the above-mentioned manifestations of weightism, its most common form is open criticism of the appearance, diet and lifestyle of people with excess body weight by co-workers and superiors.

### **Weight discrimination: research perspective**

The problem of the perception of individuals with excess body weight at work has been described quite thoroughly by US scientists. Examples include the following studies: *Is obesity stigmatizing? Body weight, perceived discrimination, and psychological well-being in the United States* (Carr, Friedman 2005: 244–259), *Bias, discrimination, and obesity* (Puhl, Brownell 2001: 788–805) or *The economic reality of the beauty myth* (Averett, Korenman 1996: 304–330). Several interesting experiments have also been conducted, such as *Stigmatization of obese individuals by human resource professionals: an experimental study* in which scientists from the University of Tübingen analysed the way overweight or obese



people are perceived by Human Resource specialists who selected candidates for a given position (Giel et al. 2012: 1–9).

Unfortunately, no such research has been conducted in Poland. Most often, the issue of overweight or obese people is part of broader studies on, for example, the quality of life, overall health condition, etc. Therefore, one may get the impression that weight discrimination does not exist in Poland, since researchers do not deal with the issue of how individuals with excess body weight are perceived and whether they are discriminated against in the labour market, and since the Polish law disregards obesity and being overweight as possible causes of inequality.

Individuals who have experienced discrimination often share their experience in online forums and describe problems with getting their dream job or unpleasant comments from their employer or fellow employees:<sup>3</sup>

*I know from my own experience that obesity makes finding a job more difficult. I have a strong motivation to work, excellent interpersonal skills, but unfortunately I look unattractive and I couldn't keep my dream job because of my gargantuan weight (sick leave; 4 years ago I had to retrain and change my qualifications [...]) (GP64).*

Not only are individuals with excess body weight afraid of being rejected because of their body size during a job interview or promotion, but they seem to be even more frustrated by manifestations of stigmatisation on the part of their fellow employees:

*[...] I remember the problem started on the first day, and as it turned out later, it lasted for the next six months. My fellow female employees, and there were three of them in the room I was sitting in, and four of them in the adjoining and connecting room. There were rude comments about my weight and the way I dressed, admiring the XS size, comments about Britney being too fat (while she is much thinner than me), etc. Looking disgusted when I was eating and recommending me "miracle diets" [...]. Three months later I got another position where I had contact with people. And then it all started. Endless comments about my looks, that I should look more elegant, that maybe I should take care of myself, and so on [...]) (I13.01).*

Internet forums are also full of posts showing what society thinks about people with excess body weight. Below is an example of a post illustrating that obesity and being overweight are treated as a consequence of self-neglect and laziness:

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<sup>3</sup> I came across the quoted statements in several online forums where individuals with excess body weight describe the problems they encounter in everyday life. Unfortunately, the amount of material related strictly to the problem of weight discrimination turned out to be unsatisfactory from a research point of view. The lack of online forums devoted specifically to the situation of individuals with excess body weight in the labour market made it much more difficult to identify such posts, which limited their empirical availability. Moreover, potential information about problems in professional life often appears as a side-line to discussions about the difficulties in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relations. Therefore, I decided to abandon regular content analysis. The examples of cited statements only illustrate the problem of weight discrimination in the labour market.

*Apart from those who are ill, fat people are fat because they have neglected themselves and are too lazy to change this. Clearly, others do not like self-neglect, so they happen to be discriminated against (V08.36).*

Some opinions reinforce stereotypes that individuals with excess body weight are unsuitable for certain positions, especially those related to presentable functions as they do not meet contemporary standards of proper appearance:

*I am of the opinion that obese people are generally less suited to fulfilling “presentable” roles, and several others. It is not a question of my taste but of statistics, the prevailing fashion, fitness/health trends and similar issues (GL09.39).*

Excess body weight is nowadays attributed to a lack of control over one’s own body, and thus to the lack of control over one’s life, which, according to some, may be to the detriment of the company which employs such individuals:

*[...] I believe that if someone cannot take care of their physical condition and appearance, they will not be able to do work properly (although there are probably some exceptions) [...]* (G08.22).

Even the internet users who are not Human Resource professionals point out that they would not employ a person with excess body weight for reputational reasons:

*It’s true I don’t think you should dislike a fat girl or guy, but... if I had a company/beauty parLOUR/shop, for example, I would never hire an obese girl or guy. Why? The image is the most important thing and fat people are usually ASSOCIATED with disease, dirt (greasy tuft of hair, pimples), self-neglect, laziness, indolence, etc. I’m not saying that everyone looks like that, but... the world is brutal and you have to adapt; when you go beyond the norm (a tonne of fat or a pile of bones) it doesn’t resonate with people [...]* (V08.16).

In their statements, HR professionals themselves indicate there is covert discrimination with regard to overweight or obese people during the recruitment process:

*I am an HR specialist, I recruit people for very different positions in many companies. Not everyone knows that, apart from the criteria listed in job advertisements that appear on e.g. portals, employers also have so-called “hidden criteria” that cannot be included in the advertisement [...]. However, when I talk to the owner of the company for which I am recruiting an employee, I am informed about the way the person the company wants to hire should look, how old he or she should be, whether it should be a man or a woman and many other things [...]* (W12.11).

Although some people are aware of discrimination due to extra kilograms, a large number of people believe that this problem does not exist or blame people with excess weight themselves, since they are unable to comply with socially imposed standards of physicality.

## Weight discrimination and the law

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, all Poles are equal before the law. Everyone is entitled to equal treatment by public authorities. None of the citizens of Poland, including those suffering from the medical condition of obesity or being overweight, can be discriminated against in political, social or economic life for any reason whatsoever.

The principles of equality before the law and protection against discrimination are laid down in various Polish, European and international legal acts, to which Poland is a signatory. These acts include:

- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- the European Convention on Human Rights.

Unfortunately, none of the acts mentions the protection of an individual from weight discrimination, which in turn leads to a situation where it is difficult for the aggrieved party to pursue their rights in court. For example, in 2014, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled that a person who is significantly overweight or obese can defend their rights by referring to their disability.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the CJEU confirmed that EU legislation does not prohibit discrimination against an employee precisely based on their body weight; obesity and being overweight are not listed as grounds for discrimination in Directive 2000/78. The Polish Labour Code also overlooked the issue of excess weight while implementing the directive. However, the difference is that the Labour Code contains a non-exhaustive list of grounds for discrimination (such as gender, ethnicity, religion, etc.), which in itself constitutes a rather open catalogue.<sup>5</sup> As a result, a Polish employee can defend their rights and demand compensation even in the case of being moderately overweight, which in itself does not cause disability.<sup>6</sup>

## Organisations providing assistance and information

Representatives of government organisations as well as various foundations and associations are involved in defending the rights of people with excess weight. Overweight or obese people can therefore address their questions and requests to

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<sup>4</sup> The CJEU ruled thus in its decision C-354/13 of 18.12.2014 in which it interpreted the Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

<sup>5</sup> The Polish Supreme Court ruled on 23.05.2012 (decision I PK 206/11) that discrimination is also possible on grounds other than those indicated in the labour code.

<sup>6</sup> Working conditions or a type of work in which normal weight is a professional requirement is an exception. The criterion of normal body weight can therefore be applied when full physical aptitude is expected of employees.

institutions such as the Commissioner for Civil Rights, Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, Government Plenipotentiary for Persons with Disability, National Labour Inspectorate, and others.

Although there is no official unit representing the rights of people with excess weight in Poland, the institution of the Advocate for the Rights of People with the Obesity Disease was established by the OD-WAGA Foundation for People with the Obesity Disease.

According to information available on the Foundation's website, the Advocate for the Rights of People with the Obesity Disease<sup>7</sup> has the following mandate:

- to defend the rights, interests and needs of Poles suffering from the disease of obesity (children, young people and adults) before the legislative (Sejm, Senate) and executive (government, local government) authorities, and public institutions tasked with supporting the sick and disabled persons and the media in Poland and abroad;
- to improve the quality of the social life of people suffering from obesity (activities in cooperation with the OD-WAGA Foundation);
- to conduct preliminary investigation of cases of the violation of human rights, civil rights, patient rights; into discrimination against, or exclusion and stigmatisation of the person(s) suffering from obesity by public institutions, companies, the media, etc. (at the request of patients, their relatives, or other people, as well as on their own initiative or that of the OD-WAGA Foundation).

It is noteworthy that the Advocate is not a state institution, nor is it in any way financed by any public institution. Due to the independent nature of her activities, the Advocate does not have the right to make interventions as, for example, the Commissioner for Civil Rights or the Patient Rights Ombudsman can do. Therefore, the Advocate cooperates with state bodies to clarify issues referred to her.

## Summary

Based on both the body of literature and quoted posts by internet users, it can be concluded that overweight and obese people are often subjected to discrimination on grounds of their excess weight. Many employers do not want to employ such individuals at all, so their chances of finding a dream job or having a successful career are limited. At work, they often experience verbal abuse and victimisation in the form of detraction, gossip and isolation. Individuals with excess body weight are discriminated against because there exist numerous negative stereotypes which associate being overweight and obese with laziness, self-neglect,

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<sup>7</sup> OD-WAGA Foundation for People with the Obesity Disease, *Kim jest Społeczny Rzecznik Praw Osób Chorych na Otyłość (Who is the Advocate for the Rights of People with the Obesity Disease in Poland?)*, <http://od-waga.org.pl/rzecznik.html> (accessed 1.08.2019).

unattractiveness or inferior skills. In addition, the ideal of beauty promoted by the media and contemporary culture is based on one “proper” slim/fit body model. Therefore, contemporary society treats the problem of excess body weight without empathy, tolerance or understanding, increasingly identifying the appearance of a person with their inner worth. Although the number of overweight and obese people in Poland (and many other countries) is constantly rising, no regulations that would directly address weight discrimination have been formulated in the contemporary national law or EU directives. Consequently, we may witness not only increasing social pressure but, above all, the rise and multiplication of even greater social inequalities stemming from the way the physical condition and aesthetics of our bodies are perceived.

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## DYSKRYMINACJA OSÓB Z NADMIERNĄ MASĄ CIAŁA NA RYNKU PRACY

**Abstrakt.** Artykuł dotyczy postrzegania nadwagi i otyłości na rynku pracy oraz dyskryminacji związanej z tym zjawiskiem. Nadmierna masa ciała stała się bardzo poważnym problemem społecznym. Wzrost wskaźników nadwagi i otyłości stanowi istotny problem dla osób i polityki społecznej w krajach rozwiniętych. W niektórych krajach już ponad 50 proc. społeczeństwa ma problemy z nadmierną masą ciała. Dotychczasowa literatura podaje, że osoby zmagające się z nadwagą i otyłością są dyskryminowane w miejscu pracy. Badania wykazują, że osoby te są postrzegane jako mające mniejszy potencjał przywódczy, niższy iloraz inteligencji i skuteczność w porównaniu z osobami o normalnej wadze. Z tego też powodu osoby z nadmierną masą ciała są narażone na stygmatyzację i dyskryminację, mają mniejsze szanse na zatrudnienie na wyższych stanowiskach i niższe dochody. Artykuł pokazuje również, czy i jak osoby z nadwagą i otyłością mogą bronić swoich praw.

**Słowa kluczowe:** nadwaga, otyłość, nadmierna masa ciała, stygmatyzacja, dyskryminacja, stereotypy, rynek pracy.

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## THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: LOSSES AND BENEFITS

**Abstract.** International declarations emphasise the role of higher education in building the knowledge society and underline its importance for the economic, social and cultural development of individual countries. The article shows how the internationalisation of higher education transforms universities, cities and countries that welcome international students. At the same time, it is stressed that the internationalisation of higher education and the employment of well-educated foreign students in the destination country is one of the forms of brain drain and competition for gifted young people. The example of Poland, where Ukrainian students dominate among international students, is used to demonstrate the benefits enjoyed by the destination country and losses suffered by the country of origin. The situation is presented against the backdrop of the current political instability in Ukraine, which may additionally encourage young people to study and settle abroad.

**Keywords:** internationalisation of higher education, international students, incoming students, post-graduation plans.

State Parties shall [...] make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means.

(Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989)

### Introduction

In accordance with the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, all states are obliged to provide equal conditions for obtaining higher education. The only criterion for access to higher education is the talents of young people. Thirty years after the adoption of this Convention, and following subsequent international declarations concerning higher education (Bologna 1999; Leuven 2009), taking into account student mobility among the young generation and growing interest in studying abroad, it is worthwhile to explore the intellectual and economic context of this phenomenon.

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The internationalisation of higher education has a long-standing tradition in many countries. It is estimated as the percentage of students coming from abroad from the total number of students in public and non-public higher education institutions in a given country. Universities are making efforts to increase the level of internationalisation, as it is one of the criteria for assessing academic centres, their scientific achievements, and the rating of universities in the country and beyond. In Europe, these processes were accelerated by the Bologna Declaration of June 19, 1999, which became the basis for continuous adjustment of higher education to changes and building the knowledge society which is conducive to the social, economic and cultural development of individual countries. To a large extent, this has become a challenge for universities, as the central role in building the knowledge society has been assigned to higher education institutions (the Bologna Declaration). The 2009 Leuven Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education made an assumption that “in 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad” (Saryusz-Wolski, Piotrowska 2011: 44). It is recommended that students should study at a university abroad for at least a semester or a year.

Tertiary education plays a fundamental role in building the knowledge society. It aims at the development of “human capital”,<sup>1</sup> and, in particular, its essential, intangible component i.e. the “intellectual capital” obtained and developed by young people during their studies. As stressed by scholars, knowledge and acquired skills largely determine the socio-economic growth of countries and regions, because “it is not labour, commodities or capital that is the key resource, but knowledge that enables achieving competitiveness and high level of development” (Mendryk et al. 2020: 6).

Against this backdrop, let me analyse the role and importance of the internationalisation of higher education in achieving this objective. Let me also address the issue of student mobility across countries and universities, as well as the issue of who gains and who loses as a result of student mobility. The article aims to explore these questions. I sought the answers in a literature review, using key words such as internationalisation of higher education, international students, student migration, students from Ukraine in Poland.

## **On the internationalisation processes**

Internationalisation was typical of the first European medieval universities, which makes it clear that this idea did not emerge in the first decade of the 21st century (Bergen 2011) and was known in previous centuries and years. How-

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<sup>1</sup> Human capital is understood, among other things, as the renewable human potential that can be developed. It encompasses measurable individual resources of knowledge, skills, abilities, qualifications, attitudes and motivation which can be used for the development of individuals, larger communities and society as a whole (cf. Łukasiewicz 2009).



ever, the last decades have seen a growing interest in studying abroad. For some time now, internationalisation has been promoted by the universities in the United States, Canada, the UK and Australia. For young people from different countries seeking opportunities to study abroad, the extent of internationalisation is indicative of the experience that a university has, and the level of education offered. It also guarantees that the diplomas obtained from internationalised universities increase one's employability in one's home country as well as the international labour market. For many students, this is also an opportunity to obtain a prestigious diploma which offers opportunities for further in-depth scientific specialisation. From the perspective of the young generation, studying abroad can be seen as a career path and an opportunity for social advancement.

The internationalisation of higher education is coupled with the increasing global mobility of young people seeking the best opportunities for the development of their social capital. Interesting determinants have been observed, such as the size of the country. It turns out that student mobility is lower in larger countries which have numerous, internationally recognised courses on offer (e.g. the USA, UK) compared to smaller countries (e.g. Luxembourg) which cannot boast of such an offer. In the latter case, the outward mobility among young people is more pronounced (Kaczmarczyk, Okólski 2005: 79). Most importantly, wealthier countries have undertaken steps to attract international students through scholarship schemes, grants and special programmes as well as by establishing teams aimed at recruiting students from selected countries. These initiatives have been successful. The leaders of internationalisation of higher education in 2015 (Study 2017: 9) were New Zealand (21.14%), the United Kingdom (18.49%), Switzerland (17.8%), Austria (15.89%) and Australia (15.47%) with an average of 8.38% across 25 countries. Poland ranked 24th, with its 2.64% in terms of the internationalisation of higher education, ahead only of Chile (0.31%). However, the rate increased, as previously as few as 1.1% of international students studied in Poland and, in Europe, we were ahead only of Croatia and Turkey (OECD Report 2008).

For at least a few decades now, the topic of international students has been raised in Polish scientific discourse. Initially, it did not refer to internationalisation and focused mainly on topics concerning the culture clash, the problem of "us" and "outsiders" in a student milieu, the motives for coming to Poland, and the problems of adaptation experienced by foreign students who often came from so-called "third-world countries" at the time (Nowicka, Łodziński 1993). It was not until a few years ago that the issue of university internationalisation, as one of the challenges faced by the global academic life, also became seminal in Poland (Żołędowski 2010; Hut, Jaroszewska 2012; Kawczyńska-Butrym 2014). The internationalisation of higher education is not only about attracting international students, but also concerns the internationalisation of researcher contacts and scientific research. The awareness that "internationalisation is the main driving

force behind the development of higher education in the world is of the utmost importance”.<sup>2</sup> These contacts enable the exchange and development of intellectual capital based on cooperation between countries and universities. Intellectual capital does not only play a huge role in science. Drawing on the available body of academic literature, Tomasz Domański states that:

International education has become an important political tool for promoting China and its system of values and culture. It perfectly serves the purpose of the country’s international expansion through the soft power mechanisms described by Joseph Nye Jr., alongside military and economic power (Nye 2002).

In conclusion, Domański stresses that international education “is an investment in the future, whose political, economic and cultural effects will become apparent later” (Domański 2017: 67). In addition, it is difficult to assess these effects in the short run.

The internationalisation of higher education was also discussed at the 2018 Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland which addressed the issue of international students in Poland. It was stated that “We already have about 72,000 foreign students and their number will probably reach 100,000 in 2020”.<sup>3</sup> This requires the advanced internationalisation of scientific research, and the continuous recruitment of students from many countries and on many continents. Medical universities have been very successful at this. However, this does not mean that medical universities should be the only hallmark of the internationalisation of higher education in Poland. Foreign students should also be offered non-medical courses and the range of courses offered in English should be expanded. It is also noteworthy that involvement of international students expands international contacts between countries and universities, bolsters their prestige in the international arena, and creates a platform for current and future scientific, economic and cultural cooperation between universities and countries. Moreover, the internationalisation of higher education is related to the growing need for the internationalisation of science. It is also associated with the challenge faced especially by the young generation of scientists who are encouraged to conduct scientific research that is strongly embedded in international research networks (Kwiek 2015: 21). Thus, the internationalisation of higher education can be seen as a platform for the development of the existing and future international networks.

## On destination countries

The USA (1,043,839 foreign students), UK (496,690), China (397,635) and France (309,642) are among the most popular destination countries chosen by international students in recent years. Out of the total of 4.6 million students studying

<sup>2</sup> <http://naukawpolsce.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news.28066gowin> (accessed 1.03.2019).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.studyinpoland.pl/konferencja2018/> (accessed 15.10.2019).

abroad, 25% studied in the USA, 12% in the UK and 10% in China. Foreign students came mainly from Asia (57%), Europe (22%) and Africa (11%) (Study 2017: 10).

One cannot fully agree with the statement that “student migration is triggered by the mobility of participants, mainly students” (Grabowska 2013: 119). Obviously, students are the main actors in this migration process, and it is they who make decisions about studying abroad. The contemporary young generation treats education, including education abroad, as a long-term and indispensable investment in achieving success in life. It gives them a chance to increase their own social capital and subsequently improve their future quality of life. Apart from young people, there are many other actors and activities that stimulate student migration. Universities are interested in the influx of students not only for reasons of prestige. Given worldwide demographic changes and the ageing of some populations, there are signs indicating the importance of even a moderate influx of young people to higher education institutions, even when they do not stay for the entire calendar year there. This is important even when it comes to an influx of young people from the same country and from among national universities i.e. within the framework of internal student migration (Rokita-Poskart 2017). Financial considerations are also important, especially when it comes to international students. It turns out that a university’s internationalisation generates additional funds for the university and has a positive effect on the economy of the city in which foreign youth study (Strózek, Butrym 2014). International students spend money on food, hygiene items, accommodation and cultural events (Kubiciel-Lodzińska 2014). Another important economic factor is related to foreign students’ access to various institutions and services including universities, healthcare, banks, restaurants, transport and others. In 2018, one of the dailies quoted a municipal official saying that “Lublin universities earn almost PLN 53 million a year thanks to international students. The city’s economy earns another 80 million PLN” (Ćwieluch 2018). Revenues generated by foreign students are carefully estimated in many countries. It is estimated that, globally, profits exceed USD 100 billion a year. These profits are shared unevenly. They are the highest in the countries with the highest level of internationalisation. And these are universities in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom, where the proportion of foreign students in the total number of students is over 18%, which generates high profits. For example, Deloitte Access Economics estimates that “in 2014–2015, revenues related to international students’ arrivals and stay in Australia reached USD 16.9 billion amounting to 1% of GDP; 128,000 jobs were created” (Fryc 2017). It is therefore clear that not only future economic development, but also the current material standing cannot be ignored when it comes to countries’ efforts to expand the internationalisation of higher education.

