Functioning of Young Adults in a Changing World

Edited by Katarzyna Adamczyk and Monika Wysota

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Contents

Preface

If you have reached for this book, it means that probably you are interested as we are in young adults' life. Perhaps you wonder, as we do, what does it mean to be an adult in a contemporary world, and what developmental tasks and issues must be faced and resolved by young adults. Perhaps you have wondered, what the criteria of being adult are, what the relationship between the self-concept complexity and the identity structure in young adulthood is, what the concept of autonomy in emerging adulthood is, what the structure, function and dynamics of religiousness in this period of life are, how parenting practices influence young adults' psychological and social competencies, what marital beliefs held by young adults are, why some young people decide to remain single, and finally what young employees expect from their work. If all these issues are intriguing you, we encourage you to read this book in pursuit of answers to your questions and doubts.

Despite the fact that adulthood is the longest and very important phase in the human life cycle (Harwas-Napierała, 1996), researchers have not until recently taken into account the possibility of an individual's development in this period of life after achieving by him or her biological maturity (Gurba, 2007). Today, we observe the opposite trend and increase of interest in the area of developmental changes during adulthood. The book we hand to readers concerns diverse issues regarding young adulthood, which is located between the age of 18/25 and 35/40. Nowadays, it is getting more difficult to indicate the so called "adulthood treshold", that is a moment at which an individual becomes an adult person. Moreover, more and more often, adulthood is considered in terms of psychological (intraindividual) changes (e.g., responsibility for one's own actions, one' own system of values and decision making process on its basis) (Arnett, 2000) rather than in terms of social changes such as setting up home, moving out of home, having children.

Social functioning of young adults is described in the context of social and cultural changes taking place in particular in Western countries. These changes

which include such phenomena as, for instance, a delay of getting married and giving birth to the first child are also observed in Poland, and they are defined as postponement of adulthood (Brzezińska, Kaczan, Piotrowski, & Rękosiewicz, 2011). Therefore, for instance, young adults devote many years to education and getting experiences, and postpone until later taking social adult roles in marital and family area, in order to achieve satisfying social status and occupational position. Furthermore, in regard to changes observed in many Western countries (e.g., Spain, Great Britain, France) we can talk about a new phase in the development defined by Arnett (2000) as emerging adulthood and located between the age of 18/20 and 25/26. According to Arnett (2000), this new phase of development is differentiated from young adulthood by wide diversity in terms of (1) intimate relationships (e.g., informal relationships, changing partners frequently, being single), (2) ways of living (people living with parents, friends, lifetime partners, changing places of living frequently), (3) professional activity (full time job, part time job, temporary jobs, often changes of workplaces), (4) having children (a lot of people do not possess children), and finally (5) education (taking up studies at universities, often changes regarding faculties, universities, breaking off or giving up studying).

Taking into account that a lot of multiple changes experienced by contemporary young adults differ from experiences of young adults from before a few decades, the focus on this period of life appears to be particularly interesting and important. Taking into consideration greater diversity and individualization of life paths in young adulthood in Poland and in other countries, we have invited Authors from different countries to present various issues of crucial significance for young adults.

Chapter 1 *Subjective and Objective Indicators of Adulthood* by Monika Wysota presents consideration referring to adulthood indices. Because of the fact that socially determined structure of human life course, which is regulated by social standards and expectations, has undergone crucial changes for the last decades, changes also appear when it comes to the ways of adulthood formulation. Adulthood is more and more frequently considered in terms of psychological characteristics such as responsibility or independence. In her chapter Monika Wysota describes two perspectives of adulthood perception. The first one treats adulthood as social category, whereas the second one refers to its psychological aspects. The chapter also touches upon the direction of transformations, which appear in connection with socio-cultural changes of recent decades, in understanding what adulthood is. This chapter aims to show the need for a thorough scientific reflection on the definition of adulthood.

Chapter 2 *Identity Processes and Identity Senses: Does Self-Complexity Matter?* by Aleksandra Pilarska and Anna Suchańska outlines empirical analysis of the relationship between the self-concept complexity and the identity structure. The sample consisted of 118 emerging and young adults who completed Self-complexity Questionnaire, Multidimensional Identity Questionnaire, and Identity and Experience Scale. The cluster analysis showed four types of specific identity structures which differed significantly in identity processes. However, there were no significant differences between the obtained clusters concerning any of self-complexity measure used. In addition, identity processes received strong support as predictors of all structural characteristics of identity and weak support as a moderator of the self-complexity-identity structure relationship: with an average and high level of accommodation, the increase in self-complexity allowed for predicting a decrease in the sense of separateness, whereas with a low level of accommodation, the contrary effect was observed.

In chapter 3 *Concepts of Autonomy in Emerging Adulthood and their Perception by Czech Emerging Adults* Stanislav Ježek, Petr Macek, Radka Michalčáková, and Ondřej Bouša provide a review of the conceptualizations of autonomy. The review considers both the individual differences perspective and the developmental perspective on autonomy. A number of various conceptualizations of autonomy has been proposed from both perspectives that may be placed in two broad categories – separation autonomy, with a clearly developmental and objective connotations, and agentic autonomy, which is subjective and with a more complex developmental relevance. In emerging adulthood both these perspectives meet and interact. In a series of interviews, a small heterogeneous sample of Czech emerging adults not only identifies the various components of various conceptualizations of autonomy. Doing so, they show the relevance of the theoretical considerations of autonomy and also illustrate how different aspects of autonomy interact in the period of emerging adulthood. Autonomy in emerging adulthood seems to act both as a goal and as a tool for achieving other developmental goals. But, as the attempt to relate utterances about autonomy to the five characteristics of emerging adulthood suggests, the openness of the possibilities and the not-as-established status of the period of emerging adulthood allow for a wide range of individually chosen and justified developmental trajectories. In the interviews, this decision-making burden or overhead is abundantly present.

Chapter 4 *Development of Religiousness in Young Adults* by Elżbieta Rydz presents the issue of religion and spirituality that has been an interest of theoretical and empirical studies, including many describing developmental changes

that occur in the course of religious life. Problems of emerging adulthood, here referred to as young adulthood, including the structure, function and dynamics of religiousness in this period of life have recently attracted particular interest of researchers. The chapter focuses on the development of structure and function of religiousness in young adults in the light of contemporary theoretical approaches: normative and non-normative conceptions of the development of religiousness in young adults. The majority of psychological studies concerning the role of religiousness in young adulthood revealed a positive, protecting and integrating function of religiousness in adolescents. Detailed studies on the development of structure and function of religiousness allowed the author to construct a pattern of dynamic, structural-functional religiousness of people in the period of young adulthood.

In chapter 5 *Family of Origin Parenting and Young Adults' Psychosocial Competencies* Chris Segrin, Michelle Givertz, and Paulina Swiatkowski indicate that there is clear evidence that the parenting experienced by children during the first two decades of their lives sets the stage for development of social and psychological competencies that persist well into adulthood and perhaps even throughout the duration of the lifespan. While this is going on, parenting practices can meet or thwart the developing child's basic needs for competence, autonomy, and relationship, and in so doing facilitate or inhibit the development of his or her competencies as an adult. The residual effects of parenting practices are abundantly evident during the years of emerging adulthood and influence the course of the entire lifespan of offspring. In this chapter, the authors review research and theory that illustrate and explain how parenting practices influence young adults' psychological and social competencies. The review starts with parenting styles, family communication patterns, and over-protectiveness as significant contemporary process in the parenting literature that documents numerous connections with the competencies of families' offspring. Next, three theoretical accounts are reviewed to explain how parenting influences child competencies. These include social cognitive theory, attachment theory, and self-determination theory. In general, these research and theory show how parenting practices are extraordinarily powerful determinants of core social and psychological competencies in young adults.

In chapter 6 *Being Single as a Result of Experience from Their Family of Origin* Julita Czernecka continues the focus on issues associated with family of origin and explains why some young people in Poland decide to be single. This chapter focuses on negative experiences when it comes to parents' relationships, as well as those of close family members, which the respondents might have observed

and which were important in their decision to remain single. Furthermore, it describes other aspects of being single associated with family life such as overly strong bonds with parents, the perfect relationship of parents as an unrealistic standard of ideal relationship, the consequences of being only-children, and involvement in helping relatives.

Chapter 7 *Exploring Belief Systems about Marriage of Single and Partnered Polish Young Adults* by Katarzyna Adamczyk and Scott S. Hall outlines that marriage is a highly-valued societal institution, though young adults have some diverse beliefs about the institution. Relationship status may contribute to these beliefs. The authors present the study in which The Marital Meaning Inventory was completed by a sample of unmarried university students in Poland. As results revealed, single and partnered individuals differed on three of the five dimensions of marital meaning. Additional analyses indicated that three clusters of belief systems differed in their proportions among partnered individuals. In general, results suggest that partnered individuals had more idealistic perspectives on marriage.

In chapter 8 *What Young Employees Expect from their Work* Sabine Reader and Andrea Gurtner focus on the Generation Y which is the generation of young people born after 1982 and currently entering the labour market or establishing their first employment relationships. They are assumed to differ from earlier generations in their expectations towards their employer and towards work-life balance. The chapter describes specific expectations of young employees towards their employer, the employers' expectations and measures to develop employment relationships with the young generation. The results of two empirical studies (conducted at the University of Applied Sciences in Bern) are presented on the background of recent research on psychological contracts of young employees. The psychological contract captures expectations between employee and employer beyond the employment contract. The empirical studies showed that the Generation Y attached great importance to meaningful tasks and ethical values in work. Career prospects and prestige were not this generation's primary goals. To a similar degree, they expect support for work-life balance. This indicates that the young employees also set value on time for private life and family.

We believe that a variety of issues concerning young adulthood presented in this book from a diverse cultural perspective will enrich our perception of this fascinating period of life.

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Katarzyna Adamczyk and Monika Wysota

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Chapter 1

Subjective and Objective Indicators of Adulthood

Monika Wysota

Introduction

Adulthood is very important and also the longest period in the life cycle (Harwas-Napierała, 1996) in which the following three stadiums of adulthood can be distinguished: early, medium and late one. It is assumed that adulthood begins between the ages of 18/20 and 23/25 (Bee, 2004; Gurba, 2007; Oleś, 2011). Such discrepancies concerning the beginnings of adulthood are connected with the fact that it is very difficult to find and define one moment in a person's life in which he or she reaches the stage of adulthood. What is more, although the literature points out that there is certain life period which is regarded as the beginning of adulthood, many authors (e.g., Badziąg, 2002) emphasize that adulthood should not be discussed in the context of an individual's age because of the fact that it is not the age which decides, to a large degree, whether the person reaches the stage of adulthood. Therefore, some of the authors try to define the so-called adulthood threshold stating that one or a few life events such as, for example, getting married, getting financial independence or giving birth to the first child could be defined as this threshold (compare Appelt, & Wojciechowska, 2002). These are the events that symbolize the moment of adulthood beginning, according to social expectations towards an adult individual (Gurba, 2011). As it is written by Pietrasiński (1990) periodization of adulthood is quite arbitrary since the only changes that are clearly connected with age in this period of life are the indications of ageing. That is why researchers refer to the so-called "social calendar". However, uncritical acceptance of such social indicators of adulthood would mean that people who never get married,

which is more and more common nowadays, (see GUS, 2003, 2011), never become adult, and students, who are provided for by their parents, reach adulthood later than the rest of the society. It should be remembered that nowadays, because of the numerous socio-cultural changes of last decades, young people in western societies (e.g. in Italy, Czech Republic, Poland) postpone taking on adult roles in time. Such phenomenon is defined as adulthood postponement (Arnett, 2000). In order to get satisfying occupational and social position young people have to devote many years to getting education and experience which causes that they make decisions about setting up home or having children much later. Therefore, adulthood is much more often perceived with reference to psychological changes (intraindividual ones) in the context of individual's subjective perceptions of being adult. Arnett (1997), for example, asking people in the ages of 18–28 about the characteristics of adulthood indicated that the interviewed were most frequently choosing such definitions as "responsibility for one's own actions", "one's own system of values and taking decisions according to it", "partnership in relations with one's parents". The results above point out crucial importance of psychological characteristics as adulthood criteria.

The problems with determining one moment in which a person reaches adulthood disappear when adulthood is treated as the process of becoming an adult person which happens slowly and gradually and is characterized by great individual diversity as far as the changes rate is concerned (Appelt &Wojciechowska, 2002). It is postulated in the subject literature that crossing the threshold of adulthood should not be identified with particular life events but treated as the process of "becoming an adult person" (Gurba, 2011) which means rather entering adulthood that consists of many mental and social changes. Research shows that both teenagers and adults regard entering adulthood in terms of a process or intramental changes and not in terms of particular life events which were to determine entering the world of adult people (Gurba, 2011). In the subject literature the answers for such questions as "Who is an adult person?" and "Where should the so-called adulthood threshold be placed?" are looked for. As it is indicated by Dubas (2001) the description of adulthood always caused difficulties for researchers and in the face of social changes that might be observed nowadays, adulthood becomes a term which is even more difficult to be defined precisely (see Kaczor, 1996). However, in the scientific context of interest in specific character of an adult person functioning and scientific research concerning this stage of a person's life, the answers for the questions stated above should be looked for. Perhaps criteria for adulthood determining, which were used two decades ago, are out-of-date today and using them

in research on an adult may lead to scientific faults. Therefore, considerations presented in this article have the aim of showing the need of careful thought that should be given to definition of adulthood and its criteria in the context of new and changing socio-cultural reality.

Adulthood – Two Perspectives in Social Science

In social science, adulthood is most often defined as 1. social category (praxeological perspective), 2. mental category/competence (antrophological perspective) (see Czerka, 2007; Malewski, 1991; Przyszczypkowski, 2003; Urbański, 1991).[1] In different words, as Pichalski (2003) states, adulthood includes in itself the importance of both objective and subjective context.

When it comes to the first perspective, adulthood is referred to as specific social state determined by the level of social expectations and tasks accomplishment of an individual. Getting the status of an adult person depends on the level of these expectations fulfillment (Piotrowski, 2010). Therefore, adulthood will be marked by such factors as: economic independence, carrying out family duties (father and mother's roles) or civil ones (Czerka, 2007). According to this understanding of adulthood, a person becomes an adult when he or she is able to go through the series of social standards which he or she meets in each stage of life (Malewski, 1991). Thus, the objective dimension of adulthood refers to certain social standard ascribed to this stage of life and usually determined by the age limits.

In the second conception attention is drawn to the necessity to free "adulthood" from any social convention (Przyszczypkowski, 2003). This perspective assumes that a person is not an adult thanks to the roles he or she takes or social expectations he or she fulfills, but becomes an adult by acquisition of mental competencies, for example, the increase of self-awareness and the adequacy of self-assessment. It is presumed that an individual reaches adulthood by achieving mental maturity (Czerka, 2007). In other words adulthood is referred to as the process of mental development at certain, defined levels and in relation to particular aspects (more will be written about it in the next parts of the article). Therefore, according to Pichalski (2003), subjective dimension of adulthood is

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[1]   In pedagogy actualistic perspective is also used, although it does not define directly what adulthood is, but rather answers the question about the form of time that is the most intensely sensed by an adult person which means that it has the greatest value for him or her (Urbański, 1991). Therefore actualistic perspective has been omitted in the analysis concerning the criteria of adulthood which are the subject of present chapter.

expressed in an individual's feelings which are influenced by individual experiences being connected with self-perception.

Some of the authors (e.g., Gurba, 2011) state that in post industrial societies which do not formulate definite and straightforward expectations towards their members, referring to adulthood as to the social category, determined by the level at which an individual fulfills the social expectations and by the roles he or she takes, is less and less common. On the other hand, others (e.g., Piotrowski, 2010) claim that the categories of developmental tasks of adulthood (or social expectations towards an individual) are still frequent. However, nowadays we face the phenomenon of delayed accomplishment of the expectations by contemporary young people. Thus, adulthood appears much later than several dozen years ago (Piotrowski, 2010).

In the context of the topic considered in the article we are to deal with two ways of understanding of what adulthood is. These are, in other words, two main domains of scientific analysis- adulthood in social aspect which is visible in the life tasks undertaken and done by an individual (objective/ social adulthood), and adulthood in psychological aspect (subjective/ intramental adulthood) which is manifested by such characteristics as independence, responsibility for one's own decisions, self-reliance and being ready to face the consequences of one's own choices (Brzezińska, Kaczan, Piotrowski, & Rękosiewicz, 2011). According to Oleś (2011) both perspectives are to be treated as complementary to each other and not as mutually exclusive. In the definition proposed by the author both objective (social) and subjective (mental) adulthood criteria are taken into account. These are: 1) a kind of life tasks being done (setting up home, beginning professional activity), 2) responsibility for oneself and others, 3) emotional independence, 4) feeling free to make choices and being independent when it comes to decision making.

Oleś (2011) states that undertaking the life tasks typical for an adult person decides, among others, about the fact that a person is an adult. However, as the author notices socio-cultural changes, that took place in our cultural circle during the last decades, make us to look in a new way at the issue concerning reaching adulthood by young people. As Bynner (2005) emphasizes, the process of becoming an adult person has changed significantly for the last 20–30 years. Nowadays young people decide to get married, leave home or having babies much later. An interesting fact is that at present the process of entering adulthood is characterized by great individualism. Gurba (2011, p. 289) claims that age borders of adulthood "are blurred in individual stories of adolescents' lives". Socially determined structure of human life's course, which is regulated by the

norms and society's expectations, has undergone considerable destabilization for the last decades. A person can currently in an individual way set goals and develop their wider range than it would result from developmental tasks. What is more, he or she can do it at any time. Nowadays an individual is given broader range of freedom and consent when it comes to making choices and decisions. Such situation makes it more difficult to predict individual life standards (Oleś, 2011). Thus we can meet a twenty-eight-year-old man who set up home and his peer who still lives with his parents or in a student flat with his friends. We can also more often find relationships that are called partnerships "for a trial" instead of traditional marriages. These partnerships (contrary to their definition) often last many years. There are also singles who are not married and live alone because of their own choice and who also (also by their own choice) from time to time (for long or short period of time) strike up a relationship based on intimacy (Oleś, 2011). In connection with all the above, Oleś (2011) postulates that adulthood criteria should be formulated differently using the perspective of subjective determinants.

According to Piotrowski (2010), both ways of adulthood interpretation described above (social- objective and psychological- subjective) are very often connected with each other. The author states that "people who began or are beginning doing developmental tasks ascribed to adulthood, acquire reflexively (maybe because of self-observation) feeling of being an adult person; at the same time possessing such a picture of oneself can make it easier to take adult social roles" (Piotrowski, 2010, p. 14). Research conducted in Poland and abroad confirm a reflexive character of relation between the sense of adulthood and taking social roles ascribed to adulthood (Brzezińska, & Piotrowski, 2010; Fadjukoff, Kokko, & Pulkkinen, 2007; Luyckx, Schwarz, Goossen, & Pollock, 2008).

Social (Objective) Criteria of Adulthood

Objective criteria, considered from praxeological point of view, may be the basis for conclusion whether or not an individual got the status of an adult person. These criteria are connected with fulfilling particular social expectations and performing developmental tasks, ascribed to adulthood, by an individual (Brzezińska, 2007). These tasks, in turn, define normative model of adulthood and an adult person (Garlej-Drzewiecka, 2003). As Pichalski (2003) states, the term 'adulthood' is often used as 'adulthood for something' (see Urbański, 1991). Such interpretation of adulthood includes particular tasks, roles and functions, ascribed to this stage of life, for which a person becomes or is adult. Defini-

tion of adulthood by Tyszkowa (1987, p. 67) also belongs to this mainstream. According to this definition "adulthood is this part of an individual's life cycle which follows growth and puberty that prepare an individual to perform all essential life functions".

According to praxeological approach it's the society that labels particular person as an adult using, for example, the criterion of age. It is the most frequently assumed that adulthood begins at about the age of 18–23. The second determinant of adulthood is readiness to undertake and ability to perform increasing amount of more complicated tasks, roles or social functions by an individual (Urbański, 1991). Thus adulthood is often defined as "social competence connected with possession of resources that enable an individual to carry out particular social tasks" (Czerka, 2005). Dubas (2001, p. 79) claims that "an adult is a person who grew up to requirements that the society sets". Society labels particular person as an adult if the people see that the person performs the majority of tasks ascribed to adult citizens (Czerka, 2005). Moreover, because of the fact that an adult person does particular tasks for the benefit of society in which he or she lives, an essential social status is ascribed to an adult's role (Dubas, 2001).

Both determinants (age and taking social roles) do not fully overlap since an individual may be identified as an adult person thanks to taking adult roles even though he or she is not old enough (e.g. juvenile parents). Similarly, a person who, in spite of appropriate age (18–23), does not take social roles ascribed to adulthood may not be identified as an adult person and society may question his or her participation in adult life. That is why it is more and more often observed that adulthood is something more than crossing certain age border or taking social roles.

According to this approach, the main criterion of adulthood lies in social convention which relates to noticing and classifying people to the category of adult individuals. In accordance with this conception, the following criteria are taken into account when it comes to defining adulthood: financial independence, family duties, legal, occupational and defensive duties, social activity etc. (Urbański, 1991). If we regard social convention as the main criterion of adulthood in an individual biography of each individual person, we can easily distinguish the moment at which he or she became an adult. In this context adulthood is a category ascribed to individual forever with the use of zero-one method, where '0' signifies lack of adulthood and '1' stands for adulthood. It's a static model of adulthood- the model of taking roles which are socially important (Sadowska, 2003).

Classical conception of developmental tasks in the life cycle proposed by Hevighurst (1981) is worth presenting in the context of objective criteria of adulthood. According to it, entering adulthood can be reduced to the following tasks: the start in the field of family roles (wife, husband, mother, father), in occupational life (in the job market) and widely understood social activity (finding similar social group and developing civil attitude (Czerka, 2005).