However, it seems that “the fight for gifted youth” is most important since it has the most far-reaching consequences. National economies compete for intellectual capital, since intellectual advantages are translated into a stronger economic

position in the future. And it is the main objective of efforts made to attract and then retain foreign students, thus acquiring human capital, including intellectual capital. An estimated 220,000 students from China will study in the UK in 2020, not to mention students from other countries (Asteris 2006, after: Matacz 2014: 38). Clearly, internationalisation is on the rise. “In 2014, the global population of internationally mobile students amounted to 5 million, but, according to OECD estimates, their number will reach 8 million by 2025” (Fryc 2017).

The competition for gifted youth is not only focused on attracting an influx of students from abroad. The countries where foreign students have been educated are interested in them staying there. Clearly, in the case of student migration both the country of origin and the destination country are concerned about their economic, social and cultural development, which largely depends on intellectual capital, or, more broadly, human capital and general social capital comprising people with diplomas and high professional competence. In the long run, destination countries are interested in retaining the most gifted international students, and they offer them opportunities to apply for PhD studies or obtain a greater range of specialisations. For the destination country, this is one of the forms of brain drain, an attempt to make gifted, creative and highly qualified graduates stay.

Brain drain mainly implies the outflow of high-performance professionals often attracted by more economically advanced countries, whereas brain gain mainly implies employment of professionals who make up for a shortage of specialists in a destination country. Brain drain provides an opportunity for destination countries to bridge the gap in certain economic sectors. Attracting international students can be seen as an opportunity to gain “valuable, highly-qualified employees to build the country’s economic potential” (Matkowska 2010: 87). For this reason, destination countries, including Poland, are interested in graduates staying in the country that provided them with higher education. In the long run, they expect international students to fill an important segment of the labour market (Trzeciński 2015: 205) and become an important component of the intellectual capital needed to build a knowledge-based economy. However, when graduates stay in the country they studied in, their outflow diminishes the economic potential of the country of origin (Balicki 2007: 232). The employment of international graduates in the destination country is a form of brain drain. Many countries use this approach to attract the human capital needed to build the knowledge society and develop the country in general. Japan is one example. In Japan, “Approximately 5,000 international graduates of the Japanese universities move directly from a student status to an employee status per annum” (Dzienis 2013: 8). Some international students (and this is especially true of young people from Ukraine and Belarus studying in Poland) see it as an opportunity to stay in a country with a generally higher standard of living, greater social and economic stability and better career prospects. In addition, it promotes a positive image of the country they study in and want to live in (Trzeciński 2015: 208).

What is Poland's situation in this context? And what is the situation of Ukraine, which is the country of origin of the largest number of foreign students in Poland?

## On international students in Poland

The existing and planned level of internationalisation in Poland is not impressive when compared to other countries. To a certain extent, the enrolment of students from abroad has become a necessity for some faculties and some universities. For at least a decade now, Polish universities have been facing the problem of a population decline and a decreasing number of secondary school graduates. Due to the changing demographic structure, the number of young people willing to study at Polish higher education institutions has been decreasing each and every year. This is due to greater opportunities to study abroad and growing economic migration of young people after 2004, when Poland joined the European Union, thus enabling the free movement of people across borders.

Due to the decline in the number of young Poles who enrol at Polish universities, it might be necessary to cut the number of teaching hours, which would cause problems in maintaining employment of the existing academic staff. The Ministry of Higher Education and higher education institutions promote the internationalisation of higher education to keep the university staff and alleviate the negative consequences of the population decline that has resulted in the lower number of Polish students. In addition, the admission of international students contributes to the improvement of university's financial standing, as some foreign students pay relatively high tuition fees. At the end of the last century, it was estimated that revenues coming from educating international students significantly boosted the economies of destination countries (Siwińska 2007: 15; Siwińska 2014). For instance, in the UK, revenues generated due to educating international students amount to around £20 billion a year (Matacz 2014: 57).

The influx of students from abroad is indicative of the attractiveness of the educational and scientific opportunities offered by a given university. This is true of academic centres which offer courses at different faculties and in various fields in foreign languages. This attracts students with diverse interests and increases the number of young people who choose such a higher education institution. Rectors of Polish higher education institutions have recently discussed the internationalisation of higher education in Poland, and they have indicated that international students are attracted to Poland for the following reasons, among others:

It is **safe** in Poland. The cost of living is lower here than in Western Europe. The legal regulations concerning international students are also friendly: for example, a graduate of the Polish university can undertake employment without additional permits. The same goes for a full-time student. University graduates can also obtain an annual residence permit in Poland in order to seek employment or travel (Fryc 2017).

Previous studies conducted in Poland (Żołądowski 2010; Hut, Jaroszevska 2012; Kawczyńska-Butrym 2014) also show that, apart from university courses, there are other factors that attract international students to Poland. These are:

- relatively low tuition fees compared to those in the country of origin; this factor is acknowledged by many students from Western and Asian countries, most notably students of medicine;
- the small distance between the countries and low travel costs; this is appreciated especially by students from Ukraine and Belarus who often choose cities close to Poland's eastern border which are easily accessible from the student's country of origin and place of residence; nevertheless, Warsaw, Wrocław and other cities in central and western Poland are also popular among these students;
- the low cost of living (accommodation and meals), which is appreciated by all students, not only those from Eastern Europe;
- the ease of commuting to classes, which appears to be the motivation behind the decision of students from Ukraine to study in smaller towns.

Monika Grabowska interprets factors stimulating the growth of student migration in a broader way to include the perspective of governments and university authorities. The author lists the following factors which can boost student migration:

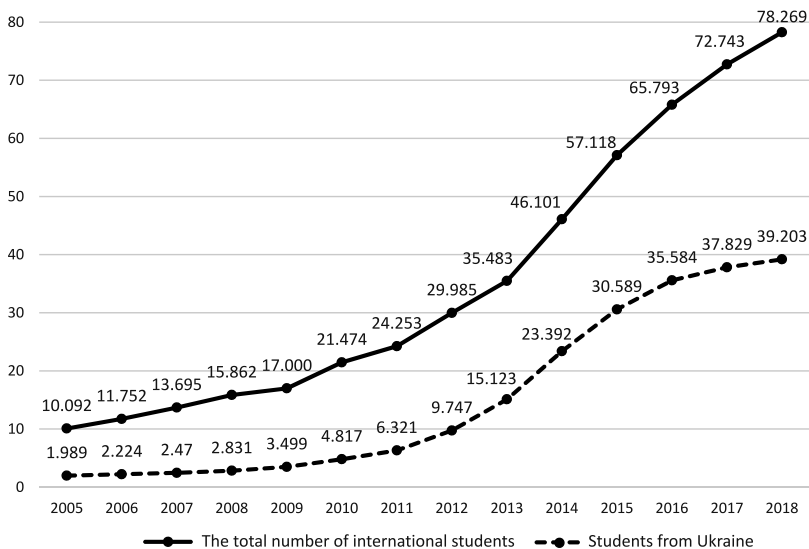
- student mobility,
- European educational initiatives, such as Erasmus and Socrates programmes,
- the new vision of governments, which see student migration as an opportunity to boost the intellectual potential of their country,
- the new vision of university authorities that are interested in enrolling international students and encouraging Polish students to study and undergo internships abroad (Grabowska 2013: 115).

However, the choice of a given country, university and course is determined by students' individual preferences. As mentioned above, relatively low tuition fees motivate many international students. Foreign students who decided to study in Gdańsk said they did so "because there are more favourable tuition fees and lower costs of living in Poland". These tuition fees would be considered by Polish students as high, since "A year at the Faculty of Medicine/ English Division costs PLN 43,000 (over EUR 10,000), and you have to pay PLN 23,000 (nearly EUR 5,500) at the Faculty of Nursing/ English Division" (Studenci 2016). These costs are clearly satisfactory for international students from different countries who declare that they find these tuition fees attractive and therefore study medicine at Polish universities. They often represent a separate group of international students who pay tuition fees in Poland, and they are of a higher economic status. This does not always resonate with Polish students (Kawczyńska-Butrym 2014). The fact that medical universities are the most internationalised encourages other universities to develop curricula attractive for international students. This is

especially true of the universities and faculties whose graduates are ranked high. As stated at the Conference of Rectors: “It is time to start promoting IT courses. Since our students win prestigious competitions for software engineers, there is no reason why the Polish universities which run these top-notch courses should not win as well” (Fryc 2017). It should be added that medical universities have limited arguments for persuading foreign graduates to stay in Poland. This is determined both by students’ legal obligations to their country of origin (e.g. a student loan obtained in a home country under certain conditions) and the financially unattractive job opportunities for healthcare practitioners in Poland compared to many other countries of origin (e.g. Norway). Otherwise, there are no formal obstacles that prevent them from staying in Poland.

### What do we know about students from Ukraine, their situation in Poland, and their post-graduation plans?

Students from Ukraine have been a special and most numerous group of international students in Poland for several years. In the academic year 2004/2005, there were 1,989 students from Ukraine studying in Poland, their number reached 4,817 five years later and 30,589 ten years later. The most recent data from the Polish Central Statistical Office (GUS) indicate that 39,203 young people from Ukraine studied in Poland in 2018. This situation should be analysed against the backdrop of the events in Ukraine.



**Figure 1.** The number of students from Ukraine compared to the total number of international students in Poland (in thousands)

Source: GUS 2006–2019.



International students decide to study in Poland for various reasons. Motives include favourable tuition fees and a relatively low cost of living compared to many Western countries. Some students show an interest in Poland as a country. Based on the analysis of student migration from Ukraine, it can be concluded that student mobility in this case can be seen as “as an escape from the home country rather than the process of exchange of ideas/knowledge accompanied by journeys and returns” (Kyvliuk, Svyrydenko 2017: 367, cited in: Andrejuk, Korniy-chuk 2018: 123). However, we should be aware of the situation in Ukraine, “three successive Ukrainian revolutions in the late 20th and early 21st centuries: the Revolution on Granite, Orange Revolution and Revolution of Dignity”<sup>4</sup> (Sokuryanskaya, Svid 2019). We should also pay special attention to the ongoing war in Donbass which may have been the reason behind the increased influx of students from Ukraine observed in Poland in the last few years. The interpretation of Kyvliuk and Svyrydenko may be justified, since young people in Ukraine experience a lack of stability and their life is in danger.

From a Polish perspective, it is interesting to learn why students from Ukraine decide to study in Poland. The key factors are listed below:

- the cost of living is lower than in other countries (39%),
- it is possible to study free of charge or with a partial fee waiver (29%),
- it is easy to enrol (28%) (Nowak 2018),
- you obtain a European diploma (Ćwieluch 2018).

There is yet another difference in the social and ethical context of studying in Poland as opposed to Ukraine which is often ignored. Namely, these are the formal and informal costs of studies. Although many Ukrainian students have to pay tuition fees in Poland, in Ukraine they would have to bear additional, hidden costs: “[...] when you count how much you have to spend on bribes for lecturers in Ukraine, it turns out that it is even cheaper to study in Poland” (Ćwieluch 2018).

There are other, slightly less influential factors that determine the choice of Polish universities, namely the positive opinion about the quality of education provided by the university (22%) and faculty (22%), the prospects of finding a job in Poland after graduation in line with one’s major (22%), as well as general employability not necessarily in line with one’s major (12%). The latter two motives indicate that the prospects of finding a job in Poland upon graduation play a significant role in making a decision about studying here. When addressing the question of post-graduation plans, as few as 28% of the students declare they would like to work in Poland, 29% plan to find employment in another EU country while 9% want to work in a non-EU country. As few as 8% plan to return to Ukraine (Nowak 2018).

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<sup>4</sup> The Revolution on Granite on the eve of the collapse of the USSR of October 7–17, 1990; the Orange Revolution from November 22, 2004 – January 23, 2005; and the Revolution of Dignity from November 21, 2013 – February 2014.

Let us take a look at the findings of one of the studies that explored the situation of Ukrainian citizens including students in Poland. It turned out that more than one in two students combined studies and work (57%) and every third declared a willingness to work (33%). However, it should be added that only 36.5% of those working had regular employment, while as many as 63.5% had part-time jobs. They were mostly employed in trade (26.3%), hotels and catering services (20%). Only 16% of the students surveyed did not work and did not intend take up employment (Chmielewska, Dobroczek, Puzyrkiewicz 2016: 28–29). It can be assumed that some students have to take up employment for financial reasons (tuition fees, especially at private universities, accommodation, meals and other). This is indicated by the fact that more than one in four Ukrainian students studying in Poland (28.7%) stated that his/her income was the main means of subsistence in Poland (Chmielewska, Dobroczek, Puzyrkiewicz 2016: 30). Meanwhile, research conducted among 198 students of the Medical University of Lviv showed that 20% of them worked, that is, fewer students than in Poland (Dorosh et al. 2013: 530). The difference can be explained either by the time that lapsed between the research in Lviv (2012/2013) and research in Poland (2017), or by greater job opportunities (including part-time and odd jobs) available to students in Polish academic centres compared to Ukrainian ones. There was also a study that compared the number of Ukrainian students of medicine that worked in Lviv and Polish students (226 students of medicine in Suwałki) who found employment in Poland. It was found that students' decisions about employment were determined mainly by their own assessment of their financial situation; 40% of the students who assessed their financial situation as poor earned a living whereas the remaining 60% were supported by their parents (Dorosh et al. 2013: 528). There are additional findings concerning students from Ukraine taking up employment during their studies which come from research into the situation of international students in the Opole Province. The findings indicate that only students from the countries from outside the EU, including Ukraine, take up employment to pay their tuition fees. As stated by the author of the research-based report, “none of the EU respondents mentioned personal gainful employment as a source of financing education” (Kubiciel-Lodzińska 2014: 144). Thus, we have indirect evidence of the existing differences in the financial status of international students in Poland, depending on their country of origin. Thus, it can be concluded that some of the students from Ukraine facing financial difficulties take up employment in order to continue their education.

As indicated by the research conducted in the Netherlands and quoted by Sabina Kubiciel-Lodzińska (2014: 144), “students who have found a job are more likely to settle in the host country”. Thus, destination countries can recruit well-qualified employees among international graduates. Therefore, these countries are interested in creating conditions for graduates to stay and take up employment in the country where they received higher education, even during the period of studies.

What are the plans of students from Ukraine as regards returning to their country of origin after graduation from higher education institutions in Poland?

As outlined in the first part of the paper, a university degree is an institutionally testified form of intellectual capital. It is important both for the individual and graduate's country of origin. Recent studies conducted in Poland among students from Ukraine show that a relatively large proportion of them (36.6%) declare their willingness to settle in Poland, only a slightly smaller proportion (32.5%) plan to maintain partial ties with Poland, more than one in five (22%) wants to migrate to another country. Although 6.5% of respondents have not yet made up their mind, as few as 2.4% of the students surveyed state they want to return to Ukraine (Chmielewska, Dobroczycki, Puzyrkiewicz 2016: 30). A comparison of the results of both published studies may suggest that between 2016 and 2019, the percentage of students declaring their willingness to return to Ukraine increased from 2.4% to 8%. On the one hand, this should be considered beneficial for their country of origin, but, on the other, the difference in the number of respondents in both studies does not allow a definitive conclusion to be drawn. Rafał Trzciński's analyses do not justify generalisations either. Still, it can be concluded that a significant proportion of international students surveyed by him, especially those from Ukraine and Belarus, declared a desire to stay and work in Poland (Trzciński 2015).

## **Concluding remarks**

From the perspective of international recommendations and declarations, higher education is conducive to the development of a knowledge society which, in turn, is beneficial for the social, economic and cultural development of a country. When addressing the issue of the benefits of the internationalisation of higher education, we may say that it is beneficial for everyone, that is students, the country of origin, and the destination country. It can be assumed that there are two sides of the coin, the interests (benefits) of the country international students study and stay in, and the interests (losses) of the country of origin abandoned by the students.

The analyses presented above show that students' destination countries gain more than their countries of origin. From the point of view of students' countries of origin, the fact that students do not return there means, in the short or long run, slower economic and social growth, delayed modernisation processes in many sectors of the economy and many areas of social and cultural life. This can therefore be perceived as a new form of brain drain used by countries which offer appealing curricula to international students and boost the internationalisation of their universities in order to attract intellectual capital. This is observed in many countries, which contradicts the fairly widespread opinion that young people from

all over the world are migrating to other countries in order to acquire knowledge, but are then returning to their countries of origin in order to work there and “improve their social, cultural and economic situation” (Grabowska 2013: 117).

A review of literature on the internationalisation of higher education gives an outline of the global nature of student migration, its push and pull factors (Domański 2017), aspects related to the mobility of young people who wish to develop their social capital and achieve better employment prospects in the international and domestic labour market. And these are indisputable advantages of students studying abroad. As indicated by the results of international research, the internationalisation of higher education generates multi-faceted benefits (in terms of prestige and economic effects) for the university and the country that manages to attract an influx of international students. The example of Poland also proves that.

Undoubtedly, the Ukrainianisation of higher education in Poland has a positive effect on our country. It boosts the prestige of individual universities and generates profits due to the employment of Ukrainian graduates in our country. Apart from the financial contribution provided by students from Ukraine to the universities and cities they study in (Stróžek, Butrym 2014), they also compensate for the shortage of Polish students resulting from population decline. In other words, they support universities in a variety of ways. It is definitely in Poland’s interest that this young, educated group of people settles in our country. Since young people from Ukraine constitute the largest number of international students in Poland, let me cite the following quote which illustrates the exchange that takes place in the area of higher education between Poland and Ukraine: “Ukraine gives Poland its most precious asset, its young people. And in return, we export to Ukraine the best of Poland, the European Union” (Ćwieluch 2018).

However, from the point of view of Ukraine as a country of origin, there may be justified fears that obtaining higher education in Poland becomes a step in the process of transferring social and intellectual capital from Ukraine. The capital is transferred not only to Poland, since many students declare that they are planning to move on, to work and live in other countries within or outside the European Union. Young people also leave Poland to study abroad. As Bohdan Rożnowski (2014: 144) points out, “many of those who have left Poland may not return. This, in turn, may [...] significantly weaken the intellectual potential of Polish human resources”.

When it comes to students from Ukraine, they find studies in Poland attractive in many ways. The overall economic and political situation in Ukraine is extremely complex at the moment, which can encourage young people to study abroad. In the long run, it may also be a decisive factor in their settling and finding employment in a destination country. It seems that only ensuring political stability in Ukraine will change the post-graduation plans of young people studying abroad and encourage them to return to their country of origin to boost its social, economic and cultural potential, as stipulated in the Bologna Declaration. If living conditions in Ukraine improve, it might suffer fewer losses as a result of student mobility.

The issue under discussion can also be analysed from the perspective of young Polish people studying abroad. From this perspective, the importance of their return to Poland cannot be overestimated.

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## **UMIĘDZYNARODOWIENIE STUDIÓW WYŻSZYCH – DLA KOGO ZYSKI, DLA KOGO STRATY?**

**Abstrakt.** W międzynarodowych deklaracjach podkreśla się rolę wyższego wykształcenia w budowaniu społeczeństwa wiedzy i jego związek z rozwojem ekonomicznym, społecznym i kulturowym poszczególnych krajów. W artykule ukazano ekonomiczne znaczenie umiędzynarodowienia studiów dla rozwoju uczelni, miast i krajów, w których studiują zagraniczni studenci. Jednocześnie podkreślono, że jednym z czynników i form drenażu mózgow oraz walki o “mądre głowy” przez kraje zainteresowane własnym rozwojem staje się umiędzynarodowienie studiów wyższych i zatrzymanie części wykształconych studentów zagranicznych na swoim rynku pracy. Na przykładzie Polski, gdzie wśród studentów zagranicznych dominują studenci z Ukrainy, przedstawiono zyski kraju przyjmującego studentów i straty kraju ich pochodzenia. Uwzględniono przy tym aktualny kontekst braku politycznej stabilizacji na Ukrainie, co może dodatkowo, w większym stopniu niż w innych krajach, skłaniać młodych ludzi do wyjazdu na studia i braku planowanego powrotu do kraju pochodzenia.

**Słowa kluczowe:** umiędzynarodowienie studiów, studenci zagraniczni, przyjazdy studentów, plany studentów.



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## THE TEACHER AS A CHILD-REARER OR THE TEACHER AS AN EDUCATOR. TWO VIEWS OF EDUCATION WORKERS ON THE TEACHER'S ROLE

**Abstract.** Teaching is a learned and practiced profession. In the course of their activities, the teacher influences the formation of attitudes, and the views and awareness of children and adolescents. Teaching should prepare young people “to independently manage the development of their own personality, to undertake valuable goals and to choose responsible life paths”. The teacher’s work situation results from the role that the teacher plays in the process of the socialization and education of children and adolescents. This article addresses the problem of the differentiation of the role of the teacher in the education process in Poland in terms of two variables – education and upbringing (child-rearing). It answers the question of whether and how the perception of the teaching profession has changed in the perception of people practicing this profession. How do teachers who are currently retired teachers see the profession and role of the teacher, and how are teachers currently practicing this profession? Is/was the Polish teacher a child-rearer or rather an educator, understood here as a person imparting knowledge? How does the occupation affect the perception of oneself, from the perspective of two groups of surveyed teachers (currently employed and retired)? All the reflections contained in the article are based on interviews with retired and currently working teachers. These interviews were part of a wider research project conducted in recent years by the author of the article in Polish educational institutions. The research took the form of ethnographic field research.

**Keywords:** teacher, role, educator, child-rearer, profession, unstructured interview, ethnography, observation, grounded theory.

### Introduction

The education system in Poland is constantly changing. Every year, teachers face problems resulting from changes in the education law, work plan, textbook list, list of set books, changes made to school documents, changes to assessments (e.g. descriptive assessment in grades 1–3 of primary school), the definition of the

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minimum teaching programme (curriculum), and changes to the school leaving qualification [General Certificate of Education (equivalent to the UK's GCSE level); *matura*/maturity diploma (equivalent to the UK's A Level)], and the lower secondary and primary school leaving examinations. These changes also concern the evaluation of their work, as well as the requirements for professional promotion. Over the past thirty years, in Poland we have had two revolutionary reforms in education, as a result of which gymnasiums (secondary or middle schools) were established in 1999, only to be liquidated in 2017 in a return to the eight-year primary school and three-year high school.

In their statements, the surveyed teachers (interviewees) emphasized that such frequent and serious changes in the education system cause enormous confusion and chaos in education, and lead to conflicts in educational institutions over the division of labor and the scope of duties. The same informants also argued that no reforms directly affected their perception of their professional role and school function.

The aim of this study is to show the role of the teacher as seen through the eyes of currently working and retired teachers. All the considerations refer to the educational activities undertaken by the interviewees in relation to their students. The focus is on the differences in the perception of the profession between teachers today and those who taught more than thirty years ago. The article deals with the problem of the diversification of the functions of the school, and the role of the teacher in the education process in Poland. It answers the question of whether the perception of the teaching profession has changed in the perception of people practicing this profession. In other words, do retired teachers see the teacher's role in the same way as current teachers? Is the Polish teacher a child-rearer or rather an educator, understood here as a person imparting knowledge and developing skills? How does the occupation affect the perception of oneself, from the perspective of two groups of surveyed teachers? Referring to the teachers' narrative about their work, I reconstruct the role of the teacher by relating it to the function of schools.

## Research methodology

All the ideas contained in this article are based on my research on the emotions felt in relation to professional work, which I have recently carried out over the course of a few years in Polish educational institutions (schools as the teachers' workplace). The research was a field study and was based on two methodological approaches: ethnography (mainly organizational ethnography) and grounded theory (cf. Pawłowska 2013).

The ethnographic research I have conducted, on the basis of diverse case studies (see Prus 1997; Deegan 2001; Hammersley, Atkinson 2007), was

designed in line with organizational ethnography, allowing the perspective of the organization participants to be understood and the study of both little known aspects and unusual areas of better known phenomena (Kostera 2012: 73; also see: Kostera 2003: 12; 2011: 9). It should be noted that ethnography allows for the collection of empirical data in everyday contexts in which the phenomena occur (see Prus 1997: 192; Deegan 2001; Kostera 2003: 12; Kostera 2011: 9; 2012: 73; Hammersley, Atkinson 2007).

In order to deepen the insight into the examined reality, the number of cases was reduced to three primary and two junior high schools (see Burawoy 1998). Due to the specificity of ethnographic study, the school turned out to be a relatively closed system to which access requires “permission which, if granted, will take some time in obtaining” (Stein 2006: 70) and “strictly depends on the actual possession, holding the office, invitation or appointment” (Lofland et al. 2009: 63, cited in: Wojciechowska 2018). Considering the sensitivity of students’ data, school principals were often reluctant to grant my access to the field. Some principals and teachers claimed that the researcher’s “permanent” presence in the educational facility would disrupt the functioning of the school, thereby refusing my access to data. Instead, I was advised to leave a questionnaire to be completed by teachers – in order to minimize the researcher’s contact with a given school. Thus, the choice of schools for the study was dictated by my access to data (see Silverman 2007). I had to take advantage of my informal contacts and connections (Konecki 2000: 171; also see Konecki 1998), and the number of schools was limited to five.

The methodology of grounded theory organized the research process and set the strategy for working with data. The methodology of grounded theory has been well described in the literature on the subject, therefore its detailed description will be omitted in this study (see Glaser, Strauss 1967; 2009; Strauss, Corbin 1997; Charmaz 2006; 2009; Konecki 2000; Gorzko 2008).

The research was based on an ethnographic study using triangulation, which allows a researcher to adopt different points of view and thus reach a distance to the analyzed data (Hammersley, Atkinson 2000). The study used data triangulation, methodological triangulation, and theoretical triangulation (see Denzin 1978; Konecki 2000: 86).

As part of the project (see Pawłowska 2013; Pawłowska 2019; 2020), I conducted a series of observations of school life and the work (cooperation) of teachers – with school staff, as well as students’ parents. I also analyzed existing materials, such as school statutes, regulations, legal regulations, school operating programs, staff meeting protocols, school development plans, teachers’ Level of Professional Promotion documents, websites etc. I also conducted informal conversations, and so-called conversational interviews (Konecki 2000) with school principals, teachers, other school employees and parents, and unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews with current and retired teachers. The

choice of interviewees was a deliberate, avalanche-like selection of a snowball (see Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias 2001: 199). The unstructured and conversational interviews became the basis for writing this article. There were 18 unstructured interviews with retired teachers and 42 unstructured interviews with current teachers, including school principals. The average duration of one interview was 39 minutes; however, some interviews, especially those with retired teachers, were much longer (over 2 hours). In the interviews, I attempted to draw attention to important elements of teachers' work, with particular emphasis on easy and difficult, pleasant and unpleasant, positive and negative situations. The interviews were conducted in places and at times convenient for the interviewees. Most often it was the informant or researcher's place of residence, a coffeehouse, teachers' lounge, or the principal's office. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed in accordance with the principles of grounded theory methodology. The application of grounded theory methodology is consistent with the adoption of the interpretative paradigm and allowed the capture of the processual dimension of constructing and giving meanings to studied phenomena, by comparing different cases in order to select from the collected material the basic concepts that constituted the basis for further comparisons (see Konecki 2000). The following grounded theory methodology procedures were used: substantial coding, including open coding, theoretical coding, memo-writing, diagramming.

### **Profession as a sociological concept**

The concept of a profession is closely related to the concept of division of labor and ownership (see Przystański 2008: 237, 260–261). This concept, along with many other terms in sociology, has not been given one consistent definition. In many dictionaries in the field of social sciences, including sociology, the term profession does not appear at all, or it is reduced to a one-sentence definition. In many other definitions, the authors refer to a classification of professions, which does not always seem to be correct. These classifications often refer to specific specialties and specializations, which results in confusion about the definition of the profession itself.

In the literature on the subject, two definitional problems are indicated. The first problem is related to the differentiation of a profession in terms of the scope of work specialization, where the profession is included only in the category of the position held within the performed and/or learned profession. The second problem is related to the issue of earnings, which is treated ambiguously. Although many definitions indicate that earnings function as a source of income (Weber 2002: 105–108; Giddens 2006: 397; Przystański 2008: 238), the nature of such earnings is not mentioned. The profession determines a specific social position (Szczepański 1963: 199), which may extend to other family members. Activities resulting from the social division of labor (professional activities) “cause

a particular mental and physical involvement of a given person, and also determine his function and social position, standard and lifestyle, as well as external appearance and behavior” (Sztumski 1981: 42–43).

In this study, I define a profession, following Everest Hughes, as “a relatively constantly performed set of activities aimed at producing specific items and services in order to meet needs” (Hughes 1958: 34). It is important that through the profession, a person evaluates himself, develops his opinion about himself, assigns value to himself and builds his groups of reference and identification (see Hughes 1958 and Konecki 1988). Occupation shapes the personality of an individual (see Ratajczak 2008: 48–49), and the choice of a field of study determines intellectual development and the system of values, aspirations and individual ambitions. The performed profession introduces a person in specific organizational forms, types of conflicts, types of employee relations and types of activities.

Teaching is a learned and practiced profession. Together with parents, the teacher should prepare young people “to manage their own personality development on their own, to undertake valuable goals and to choose their life paths responsibly” (Kaszubowska 2006: 55). This is also how I will understand child-rearing (upbringing) later in the article.

The practised profession is associated with adopting a specific role as an employee, which in turn leads to taking specific actions, revealing only certain aspects of one’s personality in individual situations (see Park 1926), and involving interaction with a group of people accepting a given individual (Znaniński 2011: 272). It should be emphasized that a specific social role determines the social self of an individual, that is, what the individual should be for themselves and others, and determines the set of rights and obligations assigned to the role assumed by the individual (see Znaniński 1965; Szczepański 1972). In assuming the role of a teacher, the individual plays a role based on previous schemas and the socialization process, that is, presents what they consider appropriate for the role of the teacher. The individual is engaged in the process of interpreting the role in relation to the assumed scenario. The role of the teacher is also defined by the legislator, who states that the process of education and rearing of children and adolescents carried out by performing the following tasks:

- supporting each student in his development;
- striving for full personal development;
- professional development, according to the school’s needs;
- educating young people to love their homeland, respecting the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, in an atmosphere of freedom of conscience and respect for every human being;
- taking care of shaping students’ moral and civic attitudes in line with the idea of democracy, peace and friendship between people of different nations, races and worldviews (article 6, points 1–5, Teacher’s Charter);

- carrying out didactic, educational and caring activities conducted directly with or on behalf of students or pupils;
- carrying out other activities and activities resulting from the statutory tasks of the school, including care and educational activities that take into account the needs and interests of students;
- implementation of classes and activities related to preparation for classes, self-education and professional development (article 42, points 1–2, Teacher’s Charter);
- be guided in one’s activities with the welfare of students, concern for their health, moral and civic attitude, respecting the personal dignity of the student (article 5, Educational Law).

### **Education and child-rearing (upbringing). The dispute over the role of the teacher and the functions of the school**

The role of a teacher is defined by a specific set of activities that a teacher should perform when fulfilling their duties. This role is clearly defined by the tasks and functions of the school. All the surveyed teachers are/were employees of educational institutions. Their role was mainly fulfilled in the workplace, but also outside of it. Speaking about their role, the informants identified it with the function of the institution in which they work/worked. They pointed out that they are/were also teachers outside the educational institution and when they address(ed) a student in a public place (outside the school premises) it is/was dictated by the fact that they represent(ed) the school. In the narratives, when talking about their profession, they identified themselves with the place of work, using the terms: *in our school*, *in my school*, *in my class*, *at our place*, etc. There was a self-definition through participation in the school community. The informants changed “me” to “we” (school) and vice versa. The goal of the school was also the goal of the individual employee. Due to the fact of identifying with a given institution, the professional role overlapped with the function that the school should fulfill. The Teacher’s Charter clearly defines the role and tasks of the teacher and identifies them with the school’s function. The teacher is assessed in terms of the performance of the school’s basic functions: didactic, educational and caring, and tasks related to the entrusted position, including tasks related to ensuring the safety of students during classes organized by the school (Art. 6 points 1–5, Teacher’s Charter). Thus, the role of the teacher cannot be separated from that of the school.

Most theoreticians of pedagogy agree that the function of the school is teaching, training and upbringing, and the teacher is a rearer and an educator at the same time. In his text *How to raise a school* (1956), Leszek Bandura raised the problem of moral education and the role of the teacher in the process of education.

In his opinion, the pedagogue plays a dominant role in the field of conscious and planned educational influence (see Rodziewicz 2003: 310–312). He assigned the teacher the role of a social activist (Mazur 2015: 107). He emphasized the teachers' high ideality, resulting from the shaped worldview and the sense of responsibility for the work they do (see Wołoszyn-Spirka 2001: 102–103).

Another educator and pedagogue, Zygmunt Mysłakowski, who valued the teacher's educational activities very much, in 1970 extended the list of teaching tasks to include three basic terms (teaching, training, upbringing) with two additional ones: implementation and training. He claimed that:

1. We learn (and we teach) the knowledge, elementary skills of the language material, accounting and measurement operations, etc.
2. We implement habits and wonts.
3. We exercise praxia, elementary techniques, general physical dexterity, resourcefulness in practical life, tact (dexterity in behavior).
4. We educate functions (e.g. scientific thinking), beliefs, attitudes, worldview, aesthetic taste, creative skills, feelings.
5. We educate the whole person as an active and creative member of the community, sometimes in the sense of larger wholes, for example physical education (Mysłakowski 1970, cited in: Mazur 2015: 106).

Although child-rearing is sometimes equated with indoctrination, I would like to clearly emphasize that in this article it is understood as a process of the intentional shaping of the behaviors and attitudes adopted in a given culture and society. The education system is never free from ideology and religious and political doctrines, regardless of the existing political system. The educational function of the school, which I describe below, and as emphasized by the interviewees, relates to the transfer of positive models and taking actions that indicate to children and adolescents the values desired by society. Students come from a variety of families, including environmentally neglected ones. The role of the teacher is, among other things, to provide equal opportunities, not only intellectual ones:

*Trips to the cinema, theater. Museums. Some people would not have had such opportunities if it were not for school [...]. And then how many times do you have to repeat how to behave. In order not to litter, not to make noise, not to dig in the chair, etc. [...] Oh, that's a lot. [...] And this is also upbringing (teacher in grades 1–3, primary school, woman, aged 48).*

The teacher receiving the appointment (higher position) takes an oath in which he undertakes to be a child-rearer and guardian:

“I vow to diligently fulfill my duty as a teacher, educator and guardian of youth, strive for the full development of the student's and my own personality, educate and rear the young generation in the spirit of love for the homeland, national traditions, and respect for the Constitution of the Republic of Poland”. The oath may be taken with the addition of the words: “So help me God” (art. 15 of the Teacher's Charter).



Currently working teachers, although they are familiar with the norm indicating the educational function of the school, have not fully internalized it. This is especially noticeable when we relate the declarative layer to real action.

In the first phase of conducting interviews with active teachers and school principals, I had the feeling that all I heard were some empty slogans. They were providing information which, in their opinion, should be conveyed. Still, this did not, for the most part, reflect how they felt. For example, when the informants talked about the role of the teacher, I would hear, in the first part of the interview, that “school is a pedagogic and educational institution, and the task of the teacher is to prepare children and young people to function in society as best as possible”. In the next statements, the educational function of the school was clearly emphasized, while marginalizing the pedagogic function (rearing, bringing up younger students). It was stressed that the main task of the school was to prepare children to pass an exam with a good grade, allowing them to successfully finish a given stage of education. However, the school tasks were often equated with individual teacher’s tasks:

*The school is to implement the program. This is the most important thing* (a male high school teacher, aged 45).

*Teachers are not for raising and do not raise children [...] parents should bring them up [...]. At school, the student is supposed to acquire knowledge* (a female junior high school teacher, aged 31).

The role of a modern teacher has been reduced to being a person imparting knowledge, hereinafter referred to as “an educator” or “a craftsman”. The most important value is that young people pass the exam at a good level, i.e. one that will allow students to continue their education in the school of their choice, and that will allow them to maintain their position in the ranking of schools or allow them to take a higher place in the ranking.

*My goal is, first and foremost, to prepare the student for the A-level exam. Those three years of work in some way prepare them for the end of school, so that he can pass this high school diploma, so that he has a door for his future life* (a male history teacher, high school teacher, aged 43).

Teachers in grades 1–3 also indicated the care function of the school, seeing themselves as taking care of the children entrusted to them. Most of the interviewees, although they were satisfied with the sympathy of the students, spoke negatively about the fact of the necessity to help students perform basic activities, such as getting dressed after PE lessons, tying shoes, teaching them to use scissors, for example, or dealing with emotionally and socially maladjusted students:

*And he was not at all prepared by his parents for the fact that he was going to a new place and that he would be there, unfortunately; that he would have to be without his mother a bit. Well, there are children like that, and their parents could have prepared such holidays in some way during this period [...]* (a female teacher of grades 1–3, primary school, aged 29).

*It is a girl and she is still very childish. She is not always able to submit to the group she works with. She does not always follow the teacher's instructions, or does it for a minute and then get distracted and doesn't do her work. So there is no such sense of duty and internal rigor, and she just approaches many things in a playful way. [...] She didn't feel safe because it was a new environment; large school, less intimate atmosphere than kindergarten. She was nervous, she waited for her mother, she was afraid that her mother would not come, she cried. Well, she had such pre-school behavior (a female teacher of grades 1–3, primary school, aged 46).*

This student's social, emotional or intellectual maladjustment involves additional work for the teacher:

*What if there are several such children in the class. Today more and more often, it's "this is ADHD, and this is exemption from PE, and this is dyslexia". Sometimes half a class has dyslexia. I mean, I don't know if they really have it, but there is a certificate, so you have to write a separate program for each. Well, it is, yes, it is a big obstacle for us (woman, teacher, primary school, aged 48).*

Each dysfunction (e.g. dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysorthography, dyscalculia) is associated with the need to create an individual curriculum taking into account the dysfunction in question. The program (plan) of work with a dysfunctional child is submitted in the form of a document to the pedagogical council, and also for inspection by the parents (guardians) of the child. A few years ago, such a document had to be approved and signed by the parents, which involved the need to establish the content of the teacher's work program with a dysfunctional student with the parents (guardians). Teachers talked about communication difficulties with parents saying that they cannot "normally" work:

*Parent had to sign. And sometimes such a parent is difficult to bring to school. He does not come to meetings. I pass the message to the student and nothing. There were times when such a work plan remained unsigned until the end of the semester. One of my friends had to go to the student's home after working hours to find her parents and ask for a signature. Usually, parents are surprised about what it is and why. Some people are not easy to convince [...] (a female math teacher, junior high school, aged 44).*

Currently, the upbringing (rearing) function of the school is performed by educational institutions to a minimum extent:

*The greatest role in shaping this process [rearing (upbringing) – ed. author] is played by the family, while educational institutions should play a supporting role. I also think that the disturbance of this relationship, especially when parents shift the responsibility for raising their children to institutions, adversely affects their process of development. Professional experience allows me to believe that such cases are not isolated (a female English teacher, primary school, aged 29).*

According to the current teachers, family and parents (guardians) should be responsible for bringing children up (cf. Kowalczyk-Szajrych 2010). However, it is forgotten that children and teenagers spend up to eight or nine hours a day at school. This means that the process of socialization is somewhat dis-

turbed: not having adult role models, young people refer to the behavior of their peers. The lack of clear educational activities on the part of the school and the lack of parents' time mean that educational activities focused on young people are generally not undertaken at all.