In order to carry out the analysis of the process of entering adulthood psychologists nowadays use indicators that take into account the following five ranges of an individual's functioning: a) housing situation, b) education, c) marital status, d) having children, e) occupational activity (Fadjukoff, 2007). When it comes to the first range, independence from family in which a person was born, which means changing the place of residence and setting up one's own household, is considered as the indicator of adulthood. Taking education into account, finishing the education process is adulthood indicator. In the next area, the fact of getting married and also having children is regarded as criterion of adulthood whereas in occupational activity, taking up a job is an indication of adulthood (Piotrowski, 2010). Beginning the activity in a job market is considered as a fundamental step in the process of entering adulthood. It is also believed that this step influences the rest of adulthood indicators which are: independence from family, leaving home (setting up one's own household) and making decision about getting married and having children (Guerreiro, & Abrantes, 2004).

Mental (Subjective) Criteria of Adulthood

As it turns out, adulthood is not only young person's performance of the tasks ascribed to this stage of life and taking adult social roles such as wife or husband, mother or father, thanks to which he or she is labeled as an adult. Adulthood can be assessed (as it was described above) on the basis of objective indicators such as getting married or having children. However, nowadays young people's developmental paths are so much diversified that adulthood is much more often analyzed in the context of mental characteristics and competencies which are indicators of adulthood, for example sense of responsibility, independence, self-reliance, and in the context of identity development or sense of adulthood in general. With regard to extending education period[2], young

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[2] The percentage of people with higher education increased from 9.9% in 2002 to more than 17.5% in 2011 among the people aged 13 and more. In the years 1990–2004 the percentage of studying people

people decide on getting married and having children much later. That is why they do not consider their own adulthood in the context of objective and straightforward chronologically-legal attributes, but in the context of an adult person's characteristics, individual features such as ability to support for family (not only having a family), financial independence (not only having a job), and psychological characteristics such as acceptance or responsibility (Gurba, 2011). Research conducted by Gurba (2008) showed that 90% of young people entering adulthood consider responsibility for one's own actions as the attribute of adulthood. Sadowska (2003) claims that an individual's personality variables such as responsibility, maturity, self-reliance seem to be the most important when it comes to defining the threshold of adulthood. The author points out that it is emphasized not only by the researchers dealing with adulthood stage and developmental changes of adult people, but also members of society who have nothing to do with scientific analysis of the issue.

Anthropological perspective assumes that "a person is 'is not an adult' but 'becomes an adult', does not take and 'play' social roles which testify to his adulthood, but constantly learns to be real and equal" (Urbański, 1991, p. 10). The process of entering the adulthood stage is at the same time the process of an individual's psycho-social maturation. In other words, a person becomes an adult through acquisition of mental competencies and individual characteristics such as self-reliance or responsibility (Czerka, 2007). Then it is a dynamic model of adulthood.

The issue of identity must not be omitted while analyzing the adulthood issue from anthropological perspective. As Sęk and Sommerfeld (1990) state, the adulthood roots are stuck in the sense of identity which consists of the sense of stability, inner cohesion and autonomy. "It is only possible to become an adult on condition that we generally know or rather feel who we are (…)" (Sęk, & Sommerfeld, 1990, p. 14). Oleś (2011) names the process of identity formation a challenge which is faced on the threshold of adulthood. Moreover, identity is not only the basis/the beginning of the process of adulthood entering (becoming an adult individual), but also an important determinant or criterion of adulthood. Until recently it was believed that identity built at adolescence stage is relatively stable (Brzezińska, & Piotrowski, 2009). Marcia (1966) was of the opinion that

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rose to 46.4% from 12.9% (Central Statistical Office, 2003, 2011). In academic year 1997/1998, in Poland, there were 146 universities at which 226 929 students were educated whereas in academic year 2010/2011 there were 328 universities at which altogether 580 076 people studied (Central Statistical Office, 2010).

the structure of needs, aspirations, aims and opinions of a person who finishes adolescence stage of life is relatively constant. However, Bosma and Kunnen (2001) show in their research that another process of identity formation and transformation appears after adolescence. Newer research results point out that it is not the stage of adolescence, but the stage of early adulthood, that is a key one in identity formation (e.g., Erikson, 2000). Growing up and adolescence are no longer considered as life stages in which basic issues connected with identity processes are determined (Harwas-Napierała, 2012). Research based on a two-stage model of identity formation proposed by researchers from Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium, conducted abroad (e.g., Luyckx et al., 2008) as well as in Poland (e.g. Brzezińska, Piotrowski, Garbarek-Sawicka, Karowska, & Muszyńska, 2010) show that together with the age (difference between people at the age of 20–23 and people who are older) the intensity of exploration decreases whereas the level of taking on obligations and identifying with them increases. It is essential that the changes described above cause increase of the sense of adulthood among individuals (Brzezińska, & Piotrowski, 2010). Taking into account that the roots of adulthood are stuck in the sense of identity, the issue should be of key importance in the context of considerations concerning the process of entering adulthood (becoming an adult person).

Definition by Oleś (2012), mentioned earlier, is worth being developed here. According to the author, an adult is a person who takes on life tasks typical for adulthood, is responsible for oneself and others, independent and makes free choices that are supported by the strength to carry them out. Responsibility is nothing else than awareness of consequences of one's own actions for both oneself and others. An adult can experiment, seek, make mistakes but responsibility does not let him cross the borders of reasonable risk, irrational costs or obvious harm caused oneself or others. Independence, in turn, relates especially to emotional independence from parents or others who take care of a person. Objectively, such emotional independence appears when a person moves out from home. However, this physical sign is not as important as the ability to make choices and decisions without the necessity of being supported or accepted by an adult. As the author emphasizes, such emotional independence is a basis for ability to decide about oneself and form one's own life according to one's own desires and needs. Besides, emotional autonomy is also basis for mature intimate relationship with another person. According to conception by Oleś (2012) an adult is also a person who makes free choices accompanied by the strength to make dreams come true and achieve aims. Becoming aware of this dimension of adulthood may be cheerful and creative experience for an

individual, motivating him or her to live an interesting and creative life. On the other hand, however, it may cause anxiety connected with the usage of this freedom and its consequences. Freedom characteristic for an adult person involves persistence in undertaking tasks, overcoming difficulties and bearing hardships of everyday life. In connection with this an adult person, who faces difficulties, is not discouraged by tiny failures, but modifies his or her aspirations and aims and adjusts actions to changing circumstances and situations.

Szewczuk (1961, p. 40) also believes that self-reliance, independence and responsibility are important attributes of an adult person. The author provides the following definition of an adult person: "an adult person is responsible for oneself, is the subject of productive activity, decides about his life plan himself and must overcome the difficulties connected with its implementation on his own and is responsible for his activity in the face of society". It is also pointed out that before a person grows up, he or she always lives among the people who look after, teach, bring up, guide and care about him or her. People who take care of a child or a teenager are guaranteed the supervision over him or her according to the law. They are responsible for his or her life in terms of finances and parenting whereas an adult person is shaped in such a way that "he can be an independent subject of socio-productive activity" (Szewczuk, 1961, p. 42). Byczkowska, Nosarzewska and Żyta (2003, p. 264) are of the opinion that "adulthood can be noticed when a young person begins planning his place in the society, becomes aware of his subjectivity, opportunity to make choices and decisions".

Adulthood is very often discussed in the context of "maturity". These two concepts are frequently considered to be equal, especially in common usage. Adulthood is often regarded as equivalent of maturity and the other way round (Garlej-Drzewiecka, 2003) especially when maturity is identified with biological element. Tyszkowa (1987, p. 67) provides the following definition of adulthood: "adulthood is a part of an individual's life cycle which follows the process of growth and becoming biologically mature to perform all significant life functions". However, if the concept of maturity is introduced into the discussion about adulthood, it needs to be pointed out that subject literature distinguishes biological, mental and social maturity. The term "adolescence" is often used to define the process of maturation in terms of psycho-social aspects. It is the time during which a young person enters people's social life and becomes an adult person (Obuchowska, 1982). "Adolescence is the time of changes in person's mental development, which is initiated by puberty, and is individually differentiated under the influence of social factors. Its completion

is accomplishment of such state of mental development that is characterized by the ability to take an adult person's roles (Obuchowska, 1982, p. 134). As we can see, adolescence (between the ages of 12 and 18) is assumed to finish with the achievement of psycho-social maturity. However, it has to be pointed out that nowadays complete mental and social maturity is achieved much later (Ruda, 1996). When it comes to biological maturation, Obuchowska (1982) emphasizes that a person matures much earlier whereas he or she becomes mature in terms of psycho-social aspects much later. Therefore, it needs to be remembered that in psychology adulthood is usually considered with reference to age whereas maturity is analyzed with reference to personality (Obuchowska, 2007). According to Pichalski (2003, p. 80), for example, mature personality "possesses inner independence, ability to endure and soothe the feeling of loneliness and isolation, communicate with another person without difficulties, build interpersonal relationships that are good for both sides, treat, in a mature way, any kinds of conflicts as tasks to be done and overcome difficulties and obstacles instead of avoiding them".

Pichalski (2003) states that mature person possesses appropriate attitude towards oneself and accepts one's own limitations. Rzedzicka (2003), in turn, proved in the research conducted among disabled people that in participants' opinion the following features (assessed positively by them) are attributes of maturity: responsibility, ability to make decisions, cognitive-emotional decentration, sense of one's own autonomy and mature relationships with others. Kowalik (2003) introduces the term of "developmental maturity" in the context of considerations concerning adulthood. The author states that this maturity is made up of achieved social competencies and acquired knowledge that enable an individual to take social tasks and fulfill his or her needs in an effective way. Gałdowa (1990), in turn, emphasizes the role of feelings and emotions in person's development and claims that a mature person is able to control the influence of his or her mood and surroundings on decisions that he or she makes and does not subject to destruction under the influence of primitive feelings. A mature person is able to control emotions that he or she feels and achieve dominance of rational behaviours and actions towards other people (Pichalski, 2003). A person can be mature in one sphere an immature in others (Pichalski, 2003). That is why Kaczor (1996, p. 22) points out that an adult is someone who "is biologically, intellectually and emotionally mature to act in society and be responsible for the consequences of his or her actions".

It is emphasized in literature that achievement of certain level of mental maturity (and social one as well; personal maturity = mature personality) is

a necessary condition for coping with tasks that are characteristic for adulthood period (Gurba, 2011; Harwas-Napierała, 2012) which in other words means taking social roles characteristic for adulthood. Oleś (2012, p. 16) is of the opinion that psycho-social criteria of adulthood can (or should?) decide about adulthood because "it is not biological age that determines the borders between particular periods in the person's life but the type of interactions between the person and the environment, although, on the other hand, the aspect of age cannot be omitted (…). That is why a person can enter adulthood stage when he or she is 18, 25, 30 or even 35 years old".

An interesting conception of mental maturity is presented by Chlewiński (1991) who distinguished three dimensions of mental maturity on the basis of Allport (1961) conception of mature personality. These dimensions are: 1) autonomy which appears when a person can carry out subjective actions regardless of different factors that could influence them, 2) insight into one's own motives, 3) attitude towards others, described as attitude of responsibility and respect for another person.

In Rostowska (2001) opinion personal maturity consists of the following types of maturity: intellectual (which is, in other words, rational thinking), social, emotional and moral. Harwas-Napierała (2012) believes that personal maturity determines essential forms of behaviors which favor taking on developmental tasks of adulthood and thereby make the course of individual development process easier. Among these forms the author enumerates: 1) mature forms of communication, 2) emotional stability, 3) stable system of values which ensures predictability of behaviors, 4) competent formulation of aims and making choices important for an individual's development as well as stability in the accomplishment of these choices. Personal maturity determines skilful way of performing family as well as occupational roles by adult individuals.

Piotrowski (2010) states that general sense of being adult should be placed among subjective criteria of adulthood. It has been proved in the research (Brzezińska, & Piotrowski, 2010) that there is a strong connection between the sense of adulthood and the age of an individual and his or her present living situation. The sense of adulthood increases linearly between the ages of 20–23 and 30–40. What is more, the sense of adulthood also rises together with readiness to strike up close relationships.

McCrae and Costa (2005) analyze adulthood in the context of personality features structure. It turns out that few changes occur at the intermediary levels of particular personality features between the ages of 12 and 16 whereas between the ages of 20 and 30 people achieve such configuration of features that will

characterize them in the next years of their life. Thus the authors believe that this is the moment at which, from the psychologists perspective, adulthood begins. These changes in the personality features sphere that occur between the ages of 20 and 30 are connected with the changes in the sphere of social roles taken by an individual at this particular stage of his or her life.

Summary

All the considerations presented above show that at present it is very difficult to form one, commonly used and approved definition of adulthood and a list of its criteria which could be used in research on this stage of life. The direction of changes in understanding the notion of adulthood, presented in the present chapter, opens very important, interesting and wide range of analysis for researchers who work on this concept and shows relevance of using some criteria of adulthood and rejecting others in research concerning the issue discussed. As it turns out "conventional, formal, common adulthood describes an adult of the second and third millennium in much lesser degree. It is confronted with extremely complex subjective adulthood which is defined and felt internally by an individual oneself: nowadays adulthood is rather a part of an individual than a part of society" (Dubas, 2001, p. 86). This shift (Czerka, 2005) became the cause of changes of adulthood attributes. Moreover, it also caused rejection of some indicators of adulthood (getting married, having children) and taking into account other ones (responsibility, sense of autonomy, independence or generally sense of adulthood). Nowadays one's own mood or self-esteem are more important than the assessment made by society in which an individual lives (Dubas, 2011). Accepting the above (psychological) criteria of adulthood generates a problem connected with the fact that there is no punctuality in entering particular life stages. People do it either too late or too early in relation to their peers (Oleś, 2012). That is why accuracy or relevance of using the term 'the sense of punctuality of life events', understood as the feeling of appearance of life event and necessity of performing tasks connected with the event at the time which is similar to the time at which peers do the same tasks, is doubtful (Brzezińska, & Kaczan, 2011). Nowadays definition of the concept should rather put emphasis on an individual's inner feeling of readiness to perform particular tasks (marriage, children, occupational job) which is closely connected with a person's conviction that he or she possesses appropriate competencies and features.

Adulthood can now be identified with subjective sense of being an adult person. It seems that the acquisition of this feeling is, or can be, determined

by or connected with acquiring or possessing by an individual a number of mental characteristics and competencies such as the sense of responsibility, autonomy, independence, self-reliance and also with possessing definite status of self-identity. As a result of introspection or evaluation of one's own supplies and features, an individual can reflexively define oneself as an adult or no. The sense of being adult (and the conviction about possessing appropriate competencies and characteristics) may, in turn, determine individual's own decisions about taking on particular life tasks, ascribed to adult people by virtue of social convention, having the sense that these event/s occurred at the right moment in his or her biography. The direction of relationships indicated above is only a theoretical proposition which should be tested in scientific research.

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Identity Processes and Identity Senses: Does Self-Complexity Matter?

Aleksandra Pilarska and Anna Suchańska

There is an agreement in modern personality psychology that the self-concept consists of a number of sub-conceptions which change depending on the situational context, role or relations with others (e.g., Kihlstrom & Cantor, 1984; Linville, 1987; Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993; Kihlstrom, Beer, & Klein, 2002; Trzebińska & Dowgiert, 2005; Roberts, 2007; Suszek, 2007; Oleś, 2008). During over 20 years of research it has been proved that there are individual differences in the number and diversity of self-aspects. However, the functionality of these features of the self-structure proved to be different depending on their operationalization and measurement. The identity formation process comes especially to the foreground when the individual shifts between various roles and social contexts. Historically, achieving a sense of personal identity was considered a critical task of adolescence. Today however, the major struggles of identity fall upon emerging adults (Arnett, 2000). The confrontation with other developmental tasks, besides forming identity, and the experiences and consequences of turning points during emerging and young adulthood (e.g., marriage, military service, leaving home) may go hand in hand with the growing complexity of the self. Determining which intraindividual processes underlie integration within the self becomes thus of crucial importance.

When answering the question: what kind of person am I on the job, at home or among friends, people describe their selves as objects of knowledge (cf. James, 1890). It has not yet been established if certain structural characteristics of the self-concept are connected with the way of experiencing self-consistency, self-uniqueness etc., or are they independent areas. From the

cognitive standpoint, personal identity comprises those contents which are key for defining oneself and differentiating the self from the non-self. These contents as more stable than the others are expected to manifest themselves in different roles and situations. It may be assumed that such a repeatability and continuity of the self-expression would impact the subjectively experienced self-stability or self-consistency. If this was the case, one would agree with the thesis that a small differentiation of self-aspects is connected with the sense of identity (Styła, Jankowski, & Suszek, 2010). However, it seems also just to expect this relation to depend on particular personality dispositions. Our previous research results are in favour of this assumption as we have noticed that, among people with high self-complexity, those with high level of narrative inclination showed a more integrated identity (Suchańska & Ligocka, 2011). This finding led to the main hypothesis of this study, that the relations between the self-concept structure and the sense of personal identity depend on personality characteristics or processes which have integrating functions towards the self-concept contents.

Susan Krauss Whitbourne and her co-workers (e.g., 1998, 2002, 2003) state that assimilation, accommodation and balance should be regarded as processes determining the integration of information about oneself in building personal identity. The author determines identity as a broad biopsychosocial self-definition which includes the self-representations in various areas of physical, psychological, and social functioning and as a structure of self-organizing cognitive-affective schemes through which the individual experiences are interpreted (Whitbourne, Sneed, & Skultety, 2002). Identity assimilation is a process used for maintaining the sense of internal consistency. It refers to the interpretation of new experiences through the existing identity schema and can lead to ignoring information inconsistent with it. The accommodation process, by contrast, involves modifying the cognitive-affective schemes in response to information inconsistent with them. A significant susceptibility to external factors and, in consequence, a fragile sense of identity, are connected with preferring accommodation. Identity balance is a process of dynamic balancing of assimilation and accommodation. A mature person usually reacts to new experiences by trying to fit it (assimilate) into his or hers current self-schemas, yet retains the sufficient self-flexibility. This means being open to changes and at the same aiming at maintaining self-consistency which preserves the sense of identity. Therefore, elastic use of both processes is considered to be an optimal way of developing identity (Whitbourne & Collins, 1998; Whitbourne et al., 2002).

Identity processes, which are usually activated situationally, may become the habitual ways of dealing with information about oneself (Whitbourne & Collins, 1998). In both cases they have major consequences for one's sense of identity and self-esteem. Previous research showed that identity assimilation and balance predict increases in self-esteem and decreases in depressive symptoms, whereas the opposite is true for identity accommodation (e.g., Whitbourne et al., 2002; Sneed & Whitbourne, 2003; Weinberger, 2009). Moreover, identity assimilation was found to be negatively related to self-reflection (described as neurotic self-awareness) and identity accommodation to be positively related to self-reflection and negatively related to internal state awareness. Identity balance alone was positively associated with internal state awareness, which reflects an adaptive self-consciousness and facilitates the identity formation process (Sneed & Whitbourne, 2003; Berzonsky & Luyckx, 2008).

It is puzzling if the identity processes described above play a similar role in the case of integrating contents which are currently coexisting in a complex self-concept. If it is valid to assume that a mature sense of identity requires some kind of integration of the self-concepts (varying across different social contexts or roles), there are already indicators that the similarity of their contents is not such an understood form of integration (Suchańska & Ligocka, 2011; Suchańska & Worach, 2012).

Aim of the Research

The empirical analysis attempts to answer the following questions:
1. Are there any relations connecting the structural characteristics of the self-concept and the sense of personal identity? If yes, what are they?
2. Are there any relations connecting the identity processes and the sense of personal identity? If yes, what are they?
3. Do the identity processes have a moderating role in the relations between the structure of the self-concept and the sense of personal identity?

The study by Donahue and team (1993) proved a high adaptive value of the self-concept consistency and gave reasons to expect that the less complex and diverse the self-concept is, the stronger the sense of identity is (H1). However, our own research and a theoretical differentiation between an objective conceptualization of the self-concept as a bundle of self-attributes and a subjective self-experience indicate that they are two different perspectives which can remain independent. The different identity processes as described and theorized by Whitbourne and co-workers (1998, 2002) should substantially

explain the variance of the identity senses, particularly the sense of coherence, stability, accessibility and valuation of identity contents. In line with Whitbourne's theory, we hypothesize that people with an integrated sense of identity will mostly use the processes of assimilation and balance whereas among those with a low integration of identity senses accommodation will dominate (H2). Finally, if we assume that the sense of identity is also built by means of processes which integrate the different self-aspects and consider the identity balance as one of such processes we can expect it to have a intermediary role in relations between the self-concept structure and the identity senses (H3).

Method

Participants

Participants were 118 female (53.4%) and male (46.6%), with the mean age of 24.64 years (SD = 3.22). They were university students of different specializations and professionals with degrees in exact sciences or humanities. The sex ratio was equal, $\chi^2(1)$ = .54, p > .05.

Measures

Identity structure. The *Multidimensional Identity Questionnaire* (MIQ) by Pilarska (2012a) was used to measure six dimensions of the identity structure – accessibility, specificity, separation, coherence, stability and valuation of the identity contents, connected with the six senses of identity, that is the sense of internal content, uniqueness, separateness, coherence, continuity in time and self-worth. The questionnaire consists of 43 items[3], graded in a four-degree scale ranging from *definitely no/never* to *definitely yes/always*. The alpha Cronbach reliability indicators reached the following values for particular sub-scales: accessibility α = .79, specificity α = .79, separateness α = .66, coherence α = .86, stability α = .74, valuation α = .74 (cf. Pilarska, 2012a).

Self-complexity. Linville's *Self-complexity Questionnaire* in its Polish version by Barczak, Besta, and Bazińska (2007) was used to measure self-complexity. The participants task was to point out the roles they play in life and assign each of it some adjectives from a list of 60 items (30 positive and 30 negative).

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[3]   A version of MIQ modified by the author was used. The sub-scale of identity content stability was developed in order to improve its internal consistency and widen the range of thoughts, feelings or actions the items in this scale refer to.