Florian Znaniecki, a classic scholar in the field of the sociology of upbringing (education), believed that child-rearing is a social process, and that the goals of education depend on the needs and aspirations of the social group it educates. According to Znaniecki (2011), the main educational environments are family, neighborhood, peer groups, school, and, extremely pertinent today, the broadly understood media. School was established as a complement to the family and neighborhood environment, but also in opposition to it. A feature of schools is a certain seclusion, which is necessary to focus benevolent influences and create a special environment. However, modern teachers argue that:

*The assumption that school is a complementary environment does not hold true today. The demanding attitude of parents, the lack of involvement in the upbringing of their own children and difficulties in communicating with teachers make it extremely difficult for educational institutions to be the primary rearing environment for young people. Which there is no time for in the education process. In my professional work, I have experienced many times when the obligation to educate and build the right attitude of a child is transferred to the institution. Despite the obvious role and professional duties of the teacher, their striving and effort will not bring the expected results without the parent continuing this process. Lack of consistent messages at home and at school do not help the child's development, but they hinder it significantly (a female English teacher, primary school, aged 29).*

In their interviews, the currently working teachers emphasized the passivity of parents as the main cause of educational problems that children and adolescents increasingly suffer from.

*Besides, I believe that many of the children's rearing (upbringing) problems result from the negligence of their parents. Lack of interest in correcting the mistakes made by their children results in the development of bad habits and inappropriate behavior (a female Polish language teacher, junior high school, aged 39).*

The literature on the subject emphasizes the importance of the education process in the activity of an educational institution. This is also how the teachers who are now retired saw their role. They mentioned the profession as a vocation, with the teacher having authority and being a role model in the process of socialization. The school was a place not only for education, but above all for child-rearing, and the teacher had authority and respect. Students modeled themselves on their masters, choosing a field of study and a future profession:

*The leading places of students in Russian language competitions were a success. I am proud that several of my students graduated from Russian philology. One student even studied in Russia in St. Petersburg. That's nice (a female retired teacher, aged 77).*

The teacher was the person to whom the student could turn with the problem, who showed the way to solve the problem and shaped the personality of the student:

*I have always believed that it was up to me as a teacher what kind of youth we would have. Today many educators complain about children, but what are they doing to help them? [...] How many times did I stay after school to explain not only tasks, but also how to act, how to react. The parents of my pupils worked hard and we taught them how to live. I don't know if I gave any good advice, but I tried my best [laughs] (a female retired teacher, aged 79).*

*Students came with various problems. There is not always a good educational atmosphere at home. They confided. Sometimes it was enough, so to speak, to talk. With some we spoke on first-name terms. They were almost grown-up people [...]. Yes, I still have contact with some of them today. They call me. They come by for tea. They tell about their children, grandchildren [...]. A teacher is a calling, not a profession. You cannot be a teacher only at school [...]. And when I met a student on the street, now he was an ex-student, I will also talk (a female retired teacher, aged 68).*

The last statement shows how important the child-rearing function played by the teacher was. The informants considered the choice of this profession to be a kind of vocation. Another interviewee linked the role of a teacher as educator and teacher as rearer with the fact of constantly belonging to her first-class community:

*And you know that I have contact with my first class all the time. They found me and we are meeting today on the occasion of Christmas, but not only. And it has been over fifty years since they finished primary school. They organize such meetings. They themselves meet several times a year and they always invite me. They're calling. Sometimes they tell different school stories. Some say they remember my advice, that I helped. As you know, I am lonely and they add joy to my old age (a female retired teacher, aged 84).*

As you can see, there are significant differences in the perception of their role as teacher-child-rearer and teacher-educator among teachers. Retired teachers emphasized the balance between child-rearing (upbringing) and education. They also pointed out that this upbringing is often more important than education: "Knowledge is in books and studies, and indicating the right path – often priceless". It should be remembered that before the education reform of 1999, the *matura* (maturity diploma/A-level exams) was not a test. There were no exams for students finishing primary and secondary schools. Therefore, the teacher did not have to ensure that their students passed their school leaving exams well, as the result obtained by students in the entrance examinations to secondary and tertiary education was not related to the school's assessment and the achievement of high rates and places in school rankings. The *matura* examination was not a closed-ended or semi-open-ended test in which you should enter a specific answer, specified by the test creator. The *matura* examination allowed to students to make their own interpretation of the given topic, on the basis of their knowledge. Currently, the exam requires specific knowledge and leaves little room for logical thinking.

Teachers are forced to teach in such a way that the student learns the facts that will be useful in the exam and will allow the student to guess the answers. Students in the last year of high school practice completing tests almost the entire school year. They learn how to construct a statement in order for it to be recognized by the teacher who checks the work (examiner). All this leads to the situation where the teacher becomes a “technician (craftsman/works man)” who transmits knowledge. The overloaded curriculum, as well as the enormity of bureaucratic work, often referred to by teachers as “*papermaking*” (in vivo code), means that the teacher has virtually no time for non-educational activities:

*Starting some years ago, there was more emphasis on work with young people and the teacher was not burdened with various types of papers, the teacher was just doing his job. He was working. However, now [longer pause] he is working and writing, I should say so. What he does and what he doesn't write is not considered done. And he just writes and writes and only works. However, earlier it was the opposite. This is my impression (a female chemistry teacher, junior high school teacher, aged 48).*

The respondents emphasize the difficulty of combining the work of a child-rearer with teaching and bureaucratic work. Magdalena Smak and Dominika Walczak (2015: 32) write that teachers and school principals feel that the number of documents they have to fill in, plans, reports, and statements means that their work is less about teaching and more about reporting. This greater emphasis on keeping school records is a factor indicating the transformation of modern schools in terms of their functions, which translates into teachers' perception of their role in the education and child-rearing process. The informants pointed to the increasing bureaucracy of the teaching process, which may result in level of education being lowered, and the rearing (upbringing) function of the school and the role of the teacher as a child-rearer being minimized.

Another distinguishing feature of the evolution of the teacher's role is significant individualisation and independence of work. Currently, teachers choose a specific teaching program (curriculum) themselves. The curriculum content is imposed and approved by the Ministry, however the teaching program and plan is developed individually by the teacher. The teacher can independently create a new plan and submit it for approval as the author's program. A modern teacher independently chooses the textbooks to be used by students. The situation was somewhat different in the communist period, where one textbook approved by the competent Ministry was required to teach the subject. The designs as well as the content of the approved textbooks have changed over the years. There was also one list of literary set books that was valid for all schools. The teacher was forced to discuss all the readings mentioned therein during the Polish language lesson. Currently, there is also a list of set books approved by the Ministry of Education, but the books have been divided into compulsory (so-called “*with a star*” or “*starred*” – in vivo codes) and supplementary, from which the teacher can discuss any chosen text, and within the scope he or she chooses.

In both study groups, teachers indicated that the teaching methods used during the lessons were an individual choice of the teachers. It is they who decide whether it will work, on the basis of case studies, talks, lectures, work with the textbook, etc. It is they who decide whether during the classes for example the experiments (chemical) will be shown and whether the available multimedia will be used.

The perception of one's own professional role may also be influenced by the motives for choosing the occupation and by professional burnout. The random choice of profession and professional burnout direct the teachers' perception of their role as an educator and craftsman. The temporary nature of employment is not conducive to establishing an in-depth relationship with the student and solving educational problems:

*I'm here by chance. I will work this year, maybe two, and if I find something else, I will move on. Working with children is probably not for me* (a male physics teacher, junior high school, aged 25).

In the statements of retired teachers, we can see that the choice of profession was not accidental. In the narratives of the respondents, there were stories about "playing the teacher" in childhood, about parents-teachers, and about dreams, convictions and the beliefs that appear in childhood about the future involvement in the teaching profession:

*I often played at school and I like young people. When it was time to choose my profession, I didn't see myself anywhere else than at school. During my studies, I chose the teaching specialty* (a female retired biology teacher, aged 68).

*I've always wanted to be a teacher. I love children* (a female retired kindergarten teacher, aged 69).

In some cases, this profession was inherited (cf. Pawłowska 2013), and many respondents came from families with a teaching tradition (cf. Mazurkiewicz 2003):

*My mother was a teacher and so was her sister. My older sister too. So I had no choice [laughs] [...]. But it was a very rewarding job* (a female retired math teacher, aged 68).

The current teachers, even when they started working for similar reasons as their older colleagues, spoke about unfavorable changes, about professional burnout and a decline in authority:

*When I started working, I felt really good. I remember how proud I was to get the job. My mother was also very proud of me. She was also a teacher, so I grew up in the spirit that the teacher is an authority who provides a good education and fulfills this educational obligation. Today is different. Harder. Parents question our authority, but so do politicians [...]. This is not the same school* (a female French teacher, high school, aged 53).

Many respondents, reflecting on the motive for choosing their profession, said that while had been observing their teachers they thought about also taking up teaching in the future. The teacher's authority, commitment and passion became a stimulus for the next generation of employees:



*Yes, yes, the decision to be a teacher was made in high school. I went to a class that was first class, a class that gave a beginning. It was a pedagogical class, I chose this class already then. I knew that my life would be related to teaching young people, definitely young people, not children (a female physics teacher, high school, aged 46).*

Many of the respondents who are currently working teachers spoke about the temporary nature of work at school. They emphasized convenient and shorter working hours, longer holidays, and thus the possibility of better care for one's own children and easier organization of family life. Some people honestly pointed to the benefits in the form of tutoring or other additional paid lessons. Foreign language teachers mentioned the possibility of working in other language schools:

*As you know, I teach German. At school, I have few hours and a permanent job. Here in primary school it's ok. But you can't earn too much [...]. Fortunately, there are private lessons. I also work in [here the name of a language school] [...] (a male German teacher, primary school, aged 31).*

One of the factors that determine when a teacher enters school is the lack of other options. The inability to find a job in another institution, as well as bad experiences related to looking for a job connected with the completed field of study, which is less attractive at a given moment in the labor market, make the young person decide to work at school. Personal problems and/or the family situation mentioned above, including the need to look after a small child, are often an additional factor that leads people to work at school. In such a situation, the choice of profession becomes a necessity and is a negative choice. The future teacher starts working not because of passion, but because of compulsion:

*I did not plan to be a teacher; everything just turned out that I went in this direction and just got a job at school, I couldn't find another job before. It all got complicated when I got pregnant in my fifth year of college, so it wasn't that easy either (a female geography teacher, secondary school, aged 33).*

*Coincidence, I got married, stayed in a small town, not in a city, and my job prospects changed. My friends informed me about a vacant position of a Polish teacher in one of the primary schools in a nearby town, and now, there were no other prospects, and I had to make a living on something (a female Polish teacher, primary school, aged 42).*

My observations are confirmed by the research by Dominika Walczak (2012: 49), who states that men rarely declared that they had "always" been determined to work in the teaching profession. Most of them admitted that the choice of profession was made by chance. When choosing their university courses, they were guided mainly by the development of their own interests. The decision to supplement their education with a teacher training course was dictated primarily by the desire to acquire additional professional qualifications, resulted from the calculation of the chances of finding a job after graduation, and was made under the influence of friends from the same year.



Many of my interviewees claimed that the choice of profession does not have to be carefully considered. They believed that taking up work in the profession and practice made it possible to clearly determine whether a given teacher is suitable for this profession:

*I started working here because the German teacher I was looking for was employed on this basis, whether he wanted to work for a year and prove himself – on this basis. I said, okay, I will come here for a year, because then I will eliminate it, it will be clear that this is what I definitely do not want to do with my life. After which I did not want to do something else (a female German teacher, high school, aged 33).*

At the same time, the interviewees noticed that few people who start work in the teaching profession subsequently leave it, which indicates that the teaching profession allows for permanent employment and for working in one place (one educational institution) for most of their professional career:

*If someone does not quit the test period (internship), he or she works until retirement. Of course, there are cases when they close the class because there are fewer children, but then you go to the common room or graduate and teach a different subject. Sometimes someone goes abroad, with a husband, but as I say, it is rare, rather rare (a female teacher in grades 1–3, primary school, aged 40).*

The research by Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz (2003) shows that out of thirty teachers, only four consciously chose this job as a dream job, which contrasts with the 1986 research (Bnińska et al.). A similar regularity is evident in my research, and that conducted by Małgorzata Bednarska (2009), who investigated extramural and full-time history students of the University of Wrocław and retirees and pensioners of the Polish Teachers Union “Wrocław Krzyki”. The author notes that the choice of the teaching profession among future historians is dictated by the “lack of other perspectives” and “lack of knowledge about the cause”, which means that the respondents do not know why they choose the teaching profession. These categories do not appear in the surveyed retired teachers, who declared that they had wanted to practice this profession from childhood, which was dictated by their love for children. The reasons mentioned by retired teachers also included the need to quickly become independent, the proximity of the school as a workplace, and the choice of parents (see Bednarska 2009: 328–330). On the basis of the cited studies, it can be concluded that the number of people choosing the teaching profession from the conviction of their own calling to this profession is decreasing, while the number of people who accidentally decide to become a teacher is increasing. Małgorzata Bednarska (2009: 328–329) writes that “for today’s youth preparing to teach others, the student becomes less important (decrease in motivation – »work with children/youth«), and more important is own person (increase in motivation – »interests«)”. It certainly translates into the role perceived and performed by teachers.

## Conclusion

A teacher's place of work is a school, usually understood as an educational institution. However, the school is also, and perhaps above all, the students who spend 5 to even 9 hours a day within its walls. Children and adolescents not only acquire knowledge here, but also undergo the process of socialization. Peers and teachers have a significant influence on the formation and appearance of certain behaviors and actions.

The above analyses showed clear differences in how teachers perceive their profession and role. The informants referred to the changes in the teacher's authority (cf. Pawłowska 2013; 2016) and changes in the attitudes of parents. Many of the factors constituting the role of a teacher (permanent employment, stress, teaching methods, changing working conditions, i.e. the provisions of the education law, including the Teacher's Charter), in the opinion of the respondents, have not changed over the last fifty years, but the perception of the role has changed. The student-teacher and teacher-parent relationships changed, which forced them to change their activities and interactions.

The aim of the article was to show the role of the teacher in the context of a child-rearer and/or educator in relation to two groups of teachers (retired and currently working). As the interviewees pointed out, a modern teacher is mainly an educator who has to prepare young people to pass exams, mainly in the form of a test. Some informants called these actions "*testomania*" (in vivo code). They said that every exam comes with an answer key that defines the correct answers. One of the informants stated that "This should be taught so that the student has no doubts about the interpretation". High school students in their final year practice completing tests almost the entire school year. They learn how to construct a statement in order for it to be recognized by the teacher checking the work (the external examiner). Therefore, in the teaching process, there is no place for the students' opinions, for their dilemmas and interpretations, or for simply independent thinking. The teacher is not (or cannot be) a person who shows the path of development, stimulates independent thinking, to ask questions and seek answers to them through discussion and mutual respect, but is only a technician (craftsman) who will teach how to solve a test, how to guess the correct answer specified by the answer key.

Contemporary teachers also point to the progressive bureaucratization of their work, which they call "*paperwork*", which, they claim, means that the teacher basically has no time for activities other than educational ones. Considering today's easy access to knowledge through the media and Internet resources, and the widespread participation of young people in additional classes and tutoring, in which both weaker and very good students participate, it is perhaps surprising that it is the teachers who today emphasize their role as educators, marginalizing the role of child-rearers. The respondents who are currently working teachers clearly

emphasized the educational function of the school in their statements, taking the position that the family is responsible for upbringing. Retired teachers emphasized the balance between child-rearing (upbringing) and education. The role of the teacher has evolved from teacher-rearer to teacher-educator. The emphasis has shifted from rearing (upbringing) to education and knowledge transfer. We should remember that the school, regardless of the formal definition of its function, has and will continue to play a socializing role. Teachers should see their great importance in the process of educating and shaping the personality and self-esteem of a child. This is especially important in the world of consumerism and busy parents. Often, it is the teacher who becomes trusted and becomes the confidant of the students', with regard to concerns and problems, which, for various reasons, they cannot share with their parents.

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## WYCHOWAWCA CZY EDUKATOR. DWA SPOJRZENIA PRACOWNIKÓW OŚWIATY NA ROLĘ NAUCZYCIELA

**Abstrakt.** Nauczyciel to zawód wyuczony i wykonywany. Nauczyciel w toku podejmowanych przez siebie działań wpływa na kształtowanie postaw, poglądów i świadomość dzieci i młodzieży. Powinien przygotować on młodzież „do samodzielnego kierowania rozwojem własnej osobowości, do podejmowania wartościowych celów i odpowiedzialnego wyboru dróg życiowych”. Sytuacja pracy nauczyciela wynika z roli, jaką nauczyciel pełni w procesie socjalizacji i kształcenia dzieci i młodzieży.


Niniejszy artykuł podejmuje problem zróżnicowania roli nauczyciela w procesie edukacji w Polsce w kontekście dwóch zmiennych – edukacji i wychowania. Odpowiada na pytanie, czy i jak zmieniło się postrzeganie zawodu nauczyciela w percepcji osób wykonujących ten zawód. Jak zawód i rolę nauczyciela widzą/widzieli nauczyciele emerytowani, a jak nauczyciele obecnie wykonujący ten zawód? Czy polski nauczyciel jest/był wychowawcą, czy raczej edukatorem, rozumianym tutaj jako osoba przekazująca wiedzę?

Całość zawartych w artykule przemyśleń bazuje na wywiadach przeprowadzonych z nauczycielami emerytowanymi i obecnie pracującymi. Wywiady te były elementem szerszego projektu badawczego prowadzonego przez autorkę artykułu w ciągu ostatnich lat w polskich instytucjach edukacyjnych. Badania miały charakter etnograficznych badań terenowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** nauczyciel, zawód, praca, etnografia, wywiad swobodny, obserwacja, teoria ugruntowana.



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## THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN IN SOCIAL RESEARCH. INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE

**Abstract.** The perspective of childhood studies has existed in science since the 1990s. Currently, it is considered as a paradigm. The article concerns one of the assumptions of this theoretical orientation – the participation of children in research. The analysis of the concept includes both positive and critical stances expressed in the subject literature. The text contains an analysis of the main assumptions of childhood studies and their relationship to the participatory approach to research. Moreover, it presents types of participatory research with children, considering the degree of their participation. The article refers to numerous examples of both research and specific techniques applied.

**Keywords:** participation of children in research, agency, child as an active social actor, child research, research with children, forms of participation, participatory tools, childhood studies, new sociology of childhood.

### Introduction

In this article I would like to focus on one of the foundations of the childhood studies paradigm, namely children's participation in research. However, even with this limitation of scope the issue is still very broad, therefore the text serves merely as an introduction to the problem, highlighting key issues.<sup>1</sup> The author is committed to the critical approach to the issue, reflecting upon whether, how and when the participation of a child in social research should be taken into consideration. The analysis will begin by indicating the assumptions on which the theoretical orientation of childhood studies is built. The author will consider how they

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the introductory character of this text, numerous references to research websites can be found herein, together with research reports, as well as examples of employing various techniques which researchers may find interesting. The structure of this article does not enable the author to discuss them in detail, therefore, multiple information is implied in the notes.



relate to the postulate of participatory research, which is considered to be “the gold standard” (Hammersley 2017). Thereafter, the reasons justifying children’s participation in research will be analyzed. Moreover, the conditions enabling and inhibiting conducting participatory research with children, as well as the potentials and limitations resulting from this form of methodological approach, will be investigated.

## **The cornerstone of participatory research with children**

The answer to the question: “who is a *child*, and how to define childhood?” has changed over the course of centuries (Ariès 2010). A significant turning point from the perspective of social research occurred in the 1980s and 1990s (Hammersley 2017; Thomas 2017; Brzozowska-Brywczyńska 2014; Mayall 2013; Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2018b) and was connected with legislative changes on the one hand, and the emergence of a new paradigm of *childhood studies*, on the other (Prout, James 1990).

Creating the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and its subsequent ratification, played a major role in the process of enabling child participation in social research (Broström 2012). This document became an inspiration for creating other significant legislative documents, e.g. the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in Africa (1990) and the European Convention on the Exercise of the Children’s Rights (2000) (Brzozowska-Brywczyńska 2014). For research focused on taking into account child participation, Article 12 of the UNCRC, known also as the participatory article, is of special importance (Horgan et al. 2017), as it underlines that a child has the right to “forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child” (Brzozowska-Brywczyńska 2014: 12). Giving a child the right to express their views equipped the researchers who employ participatory methods with a vital argument and tool (Horgan 2017). From that moment on, more importance has been attached to what children say, to their perspective, and to their knowledge regarding the world. The need to express oneself and to be listened to was also pointed out. In addition, the individual perspective has been highlighted (Mason, Bolzan 2010).