Based on these trait sorts, a self-complexity score was calculated using the H-statistic, which captures the number of groups created by the participant as well as the redundancy level between their content. Some reports have raised questions about the construct validity of Linville's operationalization of self-complexity (Rafaeli-Mor, Gotlib, & Revelle, 1999; Sakaki, 2004). The criticisms became the basis for developing such a measure of self-complexity that distinguishes its two components: the number of self-aspects and the degree of overlap in their content. The data obtained in this questionnaire were therefore also used for calculating the alternative self-complexity measures: role overlap (OL) and the number of self-aspects (n aspects) as suggested by Rafaeli-Mor, Gotlib, and Revelle (1999) and self-complexity index (SC-statistic) according to Sakaki's (2004) proposition. The corresponding formulas are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Formulas for Calculating Self-Complexity

$OL = (\Sigma_i(\Sigma_j C_{ij})/T_j)/n^*(n\text{-}1),$

where C is the number of common features in 1 aspects; T is the total number of features in the referent aspect; n is the total number of aspects in the person's sort and i and j vary from 0 to n (i and j unequal).

$H = \log_2 n - (\Sigma_i n_i \log_2 n_i)/n,$

where n is the total number of features (here 60), and n_i is the number of features that appear in a particular group combination.

$SC = NSA/OL,$

where NSA is the total number of aspects in the person's sort and OL is the person's overlap score.

Identity processes. The *Identity and Experience Scale* (IES) by Whitbourne and co-workers (2002) in its Polish version by Suchańska and Jawłowska (2010, as cited in Jawłowska, 2010) was used for measuring the identity processes. This tool consists of 33 statements, 11 for each scale: assimilation (e.g., "When it comes to understanding myself, I'd rather not look too deeply"), accommodation (e.g., "Very influenced by what others think") and balance (e.g., "Often take stock of what I have or have not accomplished"). The participants respond on a seven-point scale from *definitely no* to *definitely yes*. The reliability indicators

for three sub-scales of the Polish version of IES were: α = .70 for assimilation, α = .83 for accommodation and α = .82 for balance.

Procedure

The study was conducted in a collaborative mode, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study. The consent of each person examined was the condition of participation in the research. All participants received identical instructions and filled consecutively the *Multidimensional Identity Questionnaire*, the *Self-complexity Questionnaire*, and the *Identity and Experience Scale*.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Gender Differences

Table 2 gives a basic statistical description of the data obtained. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test show that the distribution of valuation ($Z = 1.55$, $p < .05$) as well as all measures of self-complexity ($Z = 1.88$, $p < .01$ for H-statistic, $Z = 1.66$; $p < .01$ for OL, $Z = 3.43$, $p < .001$ for SC-statistic, and $Z = 2.00$, $p < .001$ for n aspects) deviate significantly from the normal distribution. The sex differences (evaluated by the Student t test or the Mann-Whithey U test) have been found for accessibility ($M_{men} = 11.47$ [$SD = 2.44$] vs $M_{women} = 9.97$ [$SD = 1.87$]), $t(116) = 3.78$, $p < .001$, $d = .70$, separateness ($M_{men} = 11.67$ [$SD = 2.96$] vs $M_{women} = 10.45$ [$SD = 2.82$]), $t(116) = 2.29$, $p < .05$, $d = .43$, coherence ($M_{men} = 21.09$ [$SD = 4.94$] vs $M_{women} = 17.98$ [$SD = 4.42$]), $t(116) = 3.60$, $p < .001$, $d = .67$, valuation ($M_{men} = 12.71$ [$SD = 3.26$] vs $M_{women} = 11.29$ [$SD = 2.75$]), $U = 1143.00$, $p < .001$, $g_r = .34$ and accommodation ($M_{women} = 47.01$ [$SD = 11.20$] vs $M_{men} = 37.01$ [$SD = 10.20$]), $t(116) = 5.04$, $p < .001$, $d = .94$. No significant sex differences in other variables were noticed.

Analysis of the Relations Between Self–Concept Structure and Personal Identity

Table 2 presents the intercorrelations between all of the variables included in the analysis. Note should be made of the clear pattern of positive correlations between all identity dimensions and balance. Strong positive relations between balance and valuation, $r = .67$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .45$, coherence, $r = .54$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .29$, and stability, $r = .54$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .29$, are particularly interesting. A contrary pattern of correlation is observed in reference to accommodation.

The strongest relations are between accommodation and coherence, $r = -.64$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .41$, accessibility, $r = -.55$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .30$, and valuation, $r = -.55$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .30$. The relationships between assimilation and identity dimensions prove to be analogous to the ones observed in balance. However, they are mostly weak and moderate. The strongest relation is observed between assimilation and coherence, $r = .44$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .19$. None of the correlations between the structural features of the self-concept and the dimensions of the identity structure reached the significance level. However, a weak negative correlation can be observed between the SC-statistic and accommodation, $r = -.21$, $p < .05$, $r^2 = .04$.

Table 2
Zero-order Correlation Matrix, Means, and Standard Deviations for All Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Accessibility	-												
Specificity	.18	-											
Separateness	.34***	.11	-										
Coherence	.71***	.19*	.37***	-									
Stability	.65***	.34***	.27**	.69***	-								
Valuation	.54***	.50***	.24**	.55***	.55***	-							
Assimilation	.40***	-.03	.25**	.44***	.29***	.28**	-						
Accommodation	-.55***	-.34***	-.35***	-.64***	-.39***	-.55***	-.24**	-					
Balance	.48***	.37***	.22*	.54***	.54***	.67***	.21*	-.40***	-				
H	.10	.12	.05	.02	.08	.04	.13	.03	.17	-			
OL	-.08	-.07	.10	.01	-.08	-.05	-.15	-.07	.06	-.48***	-		
SC	.13	.03	-.13	.06	.04	.10	-.04	-.21*	.06	.16	-.33***	-	
N aspects	.00	.05	.08	-.05	.05	.10	-.01	-.06	.08	.35***	-.12	.52***	-
M	10.67	12.86	11.02	19.43	15.92	11.95	39.24	42.35	54.21	1.26	0.19	55.97	4.82
SD	2.28	3.31	2.93	4.90	3.54	3.07	9.17	11.81	10.30	0.97	0.19	127.82	2.13

*** $p < .001$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed. * $p < .05$, two-tailed

The next step was to establish if different configurations of structural characteristics of identity differ in the intensity of identity processes and in the degree of self-complexity. A cluster analysis revealed four distinct identity profiles. An ANOVA (or a nonparametric equivalent) showed significant differences between the obtained clusters for each dimensions of identity (cf. Table 3). Figure 1 illustrates the obtained taxonomy.
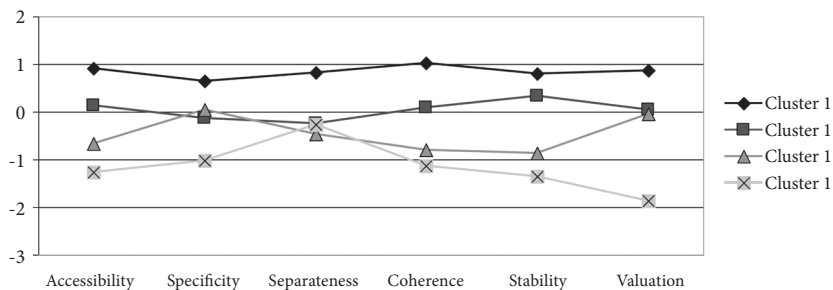
Table 3

Cluster Analysis: Means and ANOVA F-values (or Nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis Tests)

	Cluster 1 (n = 32)	Cluster 2 (n = 46)	Cluster 3 (n = 25)	Cluster 4 (n = 15)	F (3,114)/ $x2$(3)	Post hoc
Variable	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*		
Accessibility	12.75 (1.92)	10.98 (1.20)	9.16 (1.52)	7.80 (1.86)	62.39***	4, 3 < 2 < 1
Specificity	15.00 (3.16)	12.41 (2.98)	13.00 (2.48)	9.45 (2.65)	13.14***	4 < 2, 3, 1; 2 < 1
Separateness	13.46 (2.27)	10.33 (2.14)	9.64 (3.43)	10.27 (2.55)	13.81***	3, 4, 2 < 1
Coherence	24.47 (2.72)	19.88 (2.43)	15.50 (3.60)	13.87 (4.87)	55.86***	4, 3 < 2 < 1
Stability	18.81 (2.39)	17.13 (2.03)	12.88 (1.42)	11.13 (3.42)	61.47***	4, 3 < 2 < 1
Valuation	14.59 (1.86)	12.07 (1.84)	11.80 (1.73)	6.20 (1.90)	71.53***	4 < 3, 2 < 1

*** $p < .001$

Figure 1

Illustration of Clusters of the Characteristics of Identity Structure (Standardized Values)

The analysed clusters differ significantly in all identity processes (cf. Table 4). The F values were $F(3, 114) = 5.71$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .13$, $f = .39$ for assimilation, $F(3, 114) = 21.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .36$, $f = .75$ for accommodation, and $F(3, 114) = 19.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .33$, $f = .70$ for balance. The eta-squared values show that the division into subgroups with diverse profiles of identity structure explain 13% of assimilation variance, 36% of accommodation variance, and 33% of identity balance variance. The relation between specific identity structure and the intensity of identity processes is therefore evident. Cluster 4 is characterized by the highest average level of accommodation, $M = 54.80$ ($SD = 12.23$), whereas cluster 1 by the lowest, $M = 32.19$ ($SD = 9.24$). In the scope of assimilation and balance, the highest levels are observed for cluster 1, $M = 43.50$ ($SD = 8.33$) and $M = 61.94$ ($SD = 8.65$), respectively, and the lowest for cluster 4, $M = 33.53$ ($SD = 12.03$) and $M = 42.20$ ($SD = 9.37$), respectively.

Table 4

Effects of Identity Structure on Identity Processes and Self-Complexity: Means and ANOVA F-values (or Nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis Tests)

	Cluster 1 (n = 32)	Cluster 2 (n = 46)	Cluster 3 (n = 25)	Cluster 4 (n = 15)	F (3,114)/ $x2$(3)	Post hoc
Variable	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*		
Assimilation	43.50 (8.33)	39.70 (7.67)	36.37 (8.48)	33.53 (12.03)	5.71***	4, 3 < 1
Accommodation	32.19 (9.24)	43.70 (8.55)	45.40 (9.91)	54.80 (12.23)	21.76***	1 < 2, 3 < 4
Balance	61.94 (8.65)	53.37 (8.20)	53.08 (8.40)	42.20 (9.37)	19.03***	4 < 3, 2 < 1
H	1.35 (.72)	1.17 (1.33)	1.33 (.67)	1.22 (.47)	.26	-
OL	.19 (.18)	.20 (.17)	.16 (0.18)	.22 (.25)	.43	-
SC	46.46 (60.04)	67.17 (185.88)	61.41 (77.49)	29.91 (22.54)	.33	-
N aspects	4.56 (2.08)	5.00 (2.34)	4.84 (2.10)	4.80 (1.78)	.26	-

*** $p < .001$

The obtained clusters were also analysed in the scope of measures of self-complexity. As it can be seen in Table 4, the configurations of identity structure are not a significant factor differentiating the level of self-complexity, regardless of the measure that was used.

Analysis of the Intermediary Role of Identity Processes in the Relation Between the Self–Concept Structure and Personal Identity

The above analyses indicated a clear relation between the identity structure and identity processes. At the same time they pointed out the lack of relation with self-complexity (regardless of the method of its operationalization). Taking these results into account, we examined whether the identity processes have a moderating role in the relation between the self-concept structure and the personal identity. A hierarchical regression was used with the following predictors: identity processes and SC-statistic as the indicator of self-complexity[4] (step 1) and their interactions (step 2). The significant interaction effects were supplemented with simple effect tests. The obtained results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Hierarchical Regression Main Effects and Interactions

Predictors	Accessibility	Specificity	Separateness	Coherence	Stability	Valuation
SC β	.16	.10	-.59*	-.08	.15	.03
Assimilation β	.26**	-.22*	.21*	.30***	.18*	.05
Accommodation β	-.39***	-.27*	-.35***	-.45***	-.16ᵃ	-.31***
Balance β	.27**	.35***	.03	.35***	.51***	.51***
SC*Assimilation β	-.05	-.06	-.04	.01	.03	-.18
SC*Accommodation β	.17	.16	-.72ᵃ	.15	.29	.14
SC*Balance β	-.01	-.08	-.35	.22	.15	-.05
Corrected R2	.44***	.21***	.18***	.57***	.37***	.51***
ΔR2	.01	.01	.03	.01	.01	.02

*** *p* < .001, ** *p* < .01, * *p* < .05, a *p* < .10

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[4] The choice of the SC-statistic as an indicator of self-complexity was made because of the drawbacks of the H-statistic widely discussed in the literature (including the statement about its inconsistency with the theory it originates from) as well as its mathematical simplicity (cf. Rafaeli-Mor, Gotlib, & Revelle, 1999; Rafaeli-Mor & Steinberg, 2002; Luo & Watkins, 2008; Luo, Watkins, & Lam, 2009).

According to the analyses, all regression models are significant. The variables in the regression equation explain 44% of accessibility variance, $F(7, 101) = 12.53$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = .80$, 21% of specificity variance, $F(7, 101) = 4.84$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = .27$, 18% of separateness variance, $F(7, 110) = 4.26$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = .23$, 57% of coherence variance, $F(7, 101) = 20.20$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = 1.33$, 37% of stability variance, $F(7, 101) = 9.47$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = .59$, and 51% of valuation variance, $F(7, 101) = 16.01$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = 1.04$. At the same time, introducing the interaction terms between SC and identity processes did not result in a significant rise in variance explained in all cases. However, self-complexity proved to be a significant predictor of the sense of separateness, $\beta = -.59$, $t = -2.23$, $p < .05$. Moreover, one of the interaction effects was marginally significant, that is the interaction between SC and accommodation towards separateness, $\beta = -.72$, $t = -1.96$, $p = .053$. With an average, $t(98) = -2.23$, $p < .05$, and high, $t(98) = -1.97$, $p = .052$, level of accommodation, the increase in self-complexity level allows for predicting a decrease in identity content separateness, whereas with a low level of accommodation, the increase in self-complexity allows for, in a marginally significant way, predicting an increase in the sense of one's separateness, $t(98) = 1.95$, $p = .054$.

Referring to other identity dimensions, only identity processes proved to be their significant predictors. Identity accommodation is the strongest predictor of accessibility, $\beta = -.39$, $t = -4.55$, $p < .001$, and coherence, $\beta = -.45$, $t = -5.98$, $p < .001$, whereas balance is the strongest predictor of specificity, $\beta = 0.35$, $t = 3.33$, $p < .01$, stability, $\beta = .51$, $t = 5.50$, $p < .001$, and valuation, $\beta = .51$, $t = 6.22$, $p < .001$. Assimilation proved to be a weaker predictor than the other identity processes. While interpreting the obtained data, we can generally assume that the higher the intensity of identity balance and assimilation and the lower the intensity of accommodation are, the higher the sense of accessibility, specificity, separateness, coherence, stability and self-worth are.

Discussion

In the light of the research results the thesis about a negative relation between a complex and diverse self-concept and sense of identity cannot be supported. All four measures of self-complexity and dimensions of identity proved to be mutually independent. Also the types of identity structure did not differ in the measures of self-complexity. In the context of previous research on the relations between the self-concept structure and identity (cf. Suchańska & Ligocka, 2011) these results may be considered as decisive. It is also worth noting that the

mutual independence of the self-structure and the sense of personal identity is observed regardless of the operationalization method of the latter (Suchańska and Ligocka used Marcia's (1966) identity status approach and Berzonsky's (2008) identity styles model).

How can one explain the fact that the number and degree of diversity of the self-concept facets presented in different social situations do not have any impact on the sense of identity? Are the ways we describe and experience ourselves two entirely separate areas? Maybe as long as we recognise this variety in ourselves it does not change who we are. It would suggest that the construct of self-complexity should be clearly distinguished from phenomena such as multiple identity or self-fragmentation. This observation has particular meaning in the context of conclusions drawn, for example, by Donahue and co-workers (1993), that differentiation of the self-concept "implies fragmentation and a lack of coherence in the self-concept – in other words, a divided self" (p. 844). It is a fact that past empirical attempts to establish the relation between self-complexity and adaptation have not produced straightforward results. Possibly, this resulted from limiting these research to an objectively conceptualized self-concept, without including a subjective experience of one's self. At the same time, more consistent research results for the adaptive value of another measure of the self-concept structure, that is self-concept differentiation (Donahue et al., 1993), point our attention to the measurement method. It is interesting that changing the operationalization of the same aspect of the self structure – the contextual character of the self-image lead to such different conclusions. It is difficult to explain this discrepancy on the basis of the previous observations. This issue is the subject of the further research we are currently carrying out.

The hypothesis about the relation between identity processes and the sense of personal identity proved to be valid and applies to particular aspects of the sense of identity as well as their configurations (structures) obtained in the research. The integrated structure, which consisted of a high sense of coherence, stability, accessibility, specificity, separateness and valuation of identity contents was characterized by higher levels of identity balance and assimilation and lower level of identity accommodation than the other configurations. It should also be highlighted that the pattern of differences in the intensity of identity processes between the distinguished clusters suggests that the differences are a derivative of the level of particular aspects of identity structure as well as of their organisation.

The obtained relations of identity processes and the sense of personal identity are consistent and constitute a support for the functions of these processes theoretically assumed by Whitbourne (e.g., 1998, 2002, 2003). At the same time,

a negative relation between self-complexity (SC-statistic) and accommodation can, at first glance, appear surprising. This relationships can be explained by regression analysis results. An increase in self-complexity as well as an increase in accommodation prove to be predictors of a decrease in the sense of one's own boundaries. Moreover, accommodation proves to be a significant moderator of the relation between self-complexity and the sense of separateness. These results in connection with the observed correlative relation of the SC-statistic and accommodation suggest that at high self-complexity young adults will have a tendency to avoid the accommodation process as its increase endangers the sense of separateness, whereas its decrease strengthens it.

Although the research results described above confirm the theoretically assumed function of identity processes, the regressive analyses which verified their intermediary role in the relation between the self-concept structure and the sense of identity did not produce the expected results. Accommodation as well as balance proved to be good predictors of most of the identity senses which corresponds with the results of cluster analyses described above. However, their moderating function towards self-complexity was observed only for the sense of separateness. We might have expected that a significant increase in the accommodation processes leads to a situation in which the more complex the self is the more difficult it is to obtain a sense of separateness. This result corresponds with what has been reported by other authors connecting the contextual character of the self with a low sense of separateness (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Pilarska, 2012b).

To sum up, the presented research undoubtedly reveal the complexity of the issue of the mutual relations of the self-concept and identity. Contrarily to the suggestions present in literature, the carried out analyses speak in favour of accepting the thesis about independence of the formal characteristics of the self-concept and the sense of identity. This might argue against the postmodernist view that a flexible and changing self-concept is conducive to young people's liquid or fluid identity formation. However, it is difficult at this stage of our study to decide if there are no, even indirect relations between the complexity of the self and the sense of personal identity or is this the result of the choice of moderating variables made during the research.

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Concepts of Autonomy in Emerging Adulthood and Their Perception by Czech Emerging Adults

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Introduction

In this chapter we provide a theoretical review of the conceptualizations of autonomy and empirical evidence how autonomy is manifested across the period of emerging adulthood. This developmental stage, distinct from both adolescence and young adulthood has been proposed as the most typical for industrialized and "postindustrial" countries (Arnett, 2000) like the Czech Republic. Usually, it includes transitions to adulthood during the 20s when most young people find themselves in transition. They are not adolescents anymore because they have legal responsibility and all or most of the legal rights of adults. They also differ from "complete adults" because they usually have not stabilized traditional adult roles and responsibilities (Tanner & Arnett, 2011). Emerging adults show high demographic diversity and unpredictability: empirical data inform about weakening age-relatedness in the traditional markers of adulthood. This is most evident for the timings of the first marriage and the first parenthood, great diversity is also evident in the fields of education, work, and housing (Corijn & Klijzing, 2001; Arnett & Galambos, 2003; Settersten, Furstenberg, & Rumbaut, 2005).

The combination of specific life conditions, life style and key personal issues in this life stage determines the characteristics of this period. Arnett (2004) postulated five main features which psychologically characterize emerging adulthood. It is the age of identity exploration. In contrast with adolescent exploration it is no longer a non-committal experimenting; the exploration aims

at looking for more permanent values, feelings, certainties and commitments. It is the age of instability, self-focused orientation, and feelings of limitless possibilities. The majority of young people in this period does not face a great pressure to make major decisions on important life issues; they are free to change their minds and explore other possibilities in relationships, love, studies, work, etc. They also experience a feeling of personal freedom to a greater extent than ever before, associated with an option to actively influence and change their present life situation (Macek & Bouša, 2009). It is also the age of feeling in-between. Emerging adults are aware of the fact that they will not remain in this incomplete adult status forever and that sooner or later, they will become adults. However, it is not always clear to them when this happens and what initial steps will lead them into the state of full adulthood. We assume that the five postulated characteristics of emerging adulthood are related to autonomy in its various forms of conceptualizations into which we turn now.

Conceptualizations of Autonomy on Emerging Adulthood

In psychology, autonomy has been conceptualized in many ways and for various purposes. One purpose was to describe autonomy as an individual difference or disposition mostly in adults. Hmel and Pincus's (2002) review and factor analysis identified three broad types of autonomy conceptualizations – autonomy as self-governance, autonomy as individualization/separation and depresogenic vulnerability.