Another breakthrough was achieved with the emergence of the assumptions on which the paradigm of childhood studies was created. Previously, the prevailing view had been that children and childhood were marginalised in research (Hammersley 2017; Coyne, Carter 2018). This primarily resulted from the conviction that children are to some extent incomplete, not fully developed in cognitive, mental and emotional terms (Hammersley 2017). An adult person was considered to be a fully developed human. Children were stranded in the process of becoming an adult. This assumption influenced the way a child was perceived

– as unable to comprehend and describe the surrounding world (Hood, Kelley, Mayall 1996). There was a common belief that children were not capable of providing a precise description of their experiences, thus, they failed to provide accurate information regarding their own lives (Coyne 1998). This attitude legitimized validating research with the children's parents or guardians who, according to the prevalent beliefs at the time, possessed the ultimate knowledge regarding their children's experiences (Morrow, Richards 1996). As a result, it turned out that there was no research that could portray the social reality as seen by children. These voices of children are often recognized as *muted voices* (Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2018a: 38). There were certain cases where the results of research conducted on the adult population constituted the basis on which the children's world was modified (Coyne, Carter 2018). Jens Qvortrup highlighted "the conceptual homelessness of childhood" (Qvortrup 2007, cited in: Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2014: 127). He pointed out that lack of data concerning this social group is disquieting. In research, structural forms, such as class, gender or race, refer only to the reality of adults (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2014: 127), which according to the author, is a manifestation of marginalising children (Qvortrup 1997). Therefore, together with his fellow associates, he carried out a project *Childhood as Social Phenomenon* (Qvortrup 1993), whose aim was to underline the importance of children's presence in society. The author asserts that childhood is a category equal to any other category, and thus it should be studied and analysed by researchers from various fields of interest. Qvortrup mentions that this approach is an expression of taking children seriously (Qvortrup 1997).

Undoubtedly, the first shifts in the subjective perception of children were possible due to the legal solutions which enabled scientists to take part in discussions with ethics committees regarding the participation of children in research. Nevertheless, the foundation of what such research should look like was "the groundbreaking" (Coyne, Carter 2018) text by Allison James and Alan Prout (Prout, James 1990), which characterised a child as an expert on the knowledge regarding their own life. One of the theoretical bases which gave birth to *social studies* was social constructivism. Childhood is a socially constructed project (James, Prout 1997), which means that it is changeable. It is influenced by the socio-cultural context, actively co-created by individuals. What is more, in line with the objectives of constructivism, reality cannot be investigated in an objective way, as we only have access to our own interpretation of reality (Clark 2004). This is why children's individual experiences are of vital importance. Therefore, research should focus on childhood, children's relations and culture, for their own sake, not understood as a consequence of external influences (Broström 2012: 257). James and Prout considered children to be social actors whose knowledge (Mayall 2008) is significant from the scientific point of view. The word "science" is crucial, due to its the implicit associations. This is because knowledge, contrary

to the statements including opinions or observations, emphasizes the subjective role of a child, draws attention to the fact that a child has in his or her memory experiences regarding the past, and though these experiences are probably not as vast as in the case of an adult, because of the number of years they have lived, they still amount to what is called knowledge. This approach is distinct from considering statements uttered by children as only temporary, and therefore perceived as momentary and changeable, and for this reason disdained (Mayall 2008, cited in: Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2018a).

Childhood studies outlines the image of a child who is an actor and a social subject at the same time (Hammersley 2017). The former role refers to the causative agency in the context of a child's everyday life, it highlights the fact of his or her decision-making and the impact these decisions make. The latter role refers to social reality, draws attention to the active role of a child in shaping the social world. In the social sciences one can encounter the term "Great Divide" (Fuchs 2001: 25), which describes the division between an approach focused on the micro and macro subject and object and the social structure opposed to subjective activity. In childhood studies this division is also visible, however, to a lesser extent. For example, the Scandinavian tradition is more focused on structure, and the Anglo-Saxon tradition is more ethnographical, and thus oriented towards the social actor (Esser et al. 2016: 54). However, neither tradition excludes the impact of both macro and micro perspective and the structure and subject on expanding knowledge regarding social reality. The author who attempted to capture the dual nature of this structure was Anthony Giddens (2003). In the theory of structuration, he propounds the duality of structure, which is confirmed by the constitution of agents and structures (Giddens 2003: 65). The structural properties of the social system do not exist independently from action, they constantly interweave with its productions and reproductions (Giddens 2003: 425). The correlation between an agent and structure was also an object of interest of Prout and James (Prout, James 1990) in the text considered to be one of the founding texts of childhood studies. The authors refer therein to both Qvortrup and Giddens.

A certainly noticeable term referring to numerous theoretical approaches on whose theses the childhood studies paradigm has been created is that of "agency". As pointed out by Florian Esser, there is no single definition of this term (Esser et al. 2016: 54). It has become taken-for-granted and omnipresent. Nevertheless, along with the advance of various approaches within the framework of childhood studies (the paradigm that from the outset was based on interdisciplinarity), agency may take various forms, moreover, it is a multidimensional concept. Participatory research is a gold standard of childhood studies, grounded on the assumption that children are causative agents. The understanding of agency therefore has a direct influence on research practice, this is why a critical approach towards this concept constitutes a vital challenge for researchers (see Esser et al. 2016; Holland et al. 2010; Morrison et al. 2019).

## What is participatory research about?

In the Polish language, “participation” refers primarily to economy, it places emphasis on cooperation, which involves both costs and profit.<sup>2</sup> In the context of social research, the key element is the issue of cooperation, and costs and benefits are derivative elements. To participate is to take part (Gallacher, Gallagher 2008: 507). Active participation is crucial. However, two questions emerge here: “what does it mean and how does it translate into the social research?”

Children’s participation in research is based on the childhood studies assumptions. It concentrates on the child’s individual knowledge regarding the world, treating this knowledge as legitimate data regarding social reality. It enables children to talk about the issues concerning them, and it highlights the active role children play in the whole research process. The most common methods in this paradigm are qualitative. Participatory research does not only aim at eliciting the vital data, from the researcher’s point of view; its task is to describe selected elements of the social reality, the children’s way of perceiving the world.

The gradual departure from objectifying a child in favour of granting them a subjective role, enabled a child to be considered as a rightful agent of the research process. Two separate terms were distinguished:<sup>3</sup> *research on children* and *research with children*, with the latter taking account of their participation and enabling them to express their views. Participatory research assures agency, respecting their subjectivity, therefore, the source literature is dominated by the confidence that in the epistemological context this approach is superior to a more traditional attitude (Gallacher, Gallagher 2008: 499, 501). In the post-modern world, children are perceived as active entities and participants whose right to research is legally determined (Broström 2012: 257). Nowadays, there are some voices that encourage one more step to be taken, and introduce a new term – *research by children* (Thomas 2017: 160). The level of children’s participation in research is still a widely discussed issue. Numerous publications mention the pitfalls connected with a naive and unreflective approach towards research conducted by children (see e.g. Christensen, Prout 2002; Gallacher, Gallagher 2008; Sargeant, Harcourt 2012; Thomas 2017; Hammersley 2017; Christensen, James 2017).

Korrie De Koning and Marion Martin (1996) assert that there is no single definition of participatory research. However, they can be divided into three categories: researchers and the researched community take part in the whole research

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<sup>2</sup> In *Słownik Języka Polskiego* we can find the following definition: “to jointly bear the costs of a certain endeavour or to share the profits”, <https://sjp.pwn.pl/szukaj/partycypacja.html> (accessed 20.07.2019).

<sup>3</sup> More about this shift can be found in the subchapter of a book *Being Participatory: Researching with children and young people* (Coyne, Carter 2018: 3–4) entitled *Past views of children and childhood*.

process, the subjects become *de facto* researchers; researchers design tools and the subject community assist in collecting data; society cooperates with an NGO organization (De Koning, Martin 1996). All the definitions mentioned above may be referred to specific examples of participatory research with children.<sup>4</sup>

From the participatory research with children one can distinguish research models which function under a specific name: Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and Participatory Action Research (PAR)<sup>5</sup> (Wilkinson, Wilkinson 2018). The starting point for the former is an issue that is significant for a community. The approach aims at combining knowledge with undertaking activities. More and more opportunities for funding this research model arise, as it is believed that the conclusions drawn from CBPR can be utilised by the policies e.g. regarding education or health. The PAR model, on the other hand, derives from combining *participatory research* and *action research*: it aims at implementing a social change (Cahill 2007).

There are a number of methods that are applicable when distinguishing types of participatory research. What they all have in common is the fact that they refer primarily to the level of children's agency. Although the term passive participation might seem like an oxymoron, in the source literature the terms active and passive participation can be encountered (Grover 2004; Sinclair 2004). Samantha Punch (2002) explains that "active" participation methods are those where children are actively engaged, not passively responsive. In this sense "active participation" implies both intentionality (conscious will) and performativity (doing something) (Punch 2002: 337).

The most popular tool for determining the level of children's engagement in the research process is Hart's Ladder:

- Rung 8: Children and adults share decision-making
- Rung 7: Children lead and initiate action
- Rung 6: Adults initiate but share decision-making with children
- Rung 5: Children are consulted and informed about decisions
- Rung 4: Children are assigned and informed
- Rung 3: Children are tokenized
- Rung 2: Children are decoration
- Rung 1: Children are manipulated



**Figure 1.** Hart's Ladder

Source: Hart 1997, cited in: Coyne, Carter 2018: 11. Image from canva.com

<sup>4</sup> An example referring to all these definitions may be the project "The City of Children", within which since the 1990s. participatory projects including children have been conducted, enabling their participation on different levels. More on this subject can be found at: <https://www.lacittadeibambini.org/en/> (accessed: 20.07.2019).

<sup>5</sup> More information regarding utilizing these methods can be found in the chapter *Principles of Participatory Research* of the book *Being Participatory: Researching with Children and Young People* (Coyne, Carter 2018: 21–31).

The ladder does not depict a hierarchical division of the types of participatory research from the most effective model to the least effective one. It is more about presenting successive levels regarding children's participation in a research. The successive rungs of the ladder symbolize the levels of participation granted to children. The first three rungs relate to truly passive participation. The next ones present different stages of active participation. The top of the ladder presents full cooperation between children and adults. The tools can be also utilized when designing participatory research in order to determine the level of children's agency at a certain stage of the research process. It is also advantageous in the course of selecting concrete research tools.

Reflecting upon children's participation in research, the definitional issue is worth mentioning. Children constitute a vast, heterogeneous group (varied in terms of age and gender, and social, economic and cultural capital). Therefore, employing this term involves making a serious generalization that one has to be aware of. For example, the age of children who participate in research has an influence on the specific nature of the process. In treaty provisions (i.e. the United Nations' Convention of Human Rights) a child is defined as every person under the age of eighteen. In the source literature and numerous reports<sup>6</sup> one can encounter a distinction between children and young people.<sup>7</sup> However, it may be noted that the number of reports concerning the latter group is significantly larger. The people defined by this term are frequently divided into two subgroups: eleven to sixteen years of age and seventeen to twenty/thirty years of age (Thomas 2017: 161). Consequently, children are understood to be ten years old and under. In Poland, people aged eleven and above are considered to be teenagers (Fatyga 2004). This distinction plays a significant role, as it enables the nature of the research to be comprehended. The majority of the research conducted on the assumptions of childhood studies refer to the former age group. Nevertheless, I am of the opinion that due to the definitional doubts it is worth mentioning who exactly took part in the research, as it contributes to the transparency of the researcher's skills and tools. An objection against this assumption might be the argument that this type of approach can reinforce imagining a child as a person in the process of growing up, in other words as incomplete, striving for maturity. It seems to me, however, that lack of this information is detrimental from the practical point of view, especially in the context of the adopted methodological approach and the employed techniques.

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<sup>6</sup> E.g. the report "Children and clinical research: ethical issues". The link to the chapter related to this subject: <http://nuffieldbioethics.org/report/children-and-clinical-research-ethical-issues/whats-different-about-research-with-children-and-young> (accessed 16.07.2019).

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja/praca-mlodziez-raport> (accessed 1.09.2020).



## The aims of children's participation in social research

The decision regarding whether children should participate in research entails numerous problems, encompassing both legislative issues and practical obstacles. Including children in research involves obtaining various types of written permission,<sup>8</sup> moreover, a researcher needs to be knowledgeable about the applicable law, as not every procedure can be applied in every country. For instance, in Poland there are one hundred and sixty-two documents that refer to the rights of children: fifty-three from the United Nations and the League of Nations, one hundred and nine from the Council of Europe (Arczewska 2017). With regard to the practical obstacles, they appear at every stage of a study and are most frequently connected with how to keep the balance between children's agency and their welfare (Brzozowska-Brywczyńska 2014; Water 2018; Sargeant, Harcourt 2012; Zalewska-Królak 2019). Why, despite numerous obstacles, is it worth conducting participatory research with children?

The paradigm of childhood studies indicates many arguments in favour of advantages of listening to children, attempting to understand them and treating children as rightful creators of social space: *children as "beings" rather than "becomings"* (Gallacher, Gallagher 2008: 502). The participatory approach is emancipatory and democratic (Gallacher, Gallagher 2008: 499). Taking into consideration a child's perspective implies treating them as active agents, possessing certain competences (Coyne, Carter 2018: 5). Participatory research is based on a theoretical vision of a child from the perspective of their power, not deficiency (Coyne, Hallström, Söderbäck 2016). It is assumed that the proper selection of methods will enable a child, even a two-year-old, to express themselves (Coyne, Carter 2018: 5).

On numerous occasions Qvortrup emphasized the necessity of legally obliging nations to collect data concerning children, as he believed that allowing children to voice their opinion, which involves obtaining access to their knowledge regarding the surrounding reality, might improve the quality of their life, by appropriate adjustments of public policies. The European Union's measures can serve as an interesting example. In 2015, an evaluation regarding children's participation in the EU was conducted.<sup>9</sup> Particular attention was given to legislative issues, public policies, and real practices. The studies show that reliable, comparable and official data concerning the situation of children in the Member States is still lacking. However, issues pertaining to legislation have improved. The report reveals that children in the EU take part in projects related to sport, leisure and culture on a more and more frequent basis. Nevertheless, the number of examples

<sup>8</sup> E.g. a guardian's written permission, GDPR permission.

<sup>9</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3f3c50b2-6a24-465e-b8d1-74dcac7f8c42/language-en/format-PDF/source-search> (accessed 15.09.2020).



of activities engaging children in the decision-making process is still not satisfactory. Tonucci also highlights this problem.<sup>10</sup> Another example of delving into this subject is the study involving children and teenagers from the European Union (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2014), revealing the still prevailing theses of Qvortrup, asserting that: “in modern societies children and youth as a collective element of a social structure are discriminated against in terms of access to resources and opportunities to satisfy their needs in comparison to the generation of adults” (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2014: 138) despite numerous measures, including the European concept of investing in children.<sup>11</sup> This is why, regardless of the number of years that have passed, the main aim of the participatory approach to research with children is to strengthen their position in the social reality, in other words to foster children’s empowerment. As pointed out by Jill Clark (2004), due to the marginalisation of children as a social group, participatory methods may often be the only ones that enable them to express their opinions.

A significant aim of participatory research is acknowledging children’s competences and their right to agency. The employment of participatory techniques enables them to actively structure their knowledge about themselves (Gallacher, Gallagher 2008: 503). Mary Kellert (2005) enumerates the positive outcomes of this approach. She also indicates that it also increases their self-esteem, which affects their self-confidence. What is more, children get accustomed to the fact that they have the right to speak out and that, moreover, their opinion is considered valuable. By taking part in the project, especially preceded by methodological workshops, children learn universal skills, such as critical thinking, ethical awareness, teamwork, and successful communication. These are the competences that have an impact on their position in the world. Active participation aims at battling against children’s marginalisation and at the democratisation of research concerning their reality. Caitlin Cahill (2004) also points out that children, reflecting upon problems that concern them, gain tools necessary to build knowledge about themselves, as well as altering the surrounding world. The reflections of Maja Brzozowska-Brywczyńska regarding children’s citizenship are of particular interest in this context. This author points out that: “children have a right to be listened to only when they speak the safe language of participatory projects” (Brzozowska-Brywczyńska 2014: 24). Their rights as citizens should concern everyday life and take into consideration their social presence in the world. One has to bear in mind, however, the pitfall of being tempted to create perfect future citizens in the process of participatory research (Rose 1999). This because it is based on “the »futurology« conception of the child’s agency” (Brzozowska-Brywczyńska 2014: 24).

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<sup>10</sup> More information regarding this subject can be found in the film “The goal is to transform children’s words into politics”, created by the author, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFx5nLen1w> (accessed 16.07.2019).

<sup>11</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1060&langId=en> (accessed 15.09.2020).

Sonja Grover (2004) asserts that participatory methods are recognized as the ones that create more authentic knowledge about children's subjective reception of reality. Cahill (2004) underlines that they generate greater knowledge than other techniques. Therefore, participation is both an aim and a tool in the ethical challenge of empowering children (Gallacher, Gallagher 2008: 501). Participatory research can become a tool that counteracts marginalisation, allowing the hitherto "muted" voices to be heard. However, when considering such research, the issue of who conducts it, how, and in what context, is not without significance.<sup>12</sup>

### **How to conduct participatory research with children?**

The key points that constitute participatory research with children are: co-creation, relation, choice, reflexivity, flexibility, time, space and the cultural and geopolitical context (Clark 2008; Holland et al. 2010; Raffety 2015). Only an approach that takes into consideration all the crucial elements enables participatory research to be conducted effectively.

Co-creation, that is, creating something together, refers to cooperation between adults and children. The key aspect of this context is power. Participatory methods are to prevent the master-student relation. Children can perform the same functions as adults; there is no hierarchical division. However, in society, power – as understood by Foucault – is unavoidable, i.e. power that is not necessarily associated with an economic model, but is rather present on a micro scale, in everyday small instances of persuasion (Gallacher, Gallagher 2008). Therefore, constant reflection upon children's subjectivity, a reflective approach regarding boundaries of this subjectivity, and methods of respecting these boundaries are still necessary elements of the whole research process. It is also worth taking into consideration certain inequalities that may become apparent in a group of collaborating children (the age gap, gender, economic, social and cultural capital) and trying to mitigate these differences by consciously changing certain activities.

The knowledge of both adults and children is considered fully legitimate. In the context of the research process, it has to be emphasized that adult researchers are also people who need to be properly prepared. This applies in the case of children as well (Kellert 2005). This approach, on the one hand, acknowledges their competences as future researchers, and on the other leaves a great deal of room for active operation. Children are equipped with tools that can be utilized in the fu-

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<sup>12</sup> The organisations that support researchers' development or share vital data concerning participatory research are for instance: Children's Research Center, <http://wels.open.ac.uk/research/childrens-research-centre> (accessed 16.07.2019); The Centre for Children and Young People's Participation in University of Central of Lancashire, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx4CbfpzFGA&feature=youtu.be> (accessed 16.07.2019).

ture, in accordance with their own assumptions. This solution serves as a response to various ethical objections connected with the research conducted by children. The pioneering place that strove for enabling children to acquire competences in order to become researchers was The Children's Research Center,<sup>13</sup> which operated under the aegis of the Open University in England. A film prepared by the organization explaining the idea of participatory research is recommended viewing.<sup>14</sup> Another institution fulfilling a similar role is The Centre for Children and Young People's Participation at the University of Central Lancashire.<sup>15</sup>

A significant element of the collaboration is creating relations between researchers, irrespective of their age. Cooperation based on respect enables the whole research team to benefit from the competences of particular persons. Researchers complement each other, and thanks to that they are able to create a broader description of the studied aspect of social reality. A noteworthy example is the perennial project "The City of Children".<sup>16</sup> It constitutes another example of changes that were initiated at the beginning of the 1990s. In 1991, Francesco Tonucci included children in the project, as he was aiming at changing the image of the city. He believed that the observations made by children are essential and would significantly broaden the perspective of what a city should look like. The researchers' cooperation with the children resulted in the creation of over one hundred "cities of children" in the following countries: Italy, Spain, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Lebanon, Turkey.<sup>17</sup> The project is ongoing.

An essential condition of ethically conducted participatory research with children is the choice given to children. One aspect of this is informed consent. In case of the participatory element, ensuring that the consent is intentionally granted is particularly challenging. Children should understand what role they will play in research (see Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2018b; Zalewska-Królak 2019). Nevertheless, involving children's agency at every single stage of the research makes its accurate identification impossible. The nature of this type of a research is unpredictable (Gallacher, Gallagher 2008: 513). Determining in advance specifically what the research will deal with, what it will look like, and what use will be made of it in the future, is simply not feasible. This is because children will answer these questions in the course of the research process, together with

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<sup>13</sup> The institution's website is a mine of knowledge regarding both the assumptions of children's participatory research, as well as the applied techniques. Of vital importance are also reports of the research conducted available under the tab: *Recent Research by Children & Young People*, <http://wels.open.ac.uk/research/childrens-research-centre> (accessed 16.07.2019).