More close to our purpose is the study of autonomy as a part of developmental processes. In the developmental perspective the term autonomy has been relatively freely used to describe the state when a developing person was separating or becoming less dependent on a particular factor in her environment, on which the previous dependence was developmentally appropriate. A number of terms were used for the outcome or result of the process – separation, individuation, detachment, psychosocial maturity, self-regulation, self-control, self-efficacy, self-determination, or independence. In developmental psychology the two different, sometimes competing, sometimes mixed conceptualizations of autonomy were autonomy as separation and autonomy as agency (e.g. Beyers, Goosens, Vansant, & Els Moors, 2003; Van Petegem, Beyers, Vasteenkiste, & Soenens, 2012). Noom, Dekovic, and Meeus (2001, Noom, 1999) differentiate between psychodynamic, cognitive and eclectic approaches to autonomy. Psychodynamic concepts of autonomy are grounded in the transformation of the relationship between the developing individual and his parents. Be-

ing autonomous means being demonstrably able to interact with parents as equals, being autonomous primarily from parents. Cognitive approach focuses on the decision-making process, perception of control in this process and the responsibility for the decision made. This very broadly includes general concepts like self-efficacy or perceived control (Skinner, Chapman, & Baltes, 1988). As such, cognitively conceived autonomy is a very broad notion mixing abilities with subjective experiences related to decision-making and motivated behavior. Eclectic approaches combine elements of psychodynamic and cognitive conceptualizations, often as a part of broader and more complex theories such as the self-determination theory. Autonomy as separation (e.g. Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986; Hoffman, 1984) is a significant example of the psychodynamic approach; agentic autonomy, one of the three basic psychological needs in the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) is an example of the more cognitively oriented lines of thought. As examples of eclectic theories Noom, Dekovic, & Meeus (2001) name the self-determination theory or the reactive and reflective autonomy of Koestner and Losier (1996) based on self-determination theory.

Although the individual differences perspective and developmental perspective broadly correspond to each other in differentiating between the subjective experience of autonomy and objective, observable autonomous or independent functioning, the emphases differ. The developmental perspective focuses more explicitly on the relationship with parents, peers and romantic partners. In the period of emerging adulthood the individual differences and developmental perspectives tend to overlap more because the period is a mix of adulthood and adolescence.

Autonomy as Separation

Considering the period of emerging adulthood the most relevant autonomy process here is the separation from parents during which childhood representations of parents transform into adult ones. This process is differently conceived in different psychological traditions ranging from only the removal of specific elements of the representation of parents with the core of the relationship with parents remaining intact (e.g. the attachment perspective, Hazan & Shaver, 1987) all the way to complete severing of the relationship with parents so that a new, adult relationship with parents can be developed (e.g. the psychoanalytical perspective; Blos, 1979; Steinberg, 1988). Autonomy is then conceived as a state marked by a greater interpersonal distance between an individual and his/her

parents. This allows for greater freedom in behaviour, more independent affective experience and more independent beliefs, values and generally cognition. In contrast with the individual differences perspective the overall level of autonomy across all domains of life is not of primary concern. This means that the increase in interpersonal distance between the emerging adult and her parents may or may not be compensated by closer relationships with peers, friends, or romantic partners. In this context timing is one of the important questions; when the need for separation and independence subjectively emerges.

Empirical studies that relate separation autonomy with psychosocial development and adjustment find that high levels of separation autonomy are linked with negative forms of adjustment (e.g. Garber & Little, 2001). However, Byers et al. (2003, 2005) distinguished two different facets of separation autonomy: separation and detachment. Whereas separation itself is positive, developmentally normative and Byers et al. expect it to grow throughout adolescence and emerging adulthood, detachment is the negative facet related to pathology, adjustment problems that are not developmentally normative. Thus the development of detachment from adolescence to adulthood is individual. It appears that it is the detachment facet that accounts for the correlation of separation autonomy with indicators of maladjustment.

Autonomy as the Experience of Agency

The second group of autonomy conceptualisations base autonomy in the subjective experience of an individual and his ability to act freely, set goals, master one's environment and to reflect on these activities. For this kind of autonomy psychologists use terms like self-governance, agency, authorship, or authenticity (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008). The core notion here is the individual's experience that his behaviour is his own, volitional and in line with his self. This includes the experience of responsibility for one's behaviour. Thus self-governance autonomy is a subjective, self-reflective construct. From the perspective of others or maybe from theoretical perspectives a person may be controlled by various external forces, and despite that this person may experience a high level of agentic autonomy.

One of the most frequently applied agentic conceptualisations of autonomy comes from Ryan & Deci's self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Niemiec, Ryan, & Deci, 2010). In self-determination theory autonomy is one of the three basic psychological needs, a need to experience the freedom to make decisions about one-self (self-govern), act on behalf one-self and to consider

one's acts own. This need is assumed to be organismic and thus to exist from birth and is assumed necessary for continuous psychological growth, integrity and well-being. With respect to the many external influences on our lives the possibility of the experience of autonomy is based on a process of internalization of external controls into one's self. The theory describes the process of the transformation of an external impulse, control or motive into an internal motive the function of which allows the individual to experience autonomy when acting on the motive. Between fully external and fully integrated motives Deci and Ryan (2000) also differentiate two intermediate steps in this process: introjected motive and identified motive, both allowing for more autonomy experience but with possible negative affective due to lack of integration with the rest of the self (Koestner & Losier, 2002). This integration process is clearly related to identity development in emerging adulthood in that well integrated goals (i.e. commitments) tend to be more stable with a higher rate of achievement (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Wood at al.'s (2008) authentic personality is an autonomy conceptualization focusing specifically on this reflected relation between self and behavior.

In the context of adolescent and emerging adulthood development Beyers et al. (2003, s. 352) describe agentic autonomy in terms of "non-conformity, internal locus of control, resistance to persuasion from parents and peers, instrumentality, self-determination and competence". They also point out that this conceptualization differs from the separation-based conceptualizations of autonomy in that the emphasis is placed on what the developing person strives for, instead of what he/she is breaking away from. This conceptualization of autonomy is explicitly conceived as independent of the relatedness or separateness from parents. In this context parenting is studied with respect to how it supports or thwarts the experiencing of autonomy (Joussemet, Landry, & Koestner, 2008).

Although agentic autonomy is mostly related to positive developmental outcomes (Weinstein, Przybylski, & Ryan, 2012), it also has its negative aspects. For example, Konstam's (2007) narrative study details the anxiety experienced by adolescents facing the multitude of choices and weariness from choosing from too many options. While adolescents may have more leeway to postpone some decisions, early adults and emerging adults feel more pressure to decide, commit. These negative emotions may be in the base of the motives for the formulation of the separate developmental phase of emerging adulthood (see Arnett, Kloep, Hendry, & Tanner, 2011 for competing views). In this decision-making context it appears to be useful to distinguish autonomy and independence (self-reliance), which allows us to consider situations when an

individual chooses to be dependent, or situations when someone is forced to decide independently (Weinstein, Przybylski, & Ryan, 2012; Van Petegem et al., 2012). Conceptualizations of this independence are often based explicitly in decision-making (e.g. Ryan, La Guardia, Solky-Butzel, Chirkov, & Kim, 2005), or come from previously described separational conceptualizations of autonomy.

Czech Emerging Adults' Views of Autonomy

In general we have identified in this review two broad kinds of autonomy relevant in the period of emerging adulthood: subjective agentic autonomy and objective separation autonomy including explicit self-reliance. Because the process of transition to adulthood is culturally determined and the period of emerging adulthood is not yet generally accepted as relevant for in all societies, we can assume that the prolonged period of exploration or training before making adult commitments invites challenges, criticisms, discussions that ask emerging adults to reflect on their status, often in terms of autonomy. This makes it important to study how autonomy is reflected in the experiences of young people. In 2012 we started a longitudinal project studying the development of various kinds of autonomy during the period of emerging adulthood. The main aim of the study is to describe the different developmental trajectories of differently conceptualised autonomy constructs. In a qualitative piloting project we were interested in how today's Czech emerging adults themselves think about autonomy and how their views fit the various theoretical conceptualizations of autonomy investigated by the main project and described in this review. In this chapter we report on data from this qualitative pilot.

In our study we started from the assumption that similarly to the developed European countries, we can identify the period of emerging adulthood in the Czech Republic as well (cf. Arnett, 2006). The demographic trends from the last decade suggest that young Czechs do not much differ from their peers in other countries in Central and Western Europe. Nevertheless, the Czech society of the past 15 years has been undergoing a period of significant political, economic, and social changes that have had both direct and indirect impact on the present Czech emerging adults. Until now, there are only sporadic empirical data available indicating how young Czechs experience this period and how they feel in it (Macek, Bejček, & Vaníčková, 2007). With respect to the experiencing of autonomy, we do not have any relevant empirical findings about Czech emerging adults. That is why the present study focused on subjective meaning and context of autonomy should give at least a partial answer to this question.

To explore Czech emerging adult's representations of autonomy we used semi-structured individual interviews inspired by Konstam (2007). Our interview covered various domains of life and in terms of autonomy asked about the general concept of autonomy, autonomy in the relationship to parents, autonomy in a partner relationship, and autonomy in the area of studies and professional training. Questions like *Do you imagine anything under the expression "to be autonomous"?*, *What does being autonomous mean for you?*, and *What does autonomy mean for you in the relationships with parents?* were asked and explored in depth. We used a heterogeneous sample of 28 working and/or studying young people (12 females and 16 males) aged 18 to 25. We strived for diversity in socio-demographic characteristics, such as family status, education level, socioeconomic status, and place of residence.

A simple qualitative content analysis was performed on the transcribed interviews. We analysed utterances that in some way described phenomena subsumed under the broad heading of autonomy. Often the utterances were based on the context a particular topic or domain of life. Here we use the utterances or categories created by content analysis coded as general autonomy descriptors or autonomy in parental/family context descriptors.

Emerging adults in our sample defined autonomy in ways that fairly well fit the broad range of conceptualizations of autonomy used in literature. Some defined autonomy by way of association with terms of independence *(…life without being dependent on somebody else…; … be mentally independent…)* or freedom. These notions were rarely elaborated. Autonomy as independence or freedom is more like a personal and social value. This notion is close to autonomy expressed as the ability to do what one wans *(…do what I want to do … do as I like)* or, replacing doing with being, be as what one wants to be *(… be yourself… be what you want to be…)*. Although very crude, the distinction between behavioural autonomy (doing) and experiential autonomy (being) is already here. Still the definitions so far are very general, slogan-like.

Other definitions were more specific. Many mentioned financial/material independence, often in relation with parents *(…be able to make my living … earn money … not to depend on money from my parents)*. The frequency of financial/material independence appears to be significant in the context of emerging adulthood since in our society the allocation of financial resources may be interpreted as approval, sign of social contract. Although the extended time for identity exploration and commitment appears to be provided to people in their early 20s, the social approval is not as clear as it is not entirely clear who "pays". It is also interesting because this aspect is not emphasized as much in the

literature. Money may be the implicit mediator through which various forms of control (of decisions, behaviours, beliefs, or attitudes) is realized.

Sometimes the non-dependence is emphasised (…*not to be dependent on anyone… not to bother anyone … not to rely on someone helping me*) that maps explicitly onto the detachment aspect of autonomy. These are the utterances that suggest lower relatedness. Yet, other frame the independence more in terms of self-reliance (*be self-sufficient … take care of myself … care for myself … function as a standalone unit…*).