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx4CbfpzFGA&feature=youtu.be> (accessed 16.07.2019).

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/explore/groups/centre\\_young\\_people\\_participation.php](https://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/explore/groups/centre_young_people_participation.php) (accessed 16.07.2019).

<sup>16</sup> The project's website: <https://www.lacittadeibambini.org/en/> (accessed 16.07.2019).

<sup>17</sup> The map presenting the location of "cities of children" is available: <https://www.lacittadeibambini.org/en/international-network/> (accessed 16.07.2019).

adults. As emphasised by the researchers of Interdisciplinary Childhood Studies Team,<sup>18</sup> good practice regarding children's participation involves creating visual information regarding the essence of the research, the people who conduct the research, the purpose of the research, and the role of children in the research<sup>19</sup> (Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2018b). The language and the form of the presented information have to be adjusted to the needs and abilities of children, as well as their guardians or other people who take part in the research. In participatory research it is not possible to take all the necessary data into consideration. Obviously, it depends on the adopted level of participation. In its broadest scope, there could be hardly any option to give answers to any of the abovementioned issues, since there are children who actively decide in the course of the research process what they would like to deal with, how to do this, and what purpose their research will serve. In this case, however, it is possible to indicate who will be co-creating the research, as far as the adults are concerned. It is also crucial to determine whether children will have an opportunity to take part in methodological workshops, and if so, who will conduct them. An interesting idea for solving this situation and giving the broadest description of the proceedings is to explain what participatory research is. A significant element of this information seems to be creating a code of rights<sup>20</sup> that are granted to the participants of the research. In my opinion, the most troublesome element is specifying what *choice* is in terms of participatory research, and emphasizing that on each level of the research a child is able to decide to what extent they want to be involved in this project. It also needs to be underlined that a child can resign from the research at any point. These guidelines are unquestionably connected with numerous problems associated with conducting participatory research with children, as children cannot be held responsible for it. Here a question emerges: "who should be held responsible?" (Hammersley 2017). This constitutes a broad issue for further consideration.

An interesting example of presenting information in a visual form to children is a film<sup>21</sup> created by The Nuffield Council on Bioethics in cooperation with *Mosaic Films*. This animation results from a project<sup>22</sup> regarding health research with children and young people. Apart from the value of its form, which can be an inspiration for creating a film regarding the participatory research with children, the assumptions of this project are of vital importance. In order to actually answer

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<sup>18</sup> <http://childhoods.uw.edu.pl/> (accessed 5.07.2019).

<sup>19</sup> An example of a leaflet informing both children and their guardians about the research is presented in Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2018b: 59–60.

<sup>20</sup> An inspiration for creating such a code may be The Code of Good Practices proposed by the Interdisciplinary Childhood Studies Team: <http://childhoods.uw.edu.pl/664-2/> (accessed 5.07.2019).

<sup>21</sup> The film is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yaKwLG\\_vIE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yaKwLG_vIE) (accessed 10.07.2019).

<sup>22</sup> The report on the project "Children and clinical research: ethical issues" is available at: <http://nuffieldbioethics.org/project/children-research> (accessed 10.07.2019).

the questions of potential participants of research with children, the researchers decided to take the participatory methods into account.<sup>23</sup> The visual form has one more advantage – it engages a larger group of recipients, as it does not require reading skills, and through employing two senses – sight and hearing – it is more accessible for people with disabilities.

I am of the view that the most vital assumption of the participatory research is its reflectiveness. This is directly connected with all the remaining guidelines. When it comes to the aspect of cooperation and relation, an adult researcher needs to reflect constantly upon the issue of power. Considering this issue cannot take place in isolation from ethics or the cultural and geopolitical situation of the place where the research is being conducted, as it has a certain impact on it. For instance, nowadays, due to the fact that a great deal of participatory research takes place in schools, it has an influence on the research topics (Kelllett 2005). A significant feature for a researcher who works with children is their flexibility. A researcher should be prepared for numerous changes and be ready to confront them. There are significant costs associated with this, however – the unpredictable period of time a researcher could spend conducting the research. Therefore, this aspect is worth considering beforehand and certain borders should be set.

Utilizing participatory methods requires a great deal of creativity, in order to facilitate children's active engagement in the research process, and for them to describe how they perceive the world and what meaning they assign to it. Participatory research is, after all, a process based on co-creating meanings (Tisdall, Punch 2012). As Loris Malaguzzi (1993) points out, there are hundreds of children's languages. The researcher's role is to decipher them. O'Kane (2000) notices that participatory methods require children to be truly engaged in doing something; they should actually "handle things" not "just talk" (O'Kane 2000: 140). The techniques that may serve as an example of this postulate include: creating maps or giving tours around a certain neighbourhood (see: "The City of Children" project<sup>24</sup>), children taking photographs (Barker, Weller 2003; Greenfield 2004; Burke 2005), creating collages, and writing diaries (Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2018a). In view of the cultural context, making use of modern technologies seems to be an interesting idea. They constitute a part of the children's world. On the other hand, one should take into consideration the limitations connected with a lack of certain tools, in order to avoid marginalisation. The following are examples of interesting practices: creating radio broadcasts (Weller

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<sup>23</sup> More on this issue can be found at: <http://nuffieldbioethics.org/report/children-and-clinical-research-ethical-issues/inviting-children-and-young-people-to-take-part> (accessed 16.07.2019).

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.lacittadeibambini.org/en/project/> (accessed 15.09.2019).

2006), films,<sup>25</sup> telephone applications,<sup>26</sup> and digital storytelling.<sup>27</sup> Cheryl Greenfield (2004) points out, however, that utilizing specific prompts, photographs in this case, can serve as a starting point for conversations that could provide significant research data. Similar observations were made by Favretto, Fucci and Zaltron, who give examples of how to use vignettes,<sup>28</sup> or Reimann, who employs the method of drawing.<sup>29</sup> Well-designed tools should be customized to fit children who participate in research (Coyne, Carter 2018: 2), should be based on their strengths, and should take into consideration the cultural and geopolitical context.

### When to consider children's participation in research?

Kellett (2005) points out that research conducted by children introduces new value to science. According to this researcher, children see the world through a different lens and ask questions that adults would never come up with. Children's ideas are characterized by freshness and ingenuity (Matthews 1996). Because of their age, children have immediate access to the world of their peers, moreover, they are perceived by them in a different way than extraneous adult researchers, who are often seen as intruders. Children's input at each stage of the research process, including posing research questions, preparing tools, research execution, data analysis and drawing conclusions, is original and valuable. Kellett pays particular attention to the formulation of research questions. The fact that children get interested in certain issues results from their interests and concerns, and can be easily neglected by adults. An interesting example is the project *Hey, I'm nine, not six*<sup>30</sup>, which describes a playground for girls who seem to be much younger than they really are (Thomas 2017: 169). Nevertheless, the decision as to whether children should be involved in research needs to be followed by meeting the requirements entailed by this methodological approach.

At this point the issue of finding a balance between safety and children's agency needs to be considered once again. On the one hand, children's coopera-

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yaKwLG\\_vIE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yaKwLG_vIE) (accessed 16.07.2019).

<sup>26</sup> Map My Community is an interesting project that uses a smartphone application to research new trends concerning city development in India. More about the project can be found on the website: <http://www.new-urbanism-india.com/map-my-community.php> (accessed 16.07.2019), taking a look at the application is also worthwhile.

<sup>27</sup> <http://participatesdgs.org/?s=digital+storytelling> (accessed 16.07.2019).

<sup>28</sup> Exemplary vignettes together with the method's description can be found in Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2018b: 89–91.

<sup>29</sup> Exemplary drawings, together with a description of the method can be found in Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2018b: 138–148.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas provides the example of this project, referring to a conference presentation of A. Carlini, E. Barry (2005) "Hey I'm nine not six!". Paper presented at Spotlight on Young Researchers Conference, The Open University, 18th April.



tion throughout the whole research process is recommended (depending on the level of participation involved). However, on the other hand, one cannot forget that the researcher bears the responsibility for any undesirable effects of the research and is obliged to ensure the child's wellbeing (which can be interpreted in various ways (see Arczewska 2017)). The research conditions need to guarantee the safety of the participants yet enable their active operation. In this text I mainly refer to the opportunity of expressing oneself, the implementation of activities; however, one needs to bear in mind that silence is also information and lack of activity, refraining from it, can constitute a form of action (see Spyrou 2016). The recommendations regarding safety and agency are both contextual, to a great extent. They depend, among other things, on the legislative arrangements that are applicable in a given country. The responsibility for taking into account these guidelines lies with the researcher. A common pitfall is placing too much emphasis on safety, which could convert participation into tokenism.

It has to be borne in mind that participatory research often takes the form of major projects that last for months. During the preparatory stage the geopolitical and cultural context need to be taken into account. Children's participation in research can be influenced by, for instance, the weather and, depending on cultural conditions, a permanent place indoors may need to be found. The character of this place may have an influence on the research process. For instance, the school context has a major potential for reproducing the power relationships that existing in the education system of a given country. Cooperation with NGO organisations is a common practice, as they not only provide gathering places, but they also play the role of doorkeepers, who make it easier to enter the research area.

An interesting issue regarding research that anticipates the active participation of children is its future accessibility (Thomas 2017). This is not understood merely as its publication, but also enabling perusal of the publication's content. An example of such efforts are two children's versions of book publications by the Interdisciplinary Childhood Studies Team (Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2018a; Radkowska-Walkowicz, Reimann 2019).

## Conclusion

The issue of children's participation in research constitutes undoubtedly one of the foundation stones of childhood studies. However, its analysis requires referring to the remaining assumptions and theoretical principles on which this paradigm has been created. It is a particularly broad and complex problem; therefore, multiple publications address this issue. Lesley-Anne Gallacher and Michael Gallagher call participatory research with children an immature methodology (Gallacher, Gallagher 2008: 513). This approach certainly requires further discussion, however, its positive sides should not be underestimated. The increase



in the amount of literature regarding this issue bespeaks the desire to continue the debate. The aims of children's participation in research are strongly highlighted, taking into consideration the reflection on their form and conditions that I hopefully managed to point out in this text. The ever increasing number of projects conducted, together with the critical deliberations on advantages and disadvantages of children's participation, demonstrate the reflectiveness of researchers and enables development of this methodological approach.

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## PARTYCYPACJA DZIECI W BADANIACH SPOŁECZNYCH WPROWADZENIE DO ZAGADNIENIA

**Abstrakt.** Perspektywa *childhood studies* istnieje w nauce od lat 90. Obecnie uznawana jest za paradygmat. Artykuł dotyczy jednego z założeń tej orientacji teoretycznej – partycypacji dzieci w badaniach. Analiza pojęcia uwzględniła zarówno pozytywne, jak i krytyczne głosy pojawiające się w literaturze przedmiotu. Tekst zawiera analizę głównych założeń *childhood studies* oraz ich powiązania z partycypacyjnym podejściem do badań. Ponadto prezentuje rodzaje partycypacyjnych badań z dziećmi z uwzględnieniem stopnia uczestnictwa. Artykuł zawiera liczne przykłady zarówno przeprowadzonych badań, jak i konkretnych technik.

**Słowa kluczowe:** partycypacja dzieci w badaniach, sprawstwo, dziecko jako aktywny aktor społeczny, badania dzieci, badania z dziećmi, formy partycypacji, narzędzia partycypacyjne, *childhood studies*, nowa socjologia dzieciństwa.



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## USEFULNESS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT CONCEPT: THE DEFINITION AND CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Abstract.** This paper focuses on the review, analysis and synthesis of literature on the psychological contract. The main purpose of the synthesis in the extensive literature review is to delineate the scope in which interpersonal relations and employment relations can be created in an organisation. The article is part of broader theoretical considerations aimed at exploring and explicating the foundations of the psychological contract as a concept, and at conducting a chronological analysis of its development. Tracing this evolution provides a basis for exploring the significance of psychological contract as a regulator of employment relationships between employers and employees. The analysis and synthesis of the findings constitutes a contribution to efforts aimed at identifying gaps in existing reflection, and indicates implications for future research. To date, no comprehensive attempt has been made to present a systematic chronology and to capture changes in the terminology of psychological contract over the years.

**Keywords:** psychological contract, employee-employer relations, mutual expectations and obligations.

### Introduction

Human lives are regulated by various contracts that are necessary to establish lasting, harmonious relations between the employee and the organisation. Many researchers indicate that there is an unwritten psychological contract that the employee and the employer enter into when signing the employment contract (cf. Rousseau 1995; Briner, Conway 2005; Kelley-Patterson, George 2002).

A psychological contract is defined as an idiosyncratic set of mutual promises, expectations and commitments between an employee and an organisation (Rousseau 1989). The idea behind the psychological contract is to define the dynamic relations between the employee and the employer within the organisational

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environment (Pate 2006) and to shape and implement human resources policy within the changing mutual expectations, commitments and promises (Coyle-Shapiro et al. 2004).

The theory of psychological contract is an important and revealing research perspective which relates to the combination of the interests of the employer with the diverse interests and expectations of employees in adapting to the special characteristics of their processes. The advantages of this perspective are primarily related to three aspects. Firstly, it focuses on mutual obligations between the parties to the contract, but the analysis can be carried out from the perspective of any part of the exchange. Secondly, the importance of a psychological contract in the organisation is highlighted through the empowerment of the employees and the role of the management and direct superiors, thus increasing flexibility in adapting to changing objectives or tasks. Another advantage is the focus on the individual perception of expectations and psychological obligations or, more specifically, behavioural obligations, i.e. those different from legal obligations. The fourth argument for the usefulness of the psychological contract concept in research lies in its complexity. The concept invokes a number of specific approaches and tools in human resources management, which in practice are often applied in a selective or fragmentary manner, without considering the strategic aspect, which takes into account the special nature of business processes and related requirements, as well as the welfare of employees in the organisation (Rogozińska-Pawełczyk 2011; 2016). Moreover, the psychological contract consolidates many well-known concepts in the field of management science, and the sociology and psychology of organisations, by localising them and indicating interdependencies.

The psychological contract has become an important theory, supporting the understanding of human nature and the dynamics of the employment relationship (Zagenczyk et al. 2009). However, the phenomenon of changes within the psychological contract itself has not yet been fully explored, which means that it is important to continue this exploration. Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to construct a comprehensive framework for understanding the internal architecture of the psychological contract and its shaping mechanisms within the framework of terminological analysis. To this end, we provide a critical review of the available literature on the psychological contract, which shapes the employment relationship between the employee and the employer. The main advantage of this study is its informative role regarding the concept of psychological contract (which, as yet, is not very popular in Polish-language literature).

## **The methodology of research exploration**

In order to review the literature in the area of psychological contract, the desk research method was used to collect and analyse the existing and available data. The desk research involved a review of online databases (Scopus, JSTOR, Eb-



scoChost, Wiley Online Library, Sage, Emerald, and EBSCO) together with thematic areas related to the science of organisation and management. The keywords used in the search of this category were: labour relations, interpersonal relations, employment relations, psychological contract, expectations and obligations, and human resources management versus psychological contract. Information was collected using the databases available in the electronic library of the University of Łódź. Given that there was no access to the latest issues of journals and scientific periodicals or that the currently subscribed collections were unavailable, the analysis ends at December 2019.

In accordance with the aim of this article, a comprehensive attempt was made to systematise and capture the changes in the terminology of the psychological contract that have occurred over the years. The focus was on the origin, emergence and development of the psychological contract concept. The set of definitions often points to divergent views on various components of the contract. The revealed differences of views concern such components of the contract as: beliefs, expectations and commitments, and the nature of the psychological contract.

The concept of a contract is not new, since “social contract” occupies a prominent position in political economics and political philosophy (cf. Hobbes 2005; Locke 2002). The psychological contract has received considerable attention in both academic and practical discourse over the last twenty-five years.

## **Early definitions of psychological contract**

The first attempts to understand the nature of mutual relations at work go back to Barnard’s theory of equilibrium (1938), which suggests that employee participation at work is dependent on their receiving suitable benefits from the organisation. March and Simon developed this theory in their incentive-contribution model (1958), providing a more detailed description of the means being exchanged. These researchers argued that the continued contribution and effort of employees depends on their perception of the incentives offered by the organisation to employees for their work.

Menninger (1958) is commonly regarded as a pioneer of the idea of psychological contract. In his definition of human exchanges, Menninger focused simultaneously on the written and non-verbalised contract between the patient and the psychotherapist. However, the first researcher to officially use the term “psychological contract” was Argyris (1960), who attempted to cast light on the unwritten expectations and obligations arising between employees and the employer, going beyond formal legal arrangements. In his research, Argyris made an interesting observation that both the employer and the employee sometimes purposefully ignore unacceptable behaviour of the other party in order to maintain effective continuity of the contract (Argyris 1960). Other theorists such as Levin-

son, Price, Munden, Mandl and Solley (1962) and Schein (1965; 1980) are also among the early contributors to the theory of psychological contract.

The main idea behind the concept developed by Levinson et al. (1962) was that human needs lead to the initiation and development of relationships where each party behaves in such a way as to meet the needs of the other party. The expectations arising from this exchange lay the foundation of the psychological contract. Most likely, the emphasis on individual needs changed the further conceptualisation of the psychological contract. According to this approach, as long as the organisation meets its employees' needs, employees feel obliged to reciprocate, and strive to meet the needs of the organisation. Therefore, needs are very closely linked to obligations, and the latter are considered to be the essence of the psychological contract by authors such as Levinson et al. (1962).

Schein presented his approach to the psychological contract based on Argyris' theory of organisation. According to Schein, the notion of psychological contract means that an individual has multiple expectations towards the organisation and that the organisation formulates expectations towards its employees (Schein 1965). These expectations may relate to different areas: 1) economic issues (e.g. compensation, bonuses), 2) organisational solutions (e.g. the option to work from home for some of the time), and 3) psychological aspects (e.g. risk of occupational stress, sense of belonging or social respect), but the essence of the psychological contract mainly lies in the expectations related to intangible, psychological aspects of work. In his later works, Schein (1980) writes that the psychological contract draws attention to the understanding and management of behaviour in organisations. According to this author, expectations do not have to be written down or even clearly articulated in order to determine behaviour. One example can be the employer's expectation that employees will guard the corporate reputation while employees will expect a reward for an idea that increases efficiency in a particular area of organisational activities.

One of the earliest examples of empirical work on matching the mutual expectations and commitments of both parties to the contract is Kotter's theory (1973). In the matching theory, the psychological contract is understood as an indirect contract that regulates mutual relations by generating expectations that constitute an obligation to take specific actions (Kotter 1973). In this case, matching refers mainly to the similarity of expectations of both parties in terms of what they should receive and do for each other (i.e. matching at the level of their mutual relationship). The individual perception of matching among the employees is neglected (i.e. how individuals perceive the matching). Although there are several other examples of similar research (cf. Roehling 1996), Kotter's matching theory made a significant contribution to the early conceptualisation of psychological contract.

## The theory of psychological contract as a new research perspective

The concept of a psychological contract was first used in the early 1960s in the works of Levinson and his collaborators (1962) and Schein (1965). Briner and Conway (2005) claim that the new wave of literature on the psychological contract began in the 1980s with Rousseau (1989), which fundamentally changed further development of the theory (Freese, Schalk 2008). Cullinane and Dundon (2006) describe the impact of this study as an initiated revival or renaissance of the psychological contract. Table 1 presents the chronological context of the most significant definitions of psychological contract as a concept.

**Table 1.** The historical development of the definition of “psychological contract”

<b>Theorists</b>	<b>Early definitions of psychological contract</b>
1	2
Argyris (1960: 96)	“A psychological contract is an implicit obligation of the parties (foremen and employee) to respect each other’s standards of employment and working conditions. Employees are committed to maintaining high productivity and the foremen is to take care of things that are important to the employees, e.g. ensure freedom of action, ensure stability of employment and adequate earnings”.
Levinson et al. (1962: 21)	“[...] an effect of mutual expectations, hidden and non-verbalised, that define the relationship between an individual and an organisation. With this framework, it became clear that reciprocity can be understood as a way in which a contract is confirmed, altered or denied overnight on the basis of the professional experience acquired within the organisation”.
Schein (1965: 11, 64–65)	“The concept of a psychological contract means that a person has multiple expectations towards the organisation and that the organisation formulates expectations towards its employees. Expectations can relate to the entire pattern of rights, privileges and duties between an employee and the organisation. [...] Whether a person actually acts, generates commitment, loyalty and enthusiasm for the organisation’s goals and whether the person achieves satisfaction with his/her work depends largely on two conditions: 1. the degree to which the organisation meets its own expectations, 2. the subject-matter of the exchange: money offered in exchange for working time; the need for social satisfaction in exchange for loyalty; respect in exchange for belonging to the organisation [...]”.
Kotter (1973: 92)	“The psychological contract is an implicit contract between an individual and his organization which specifies what each expect to give and receive from each other in their relationship”.

Table 1. (cont.)

1	2
Dunahee, Wangler (1974: 519)	“[...] a psychological agreement between the two parties that binds each employee and employer together”.
Portwood, Miller (1976: 109)	“A psychological contract is defined as an implied agreement, negotiated between the employee and the employing company (usually when the employee enters the organisation). It involves mutual recognition of obligations to be fulfilled by both parties in the course of their relationship”.
Schein (1980: 22)	“The concept of a psychological contract assumes that there is an unwritten set of expectations that operates at all times between each member of the organisation and various managers and other employees in the organisation”.
<b>Theorists</b>	<b>Reconceptualisation of psychological contract</b>
Rousseau (1989: 123)	“The term psychological contract refers to an individual’s beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party. Key issues here include the belief that a promise has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations”.
Robinson, Kraatz, Rousseau (1994: 138)	“A psychological contract consists of sets or private beliefs about the perception of mutual obligations”.
Rousseau, Greller (1994: 386)	“A psychological contract consists of a person’s belief system, shaped by the organisation, concerning the conditions of exchange between the employee and the organisation”.
Rousseau (1995: 9)	“[...] individual beliefs shaped by the organisation about the agreed terms of exchange between an individual and the organisation. A psychological contract in an organisation is a commitment to act, based on a belief about mutual obligations that have been undertaken by two or more parties”.
Roehling (1996: 202)	“At a general level, the term »psychological contract« is used to refer to a set of beliefs about what employees offer to their employer and what they receive in return”.
Herriot, Pemberton (1997: 45)	“[...] the result of both parties’ perception of their mutual relationship and the offers made to each other. The psychological contract is a social process through which this perception is acquired”.
Anderson, Schalk (1998: 637)	“Most employees [...] develop a positive and lasting psychological bond with the organisation, based on an individualised pattern of expectations about what the organisation should offer and what it is obliged to do for its employees [...]. In the relationship between the employer and the employee, mutual obligations are partly defined in the formal employment contract but for the most part they remain covert and rarely discussed”.

1	2
McLean Parks, Kidder, Gallagher (1998: 698)	“A psychological contract is an idiosyncratic set of mutual expectations that employees have in terms of their duties (i.e. what they will do for the employer) and their rights (i.e. what they expect in return)”.
Rousseau (1998: 665–666)	“By definition, a psychological contract is seen as an exchange contract between two persons [Argyris 1962; Levinson 1962; Rousseau 1989; Rousseau 1995]. The perception of reciprocity is a key component of the psychological contract”.
Sparrow (1998: 30–63)	“[...] a psychological contract is defined as a set of expectations held by an employee, which defines what the person and organisation expect, give and receive to maintain the employment relationship [Rousseau 1990]. Contracts are open-ended agreements that address the social and emotional aspects of the employer-employee exchange. They represent a set of unwritten mutual expectations”.
Rousseau (2001: 511–541)	“[...] the psychological contract involves subjective beliefs about the agreement on exchange between an individual and an organisation [Rousseau 1995]. The contract is based on promises and, over time, it takes the form of a mental model or pattern which, like most other patterns, is relatively stable and robust. The main feature of psychological contracts is that a person is convinced that there is a common understanding that obligates the parties involved to a particular way of acting”.
Makin, Cooper, Cox (2000: 33)	“A psychological contract is a set of people’s beliefs about the terms and conditions for implementing arrangements, commitments and promises with regard to work and the resulting benefits, both for the employer and the employee”.
Guest (2004: 541–555)	“[...] perception of both parties to the employment relationship – organisations and individual employees – as the resulting implied mutual promises and commitments”.
Meckler, Drake, Levinson (2003: 218)	“A psychological contract is an agreement between the management and employees to meet mutual needs. As long as the needs remain rationally met, the employee has a natural motivation to work while meeting the requirements of the company. In return for having these psychological needs met, the employee makes an effort to perform productive work that benefits the company”.
Purvis, Cropley (2003: 213–241)	“The psychological contract consists of a discussion of the following factors: reciprocity, relational reciprocities vis-à-vis the individual/subjective perspective”.

Table 1. (cont.)

1	2
de Vos, Buyens, Schalk (2003: 537–538)	“A person’s beliefs as to how to fulfil the terms of an exchange agreement with an organisation”.
Rousseau (2004: 120)	“Beliefs, based on explicit or implicit promises about an agreement on the terms and conditions of exchange between an individual and an organisation, and the resulting benefits to employees and the employer” .
Dabos, Rousseau (2004: 52–72)	“[...] refers to a system of beliefs that the person and his or her employer will keep the mutual contractual obligations”.
Schalk (2005: 228, 306)	“[...] refers rather to the contractual relationship as such, but also influences the shape of the psychological contract [...]”.
Guest (2007: 133)	“The concept of a psychological contract refers to different aspects of employee relations within an organisation, and in particular to the changes they undergo and the consequences of accepting and fulfilling mutual obligations in the form of commitment to the organisation’s objectives or staff fluctuations”.
Freese (2007)	“A psychological contract is the employee’s perception of mutual obligations in the context of the relationship with the organisation that shapes the relationship and regulates the employee’s behaviour”.
Schalk, Roe (2007: 167–182)	“A psychological contract is the perception of mutual obligations”.
Venter, Levy (2011)	“The psychological contract involves different parties, structures and regulations. The contract covers both the immediate working environment, the so-called »micro-environment« and, in a broader sense, the society, or »macro-environment«”.
De Cuyper, Schreurs, Vander, Baillien, De Witte (2014: 1–10)	“[...] an individual’s belief about the conditions of a mutual exchange agreement between that individual and another party. It emerges when an individual believes that a promise has been made, such as a promise of continued employment, in response to which the other party has made a particular effort, such as diligent work, which constitutes an exchange and a commitment to deliver further mutual benefits in the future. Subjectivity is a key element in this approach: each party to a psychological contract believes that both parties have agreed to certain (the same) terms of the exchange, which in fact will not always be true, since the understanding of these arrangements may be different. When one party thinks that the other one has not fulfilled its obligations, we are dealing with a breach of contract”.

1	2
Rogozińska-Pawełczyk (2012: 63–76; 2016)	“[...] the psychological contract is considered in the perspective of the mutual perception of the exchange relationship and means that the behaviour of the employee and the superior is best understood as a dynamic process, subject to constant change. The expectations and offers formulated by both the superior and the employee may be subject to change. During the employment relationship the scope of the psychological contract will change, and the mutual, subjective expectations and commitments will cover a somewhat different part of the employee-employer relationship. As a result of changes, the internal balance of the psychological contract may be upset”.

Source: Author’s own analysis.

The primary purpose of the psychological contract, as understood by Rousseau (1989), is to understand and explain norms of behaviour under the employment relationship. This approach focuses on the relationships of individual employees, each of whom enters into unwritten contracts with the organisation. According to Rousseau, the psychological contract defines, on the one hand, how the employee constructs a long-term perspective of job security and, on the other hand, how the employer strives to ensure employee involvement in the fulfilment of organisational interests. This definition indicates that social exchange becomes the essential component of a psychological contract and it consists not only of individual expectations but also promises of mutual obligations. This theory shows what kind of values employees appreciate and what motivates them. Therefore, it is important to find a formula for mutual relations and actions to ensure that the expectations of both the employer and the employee can be met.

Rousseau (1989) built a framework for understanding the psychological contract known to this day, but many of its dimensions are still being debated (Sutton, Griffin 2004; Thomas, Anderson 1998). Moreover, further exploration of this concept reveals more in-depth and more specific research areas of the concept, as well as the emergence of a critical approach to psychological contract (Arnold 1996: 511; Guest 1998; Briner, Conway 2005).

Schalk and Roe’s research also emphasises that the psychological contract determines the shape of the relationship between an employee and an organisation, often complementing the formal arrangements (Schalk, Roe 2007). This entails the importance of the role of the contract, as it enables the employer to predict employees’ behaviour and to use relevant HR management methods and tools to influence work-related attitudes, which helps the organisation to achieve its goals. Researchers look at how the content of the contract evolves, how employees’ expectations and commitments change over time, and when employees begin to see that the informal contract has been breached.



As a theoretical concept, the psychological contract provides an opportunity to explore employee relations (Guest 2004; 2011), which can be renegotiated and modified over time to help to establish and maintain the formal and informal contracts between the employee and the employer. In Guest's analytical model applied to the psychological contract, changes in the relationship between the employee and the employer are viewed in the dynamic context of work and organisational conditions (Guest 2011). This approach finds a follow-up in Rogozińska-Pawełczyk's definition (2016), which emphasises the dynamics of the contract, i.e. naturally occurring changes in the status and content of the psychological contract over time, affecting the performance of the organisation since they determine the employees' attitudes towards work and their behaviour in relation to it.

Research on the psychological contract conducted after 2000 indicates that it is sometimes viewed as "loyalty in exchange for security" (Bańka et al. 2002: 33). In their definition of the psychological contract, Fantinato and Casado (2011) emphasise employee loyalty in exchange for job security. This mutual exchange is mainly based on hierarchical relations, where the top managers are responsible for employee welfare (Fantinato, Casado 2011).

The aforementioned definitions clearly indicate that while there are similarities in the understanding of the psychological contract, there is evident variation regarding the different constituent components of the concept. For instance, Herriot and Pemberton (1997) consider the psychological contract as consisting of two perspectives: that of the employee and that of the organisation, while Rousseau (1995), Morrison and Robinson (1997) believe that it is only the employees and not the organisation that can enter into, and perform, psychological contracts.

The findings regarding the definitions of psychological contract differ significantly vis-à-vis previous and contemporary research in four main areas:

- 1) Unlike earlier studies, which stressed the role of mutual expectations, those conducted after 1989 put a greater emphasis on the nature of psychological contracts. In this perspective, the contract mainly involves expectations, promises and mutual obligations (Guest 1998), giving rise to the anticipation of events (Purvis, Cropley 2003) and shaping attitudes and emotions that influence organisational behaviour.
- 2) A departure from looking at the psychological contract from the perspective of two parties, towards seeing it as an individual phenomenon existing at the subjective level. Previous approaches emphasised the nature of understanding between the two parties, whereas contemporary ideas focus largely on employees' individual perceptions that influence their feelings, attitudes and behaviours.
- 3) Previous theoretical discourse identified essential human needs as a driving force that shapes expectations. In contrast, the contemporary discourse sug-

gests that the structure of the psychological contract is based either on an individual perception of one's own and organisational behaviour in terms of unequivocal oral or written promises, or presumed promises arising from consistent, repetitive patterns of behaviour demonstrated by both parties.

- 4) Earlier explications tended to focus on the extent to which employees perceived the match between the gratuities offered by the organisation and the efforts made by employees, regardless of what was promised. Contemporary approaches to the nature of the psychological contract introduce the idea of contract breach or violation as the main mechanism that links the psychological contract to organisational and individual performance. The existing reflection also implies that a breach of contract will generate more intense reactions than unfulfilled expectations, as it triggers anger, a sense of betrayal, and reluctance, which can dampen motivation, undermine job satisfaction and lead to a desire to leave the organisation (Turnley et al. 2003; Behery et al. 2016).

## Conclusion

The main aim of this article was to offer a chronological review of the definition of psychological contract, to identify the range of definitions offered by scholars, and to analyse the evolution of this concept. Many concepts are characterised by multiple definitions and are understood and employed by researchers in a variety of ways. Sometimes definitions constructed by different researchers at different times are very similar. In other cases, the same notion is conceptualised in very different ways. Moreover, there are situations where the definitions are so different that they may mislead lay readers or novice researchers. For this reason, the discussion has been limited only to key concepts and functions included in the definition of a psychological contract.

The literature review has shown that researchers have been very interested in the concept of psychological contract that shapes the employment relationship between an employee and an employer (Dulac et al. 2008; Suazo, Turnley 2010). Nowadays, scholars perceive the psychological contract as a framework that explains employment relations (Rogozińska-Pawełczyk 2012; 2016) and helps them to predict and understand employees' attitudes and behaviour (cf. Braekkan 2012).

When tracing the history and evolution of the concept of psychological contract, it was noticed that it can be divided into two key periods. The first one covers the early history of the psychological contract initiated by Argyris (1960), explaining the possible ways in which the mutual obligations and expectations of the two parties of the employment relationship are perceived. The early definitions consisted of descriptions of how the two parties to employment relationship, i.e. the employee and the employer, can perceive mutual obligations and expecta-

tions. The problem of the anthropomorphisation of organisations was observed; they were viewed as entities capable of perceiving and sensing possible breaches or violations of contract by the other party to the relationship. This period is characterised by occasional theoretical development of the concept of psychological contract with little involvement of various disciplines and sub-disciplines.

The second period begins with the emergence of Rousseau's ground-breaking concept (1989), stressing the subjectivity of the psychological contract in that it includes "the term psychological contract refers to an individual's beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party. Key issues here include the belief that a promise has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations"; "the individual beliefs of the employee shaped by the organisation regarding the rules of mutual exchange" (Rousseau 1995). This period is characterised by a detailed theoretical analysis relating to an employee's individual beliefs about the requirements imposed on them, and employee's expectations towards the employer. The new definition of the psychological contract created an impulse to develop an interface with various disciplines, i.e. sociology, psychology, or management sciences.

Although the views and meanings of the concept of psychological contract have changed over time, discourse on the subject still continues (Kelley-Patterson, George 2002; Linde 2015). Ultimately, it can be concluded that the various definitional issues discussed in this article are fundamental to the whole range of research in the social sciences and management sciences. The main argument in favour of employing the concept of psychological contract in these areas is that the psychological contract makes employees and organisations more productive. Employees who commit to something and intend to fulfil these commitments can anticipate things and make plans because their actions are better defined and more predictable, both for themselves and for others. When employees understand mutual commitments during their work, the degree of mutual predictability increases and becomes achievable. However, regardless of their foundation, mutual predictability is the strongest factor in coordinating effort and planning.

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## UŻYTECZNOŚĆ KONCEPCJI KONTRAKTU PSYCHOLOGICZNEGO – ROZWAŻANIA DEFINICYJNE I KONCEPCYJNE


**Abstrakt.** W niniejszej pracy rozważania skupiają się na dokonaniu przeglądu, analizy i syntezy literatury na temat kontraktu psychologicznego. Głównym celem syntezy obszernego przeglądu literatury przedmiotu jest wskazanie zakresu kreowania relacji interpersonalnych i stosunków zatrudnienia w organizacji. Artykuł wpisuje się w nurt teoretycznych rozważań zmierzających do poznania i wyjaśnienia podwalin oraz chronologicznej analizy rozwoju koncepcji kontraktu psychologicznego. Prześledzenie rozwoju pojęcia kontraktu psychologicznego jest jednym z głównych powodów bliższego poznania znaczenia kontraktu psychologicznego jako regulatora związków zatrudnienia pomiędzy pracodawcą a pracownikiem. Analiza i synteza uzyskanych ustaleń staje się przyczynkiem do określenia luki w prowadzonych dotychczas rozważaniach i wskazuje implikacje dla przyszłych badań. Jak dotąd ani w literaturze obcojęzycznej, ani tym bardziej w rodzimej nie podjęto kompleksowej próby chronologicznego usystematyzowania i uchwycenia zmian na przestrzeni lat w terminologii kontraktu psychologicznego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kontrakt psychologiczny, relacje pracownik-pracodawca, wzajemne oczekiwania i zobowiązania.





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## THE PAKISTANI COMMUNITY IN SPAIN: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES

**Abstract.** This article uses the example of the Pakistani community to explore the phenomenon of multiculturalism in Spain. Although Muslims of Maghrebi origin constitute the most numerous immigrant group on the Iberian Peninsula, the Pakistanis are special in that they represent an exceptionally distinctive and hermetic community. The article analyses social, economic and cultural determinants of this community's situation in Spain. The Raval immigrant neighbourhood in Barcelona exemplifies the mechanisms under study. The article focuses on determinants of Pakistani immigrants' situation as well as the challenges that arise against the backdrop of interaction between this community and the host society. The author also reflects on the issue of the ethnocultural distinctiveness of this group in normative and institutional terms, and analyses the consequences of this distinctiveness.

**Keywords:** Spain, Pakistani immigrants, distinctiveness, coexistence.

The consolidation of a multicultural society has been observed in Spain over the last few decades. Spain, a state once abandoned by tens of thousands of its citizens who left in search of better living conditions, has recently become an attractive destination for newcomers from various regions of the world, both near the Iberian Peninsula and far away. Motivated mainly by economic reasons, they attempt to reach Spain using both legal and illicit means. For years, Spain has been both a country of transit and a destination for thousands of immigrants. EU integration and Spain's economic growth have played a significant role in the growth of multiculturalism. These processes have contributed to the fact that immigrants represent more than 12% of the population today. Maja Biernacka emphasises that despite a restrictive immigration policy, Spanish society has become irreversibly multicultural, which is due to "[...] the presence of newcomers representing completely different worlds of values, beliefs and customs, who require some form of accommodation to the new social space" (Biernacka 2012: 9).

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This process is particularly visible in large cities such as Madrid, Barcelona (with its Raval district), Valencia, Cordoba and Malaga. Multiculturalism is promoted by the presence of immigrants arriving from locations including the Maghreb, Latin America, Central Europe and Asia, as well as succeeding generations born on the Iberian Peninsula.

As Anna Zasuń rightly points out, problems with the integration of Muslims living in the UK, France, Germany and Spain are often highlighted. These challenges are related to the economic exclusion of many Muslim immigrants, criminality, and insufficient social and political involvement (Zasuń 2018: 33). As in the case of other Western and Southern European countries, multiculturalism undoubtedly enriches the Spanish cultural and economic landscape in many respects. On the other hand, it engenders certain problems with the integration and harmonious coexistence of communities, which often represent different axionormative systems and seek to instil their cultural patterns in the destination country. These issues are clearly noticeable on the Iberian Peninsula, which is home to many Muslims; both immigrants and their descendants born in Europe and holding Spanish citizenship.

According to the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España – UCIDE), the Muslim community in Spain comprises nearly 2 mln people, about 4.2% of the total population. Of them, 42% have Spanish citizenship (*Estudio* 2018: 17). Although the most numerous group of Muslims comprises individuals of Moroccan origin (nearly 800,000), the number of Muslims coming to the Iberian Peninsula from other, more distant regions has been on the rise over the past few years.

This article aims to identify the social and cultural challenges that determine the situation of the community of Pakistani origin residing on the territory of Spain. According to official data, about 80,000 people from this part of Asia lived in Spain as of late 2018. The largest group resided in Barcelona and its suburbs – nearly 39,000 (González Enríquez 2019: 7). Among the (post)immigrant communities living on the Iberian Peninsula, Barcelona's Pakistanis can be considered one of the most distinct ethnocultural groups, whose axionormative determinants hinder its integration into Spanish society. This is the main research assumption here.

## Methodological aspects

A range of interdisciplinary methods should be used to address this research problem. The historical method, used especially to grasp the causal link underlying the consolidation of certain mechanisms, was combined with the systemic method, which perceives the issues being studied as a set of interrelated elements and focuses on both the constituent elements and their mutual correlations. The

diagnosis of the issues under study was possible thanks to study visits to Andalusia and Catalonia, especially Barcelona, as well as observations and expert interviews conducted there. The author visited Catalonia and Andalusia (Barcelona, Lleida, Granada) in 2015–2018 to participate in meetings at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Barcelona, the Association of Pakistani Workers in Catalonia (Barcelona) and the Masjid Umm Al Qura Islamic Centre in Granada. In addition to consultations with the staff of these centres, interviews were conducted with experts dealing with Islamic issues in Spain: for example Prof. Javier Jordán (University of Granada). The analysis is also based on the results of observations made during study tours in the Raval immigrant neighbourhood in Barcelona.

There are a number of noteworthy aspects related to the conceptual framework. Thus, reference is made to John W. Berry's classic typology of acculturation attitudes: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation (Berry 1997). It is important to emphasise that adaptation mechanisms are extremely diverse and cover a multitude of social and adjustment processes (Jacher 2006: 88). The notion of socio-cultural integration implies immigrants' involvement in various spheres of the host society's life, which entails a multitude of interactions, cultural competences, acceptance of norms and values of this society (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013: 6). Multiculturalism, in turn, is defined here, after Andrzej Sadowski, as a set of durable, long developed and democratically institutionalised forms of cultural integration of individuals and communities that have their own identity and form a new, culturally diverse whole (Sadowski 2011: 19).

Multiculturalism in Spain is discussed by authors such as Maja Biernacka, but the social and cultural issues of the Pakistani immigrants living in Spain are not addressed by Polish scholars. This topic is raised by Spanish authors including Carmen González Enríquez, Joaquín Beltrán Antolín and Amelia Sáiz López. However, it should be stressed that literature on the situation of Islamic migrants and related challenges is dominated by publications by Iberian scholars devoted to analyzing the situation of newcomers from the Maghreb region, especially Morocco. In recent years, publications on the threats to the Spanish society posed by Islamic integrist movements responsible for terrorist activities have become more common. When it comes to the issue of the Salafi radicalisation of Muslim communities settled in Spain, the publications by the Elcano Royal Institute experts Fernando Reinares and Carola García-Calvo are especially noteworthy.

## **The social and economic profile of the Pakistani community in Spain**

Pakistanis have been present in Spain since the 1970s. Initially, they were mostly young men, who arrived on the Iberian Peninsula for economic reasons and found employment in the mining sector in the provinces of León and Teruel. They were not numerous; those who chose to stay in Spain did not form hermetic

ethno-cultural communities and gradually went through integration. In the 1990s, women began to join this community, mostly as part of the family reunification process. For instance, in 1997, females accounted for about 27% of the population of Pakistani immigrants living in Barcelona (Beltrán Antolín, Sáiz López 2007: 407). The influx of Pakistani immigrants was much more numerous in the first decade of the 21st century, when about 70,000 arrived in Spain. Of them, nearly 55,000 managed to legalise their stay and obtain legal employment (Fuentes 2012: 143). Some immigrants married Spaniards, obtaining residence permits. Over the years, the community has expanded to include children born in Spain to both exogamous and endogamous couples. Individuals born on the Iberian Peninsula received Spanish citizenship and, according to estimates, they constituted about 5% of this community in 2007 (Beltrán Antolín, Sáiz López 2007: 409).

The lack of work permits or other documents authorising their stay in Spain has seriously hindered the influx of Pakistani immigrants since the early 2000s. The language barrier (lack of knowledge of Spanish or Catalan) has also been an obstacle in many cases. Many immigrants do not arrive in Spain directly from their homelands but via other European countries (France, Germany, the UK). They are motivated by opportunities to find employment, mainly in the service sector, construction, agriculture or mining. One can see Pakistani businesses everywhere in Raval: halal butcher shops, Internet cafes, hairdressers, candy shops etc. These entrepreneurs mostly offer products and services to their Pakistani compatriots and their families. As observed during the study tours, this is one of the mechanisms leading to the consolidation of relatively closed communities, which consequently avoid interactions with the outside world.

As has been mentioned, the expansion of this community was primarily driven by family reasons. Thus, relatives of individuals already settled in Spain – especially those coming from the Punjab region – joined them and tried to find jobs. Thus, as in most migration movements, the reasons for migration have mostly been economic. Some of the funds earned in Spain are transferred to families left behind in Pakistan, which is an important means of support for these poor communities. In the early 21st century, nearly 50% of the Pakistanis living in Barcelona provided material assistance to their families in their country of origin (Solé Aubia, Rodríguez Roca 2005: 114).

The employment conditions for this group of immigrants have been poor. For example, around 2005, many Pakistanis living in Catalonia worked 12–14 hours a day, illegally, earning very little i.e. 300–400 euros per month (Parellada 2014: 6). The situation of those who had the required documents to take up legal employment was slightly better. The Pakistani Workers' Association (Asociación de Trabajadores Pakistaníes en Cataluña) was established in Catalonia to protect the interests of this community. The Association monitors Pakistanis' employment conditions, the implementation of labour law and similar issues.

The region that attracted the largest number of Pakistanis is Catalonia, in particular Barcelona. Due to its economic potential, Barcelona has always been attractive for immigrants. Not only does Barcelona attract newcomers from the Muslim world and Latin America who travel there in the hope of a better life, it also draws in Spaniards from poorer parts of the country who move there in search of work. It is estimated that at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, as many as 84% of the total number of Pakistani immigrants in Spain had settled in districts of Barcelona and Badalona (Beltrán Antolín, Sáiz López 2007: 409). Some of the immigrants settled in other regions of Spain such as Sonseca, Toledo or the coast (Valencia).

It is noteworthy that the Pakistani community is not homogeneous, as indicated by the experts during interviews. The community comprises well-educated individuals of a higher social status, belonging to the middle class and brought up in cities, as well as representatives of lower social strata, coming from rural areas in Pakistan and involved mainly in manual labour. The former group constitutes the elite of this community and leads its social and cultural activities, which include the celebration of secular and religious events. One of the events celebrated in Raval in August is Pakistani Independence Day, which brings together more than 3,000 members of the Pakistani minority.

Limited integration of the Pakistani community with the Spanish host society is a problem. The Pakistanis constitute a hermetic ethnocultural group. The extent of their integration is much lower than that of immigrants from the Maghreb region, especially Morocco, living on the Iberian Peninsula. This is undoubtedly due to significant cultural differences, which hinder integration. It is a very conservative community in terms of morals. Religion, Islam, is their axionormative pillar. Research conducted around 2005 showed that nearly 60% of Pakistanis living in Spain shared a rented apartment with other Pakistanis. Let us add that this tendency can mainly be explained by economic factors, and can also be observed among immigrants from Africa (Fuentes 2012: 144). More than 80% of Pakistani immigrants built social ties mainly within their own community and as few as 28% declare that they have acquaintances among indigenous Spaniards (Fuentes 2012: 144).

Belonging to a community and identification with it is a key dimension of identity, which is manifested by spending spare time together, practicing rituals, celebrating holidays, sharing customs etc., all of which contributes to the consolidation of a community. This was confirmed by research conducted in Barcelona in 2004–2005 (Solé Auba, Rodríguez Roca 2005: 109). Within this closed community, governed by internal norms and principles, there exists a system of material support and assistance for the economically disadvantaged. Problems tend to be solved by means of intra-group mechanisms. The solidarity and strong social bonds which cement this community are important determinants of its functioning. This is accompanied by the practice of maintaining

contacts with the family that is left behind in Pakistan. Intra-group ties are also manifested in the form of assistance provided to newcomers, who can count on support in finding housing, work etc. It is noteworthy that this solidarity is also typical of Pakistani communities residing in other countries of the Old Continent.

However, it would be an oversimplification to claim that close ties prevent unfair practices and conflicts. In 2019, eight Pakistanis were detained in Zaragoza. They had forced their illegally employed compatriots to quasi-slave work without pay, starved them and deprived them of liberty. The detainees were charged with human trafficking (Detenidos 2019). However, this is not a widespread phenomenon.

An important socio-cultural aspect of this community's life is common religious practices, active participation in activities of sports organisations and associations. Moreover, there are media outlets run by immigrants for immigrants (e.g. newspapers, TV programmes or the radio station "Pakcelona" launched in 2007 and broadcast in Urdu). Islam is clearly one of the pillars of this group's self-identification, and common religious practices strengthen the bonds within the group and consolidate the sense of identity. Their important role could be observed during study visits and meetings in Muslim cultural centres, not only in Catalonia.

### **The impact of intra-group social norms**

The coexistence of culturally different communities usually leads to a number of challenges. The distinct value system of Pakistani immigrants is manifested in various ways, including patriarchal patterns and specific male and female social roles, which differ from those of immigrant communities from other Muslim countries, including the Maghreb. For example, Pakistani fathers customarily choose husbands for their daughters, and this practice continues among the immigrant community settled in Spain. Qualitative research conducted in 2010 in Logroño, the province of La Rioja, among Pakistani women, indicates the existence of norms incompatible with the principles of liberal democracy (Aretio Romero 2013: 105–124). There were instances of family violence, that is, physical and emotional abuse of women in a family, in a community of nearly 2,500 people. Moreover, physical abuse within the family also occurred in the case of non-heteronormative sexual orientation. An example of this was the case of a severe beating of a young man by his father in 2019. The father testified in court that "he would rather have his son dead than gay" (Unos padres 2019). It is possible to be granted refugee status in Spain based on sexual orientation. It was granted for the first time in late 2009 to an Iranian citizen of a non-heteronormative orientation who had arrived in Madrid a year earlier (Walczak 2012: 279). These issues were regulated during the first decade of the 21st century, when the Socialists (PSOE)



were in power and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero was prime minister. A number of NGOs, such as Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR), provide assistance to non-heterosexual immigrants and refugees, offering legal advice and other forms of assistance (Walczak 2012: 281–289).

As has been mentioned, many Pakistanis moving to Spain come from poor rural areas of Pakistan (the Punjab region) and have primary education at best. No matter what the level of Pakistanis' education is, a characteristic feature of this community is rigorous social control and strict adherence to patriarchal rules of constructing symbolic images of masculinity and femininity. Despite emigration, attempts at normative copying of the rules existing in the region of origin have been observed in the Pakistani community in Spain. This was manifested in customs such as limiting women's contact with people from outside their immediate surroundings, especially men from the host society. Such practices were particularly noticeable in the case of married women in endogamous relationships. For example, as was noticed during the observations in Raval, many women wore traditional clothing and were accompanied by male relatives outside of their homes. There were cases of the physical abuse of women, which resulted in Spanish police interventions on several occasions. Female respondents also raised concerns about returning to Pakistan, where they could fall victim to "honour killings" for alleged violation of morals (Aretio Romero 2013: 126). The scope of the problem is illustrated by the data: in 2017, in a single Pakistani province alone, at least 94 women were murdered by family members (Hongdao et al. 2018: 34).

Pakistani women living in Spain are sometimes described as "invisible", which – not only symbolically – demonstrates the problem of the absence of women in social life abroad (López 2019). They primarily deal with household chores and childcare, and have limited interactions with the outside world. The patriarchal system sets norms and values to a large extent, and in addition there exist prejudices against Muslims in Spanish society. The scope of the problem is revealed by a number of sociological studies on the attitude towards immigrants and their perception by the host society (Informe Anual 2018; Aguilera-Carnerero 2018: 599–616). A Muslim female wearing a hijab finds it much more difficult to find a job than representatives of other communities. The Pakistanis are often subject to various forms of discrimination and prejudice, including in educational institutions. There are also instances of hateful acts and attitudes against them on religious and ethnic grounds.

Despite all these limitations and restrictions, there have recently been accounts of Pakistani women who have managed to go beyond stereotypical and gender-specific social roles, to gain education and achieve professional success. Fahar Butt, who lives and studies in Catalonia, is one of the few women who have achieved this. Her words are worth quoting:

My mother is very happy that I'm studying medicine, although, at the same time, she misses her idea of a daughter involved in her daily routine: cooking, cleaning and looking after her.



It's extremely difficult to go beyond a stereotype of a woman's role which is being imposed on me. I can study medicine and be active but when I come home, I'm expected to act like other women, and when I'm unable to do so, my family gets frustrated. [...] My mother believes that when I get married, I'll have to take care of my husband and home (López 2019).

This statement shows how difficult it is to surpass normative schemata and reconcile numerous social and economic challenges.

## **Pakistanis' involvement in criminal and terrorist activities**

Some of the Pakistanis living in Spain are involved in trafficking psychoactive substances, such as heroin and hashish. This phenomenon is especially widespread in Barcelona, and Raval in particular. It is estimated that up to 90% of heroin sold there comes from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Similarly to the trafficking of cocaine from Latin America, transnational criminal organisations are involved in the smuggling and distribution of heroin (Sánchez 2017; Giménez-Salinas Framis 2018: 33–34). Drugs tend to be smuggled to Catalonia not directly from Asia but via other European states. Due to police operations in recent years, several criminal groups have been dismantled, and many kilograms of psychoactive substances have been seized. Still, drug trafficking poses serious threats. Other foreigners, and immigrants from Latin America and the Maghreb (mainly Morocco), are also involved in drug trafficking. It is noteworthy that despite popular opinion, growth in the number of immigrants and their descendants born in the territory of the host country does not generate an increase in criminal activity. This is indicated by the findings of a number of studies, including by the Sociological Research Centre (CIS – Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas) and National Statistics Institute (INE – Instituto Nacional de Estadística). For example, in 2017, immigrants committed about 25,000 crimes, compared with 303,000 crimes committed by Spaniards. Crimes by foreigners comprised 23% of the total number of criminal acts committed at the time (Cometen 2019; García España 2018). Although a certain percentage of newcomers do undertake illegal actions, these analyses undermine the claim that rates of criminogenic behaviour increase alarmingly together with the influx of immigrants and the consolidation of a multicultural society.

Addressing the issue of Spain's security, one cannot disregard the threats posed by the radical Salafi movement. Salafism also poses serious threats to Pakistan, whose authorities carry out comprehensive military operations against the subversive forces (de la Corte Ibañez 2010: 7; Vicente 2016: 4; Ashraf 2008). Regrettably, the terrorist threats materialised in Madrid on March 11, 2004 and in Catalonia in August 2017. Quite a number of jihadist cells have been dismantled on the Iberian Peninsula over the past few years (Kosmyńka 2016: 179–193). Although counter-terrorist operations on the Iberian Peninsula resulted

in dismantling terrorist groups run mainly by Muslims from the Maghreb region (especially Morocco), this does not mean that the threats have been neutralised. This has been confirmed by the arrests, mainly in Catalonia, of Islamists from Pakistan charged with extremist activities.

In 2004–2006, about 70% of the extremists detained in Spain came from Morocco and Algeria. Twenty-three Pakistani Islamists were detained at the time. By 2012, nearly 26% of the arrested members of radical Salafi units in Spain were of Pakistani origin (Kosmynka 2015: 259, 267; Reinares, García-Calvo 2014: 9). In 2008, police detained 10 citizens of Pakistan carrying explosives. They were accused of belonging to an extremist group which planned terrorist attacks on the territory of Catalonia, including the Barcelona underground. In subsequent years, investigations of radical groups sporadically resulted in detections of Salafi units run by Pakistani migrants. Some representatives of the Pakistani community sympathise with the proselytising organisations Tablighi Jamaat and Dawlat al-Islam, which operate in many countries, including Spain. Obviously, only a handful of the Pakistanis residing in Spain are involved in terrorist activities. It is noteworthy that Islamic integrist groups represent a small minority of Muslims, and associations with Islam are unfair to this religion and the overwhelming majority of its believers. The Catalanian Pakistani community has unequivocally condemned terrorist attacks in Europe (Brussels and Paris in 2016, Barcelona in 2017) and appealed for people not to equate religion with extremism.

It is noteworthy that terrorist threats prompted the Spanish authorities to take action on the international arena. For example, they proposed a transatlantic strategy developed by the People's Party (Partido Popular), which was in power in Spain during the 2004 terrorist attack in Madrid. An alliance with the United States resulted in Spain's involvement in military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Spain's involvement in the war against terrorism brought about the revival of contacts with Pakistan, as evidenced by the visits of the Pakistani Interior Minister (March 2004) and Defence Minister (February 2005) to Madrid. Still, relations between the two countries were far from close (Fuentes 2012: 142–143); the problem of terrorism fuelled cooperation. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, paid a visit to Islamabad in March 2007. In return, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, then president of Pakistan, visited Spain the next month. Cooperation in the fight against terrorism and Salafi extremism was high on the agenda of the meetings. This cooperation continued after Musharraf's resignation; Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani visited Spain in June 2010. The talks focused on counter-terrorist strategy and intelligence cooperation between the two countries. The peaceful and counter-extremist attitudes of the Pakistani community in Spain were emphasised.

## Summary

To conclude, growing immigrant communities representing a distinct cultural profile have become increasingly visible in the Spanish social landscape. Their distinctive characteristics are particularly noticeable in the case of Islamic immigrants from Africa and Asia. The Pakistani community of more than 78,000 is hermetic and its integration with Spanish society is hindered by distinct customs and axiomatic characteristics. The reflections presented above and based on study visits, observations and interviews, confirm the assumption that this is a distinct group characterised by a specific system of norms, values and customs that interfere with successful socio-cultural integration with the host society. The Pakistani immigrants often form their own micro-worlds that frame their interactions, including institutional ones.

Although the second and third generations of immigrants achieve higher levels of education and integration with Spanish society, these groups also exhibit clear attachment to the traditions and norms of their country of origin (Mushtaq Abbasi 2010: 6). The life of this community is largely encapsulated in its micro-world of institutions run by immigrants and their descendants, and its rhythm is determined by the cultivation of traditions originating in the country of origin. Similarly to other immigrant groups, the Pakistanis maintain ties with relatives left behind in their homeland. Referring to John W. Berry's theoretical model of acculturation (Berry 1997: 10, 46), in the case of the Pakistani community living in Spain we may speak of coexistence, understood as cultural separation, rather than integration. This separation is more apparent compared with that of newcomers from the Maghreb. Separation does not imply antagonism. Still, it hinders mutual understanding and overcoming prejudices as well as stigmatising stereotypes that affect the perception of the "stranger". Let us add that stereotypes in multicultural societies may be reciprocal, and be used both by the host society and immigrants (Janeta 2011: 259), which solidifies mutual barriers.

The Pakistani community is not the only one which follows the model of cultural separation. The same is true of immigrants from China, who form separate communities and are much less integrated into Spanish society than, for example, the culturally similar newcomers from Latin America.

In recent decades, the Spanish government has pursued a policy of multiculturalism, as evidenced by a set of programmes and initiatives undertaken at the national and local levels (e.g. employment of intercultural mediators in Catalan schools to eliminate potential conflicts). However, as in other European countries, the popularity of anti-immigrant groups is growing in Spain. These groups are averse to newcomers, especially from culturally distinct societies. These sentiments are exemplified by the results of the 2019 parliamentary election and the success of the right-wing Vox party, which garnered about 15% of the vote. They also fit a now popular trend in the European context of the securitisation of mi-

gration, the process of classifying certain topics as security issues, which is often accompanied by the demonisation of the “stranger” (Ziętek 2017: 31; Huysmans 2000: 751). Although it is difficult to predict whether these sentiments will spread dramatically in Spain in the near future, the anti-foreigner rhetoric may sharpen, especially given the worsening immigration crisis and socio-economic challenges. Therefore, it is necessary to develop projects of inclusion and the integration of culturally different communities, which may contribute to the elimination of barriers and mutual prejudices and offset the impact of populist discourse. The promotion of intercultural dialogue helps eliminate conflicts and improve the quality of coexistence of different groups within a diverse Spanish society.

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## SPÓŁCZNOŚĆ PAKISTAŃSKA W HISZPANII – ZARYS WYZWAŃ SPÓŁCZNO-KULTUROWYCH

**Abstrakt.** Artykuł podejmuje problematykę wielokulturowości Hiszpanii w odniesieniu do mieszkającej tam społeczności imigrantów pakistańskich. Na tle liczby wyznawców islamu wywodzących się z regionu Maghrebu zbiorowość ta nie stanowi grupy najliczniejszej, jednak wyróżnia się ze względu na swoją odrębność i hermetyczność. Tekst zawiera analizę wyznaczników społeczno-ekonomicznych i kulturowych, określających sytuację tej społeczności na Półwyspie Iberyjskim. Egzemplifikację charakteryzowanych w artykule mechanizmów stanowi barcelońska dzielnica imigrancka Raval. Rozważania tu zawarte przybliżają determinanty sytuacji imigrantów z Pakistanu oraz wyzwania, które krystalizują się na płaszczyźnie interakcji tej zbiorowości ze społeczeństwem przyjmującym. Artykuł podejmuje refleksję nad problemem odrębności etnokulturowej tej grupy w wymiarze normatywnym oraz instytucjonalnym, a także nad jej skutkami.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Hiszpania, pakistańscy imigranci, odrębność, koegzystencja.





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