Decision making was the prominent notion in many definitions, often along with the specification that opinion is what the deciding is about (…*independently decide… ability to make one's own opinion.. have some opinion and keep to it … choices are from my head, I won't let anyone to influence me*), and with an expectation that decisions and opinions should be held. Autonomous decision making is the core of self-governance autonomy conceptualizations and it is good the notion is present in the collective emerging-adult mind. What differs is its focus on opinions or attitudes and not on goals or goal-oriented actions as in the self-determination theory discourse.

Finally, some defined autonomy through taking over the responsibility for their actions (…*take over the responsibility for myself … one has himself and his own conscience … not to be the wagon, be the locomotive*), or more generally be able to reflect on one's actions. If we interpret responsibility as a sign of authorship then this is again in line with the agentic conceptualization of autonomy .

Autonomy Experiences in the Relationship with Parents

Considering the relationship to parents, autonomy must be regarded in a different relational framework. Even from the separation/individuation perspective where autonomy concerns the process of natural separation and freeing oneself, it does not mean the interruption of relationships and total independence, but more likely a new quality of relationships. In both conceptualisations autonomy development cannot be separated from the maintenance and development of relatedness.

Many descriptions of autonomy in the relationship with parents were elaborations of the general themes of autonomy, i.e. independence from parents. One of the elaborations was that the independence means also independence from "what parents do". That refers not only to parental control or regulatory behaviours but also to more freedom from whatever parents do or represent. This is closer to the more psychodynamic conceptualizations of autonomy, where the character of the relationship with parents is redefined. Another participant supports this

by describing the "new" relationship "*…it's somehow more peaceful, we are nicer to each other …*". Similar description of autonomy was that being autonomous means the relief of not having to take parents into consideration or worry about bothering them (*…I can come home late without worrying I would wake parents up… I do not have to agree with them or take them into consideration…*). Where the positive redefinition was absent it was often replaced with a missing feeling ("*…that I kinda miss these family emotions, not only concerning my family, but I think I may just carry it on with me …*" or "*…well, I would definitely like to go back home at least once a month, or every other month, to see them at least. Not separate completely and not come home for a year, not that.*").

Increasing autonomy in the relationship with parents may be signified by the shifting responsibilities as some participants observe (*you must accept the responsibility …, that you decided to do something, even though it may not have worked out, but like it was your decision, so you must learn a lesson from that mistake*). Responsibility is perceived as the difficult aspect, something one can be proud of (*which I am in charge of myself… I can be grateful to myself for all my advantages. For anything I'll accomplish in my life, I owe it to myself…*) but it is also a source of stress and anxiety (*actually accept that responsibility for them, so there are maybe more worries.*). Interestingly one respondent related this anxiety not to the direct consequences of a wrong decision, but to the more distant consequence of having to admit this fact to his parents („*That I am alone for everything. When you mess up, then it's hard to come and keep your head down … One must be totally independent. When he got separated, then it must stay that way. Or it needn't but it's hard to go back!*).

Even more often than in the general autonomy context practical concerns emerged as well, like learning to take care of personal finances (*with the finances it's a bit, that I have to be more careful in order to make ends meet with that money…"*), or losing the household services ("*… you have lost a certain comfort, like that you have to do the laundry, iron, cook, but I think it's completely alright taking into consideration my age.*"). Actually, financial domain was the domain most frequently mentioned by our participants.

Autonomy and the Period Emerging Adulthood

It has been noted that the defining characteristics of the period of emerging adulthood are identity exploration, instability, self-focused orientation, possibilities, and the feeling of in-between (Arnett, 2004). Let us now relate the various concepts of autonomy to the processes implied by these characteristics.

Identity exploration is an important component of the process of identity development, the effort and the need to integrate the experience of self into a meaningful whole. This process is considered one of the most important processes during the transition from adolescence to adulthood (Kroger, 2006). The relationship between identity exploration and autonomy is manifold. On one hand, the identity process may be a major arena where autonomy is exercised, serving both as source of autonomy experiencing and opportunity to explore limits of autonomy. On the other hand, the process may be a major source of autonomy frustration when external pressures affect the process, which may be experienced as a pressure to commit or to explore.

The period of emerging adulthood provides a context allowing for the generation of self-relevant experience – exploration. For this autonomy is beneficial in both its main conceptualizations. Separation autonomy allows for more freedom to explore in various domains of life. In its "individuation" it even overlaps with the concept of identity development itself. The role of agentic autonomy, the experience of authorship of own behaviour, in this process is more indirect but essential. The agentic experience makes the experience more self-relevant. If the need for autonomy if chronically thwarted and most of one's actions are perceived as externally controlled the resulting experience "does not count" for identity exploration.

Participants in our study used descriptions that related autonomy to identity exploration. The two "voices" expressing this were the freedom statements (*"The advantage is that I have the freedom to go where I want to, do what I want to … constantly running to some activities with friends, concerts, festivals..."*) and the ownership of decisions voice (*"All my choices are my own"*) usually accompanied with expressions of responsibility (*"That you … must accept the responsibility for that decision…even though it may not have worked out, but like it was your decision, so you must learn a lesson from that mistake."*). What is interesting is that the freedom to do what one wants is usually expressed in a way suggesting that the speaker knows what she wants and feels free to acts and bear the consequences. Words like "try out", "discover" or expressions of uncertainty or even change were mostly missing. Of course, the wish to try things out may have been what was meant by "what I want", but this was never explicitly expressed. There are several possible explanations for this. One is that our participants were so "immersed" in the multitudes of choices and options that they did not need to mention this in any other context than that of expressing burdensomeness of decision making. Alternative explanation is that the participants felt the pressure to make decisions/commitment and behave as if they were permanent.

Instability as the changes in jobs, partners, friends, places of living etc. is more the result of the various normative changes and transitions during this period of life. There are two ways in which instability may be related to autonomy. One is that developed agentic autonomy helps to cope with the changes if they are perceived as self-endorsed, chosen. The other is that autonomy may contribute to the instability through the subjective or objective freedom to change some aspect of one's life. Instability was reflected in our participants' descriptions of autonomy only indirectly. This took the form of reflecting on the implications of autonomous functioning, decision-making. Some participants talked about *"parents who act as the safety net until I am adult"* and others about autonomy meaning *"responsibility … you cannot count on parents coming to save you"*. Clearly this invokes the relatedness as a counterpart of autonomy – different attachment styles lead to different perceptions of the uncertainty produced by the changes (*"I don't know, I think is not easy for everyone to move to another town and live there by themselves."*). As with identity exploration the affectively negative descriptions prevailed.

Self-focused orientation reflects the realization of the need to take charge of one's life and deal with problems on one's own. It combines the awareness of the multitude of decisions that need to be made and the determination not to let anybody else decide. Along the way, emerging adults learn about their abilities, skills, and limits. Theoretically, we can consider self-focused orientation to be a reaction to the decision-making demands of increased separation autonomy the emerging adults are granted. From this perspective autonomy or freedom is experienced as a stressor albeit a positive one. Such perception of autonomy relates to the concept of depressogenic vulnerability identified by Hmel and Pincus (2002). We can also argue in an opposite causal direction. The self-focus as a way to a clearer self is also a process leading to higher agentic autonomy experiencing – the more developed self-concept, the higher the chance a decision or action can be perceived as self-determined (or consciously perceived as externally determined). In this way an emerging adult uses self-focus to better understand the variable patterns in his agentic autonomy experience.

In a trivial way, most of what our participants said about autonomy in general and in the family domain was self-focused because the interview focused on their experience. But some utterances went beyond what was implied by the interview format. One area, in which the self-focus was evident was the word choice in describing personal freedom as the main aspects of autonomy. Although the theory mostly uses the general verb "do" as in "do what I want to do", our participants preferred the form "be what I want to be" suggesting the

focus of the exercising of the freedom is the self. Further, the most common example used in the descriptions of being free to do something were attitudes or opinions, not actions, which is again focused more inward than outward. It is not possible to infer from our qualitative data whether there is some developmental trend in applying autonomy to self and to behaviours, but it appears to be worth to make this difference.

Open *possibilities* represent the "many different futures [that] remain open, when little about a person's direction in life has been decided for certain" (Arnett, 2004, p. 16). The period of emerging adulthood provides young people with enough resources (both social and organismic) to be able to contemplate significant changes in their lives, paths that may not even be in line with how they were brought up, with their previous career choices, partnerships before making „final" commitments. To seriously consider such changes autonomy in its both main conceptualizations is a major asset. Separation autonomy may open possibilities and agency autonomy would play a major role in the goal-oriented self-regulation. Again, both autonomies need to go hand in hand because without developed agency autonomy, it is more likely that the possibilities would be perceived as threats and lead to identity diffusion.

In line with the impression described above that our participants valued the freedom to strive for what they want but not for the doubting or reconsidering, none of the participants mentioned the open possibilities in general, or the possibility of a major change in his life. Whereas the ability to do what one wants is reported positively, the making of the choices (often implied in the former) is reported negatively as a stressor. Here the theory is not supported by our data suggesting the possibilities as an opportunity is not omnipresent in emerging adulthood; it may be perceived by some individuals for limited periods of time.

The final characteristics of emerging adulthood is the subjective status of *feeling in between*, not adolescent any more but not completely adult as well. In the Czech Republic, like in other countries, about two thirds of young people, males and females alike, between 18 and 25 feel to be "in between" (Macek, Bejček, & Vaníčková, 2007; Macek & Bouša, 2012). Not belonging to any of the socially generally accepted life periods may add to uncertainty and problems with accepting the autonomy granted. The uncertainty associated with the feeling in between has been mentioned as a part of autonomy descriptions. In the family domain, it had the form of pondering whether there is a way back if the exercise of autonomy fails in some way (*"When you separate, you must stay separated. Or maybe not, but it is hard to come back." "If things turn up bad, it is hard to come back with your head down."*). But the

process of autonomy granting or its dynamics was not reflected in our participants' descriptions of autonomy.

In a currently starting longitudinal study on the development of autonomy in emerging adulthood we also tried to determine the relationship between subjective status of feeling in between and self-determination autonomy. We used the 7-item autonomy subscale from the general version of the Basic Psychological Needs Scale based on the formulations of Self-Determination Theory (Deci, Ryan, 2000) aspublishedat www.selfdeterminationtheory.org. It measures the general feeling of self-governance or agentic autonomy currently perceived by the respondent. Items like "I feel like I am free to decide for myself how to live my life." use a 7-point response scale from not true at all (1) to very true (7). We found a small but stable and statistically significant difference in self-determination autonomy between subjective self-categorizations as adolescents (lowest autonomy), emerging adults (middle autonomy) and adults (highest autonomy). Both differences are about the same size of .2 of standard deviation in autonomy. What is interesting is, that when we took age into consideration we found that the differences in perceived autonomy can be found only among the 20 to 23 year olds (Cohen d=.4). In the 18- and 19-year-olds there was no such difference. Thus, it appears that the younger emerging adults do not relate their feelings of autonomy with their subjective status.

Conclusion

In the period of emerging adulthood the two broad categorisations of autonomy, the more developmentally based separation autonomy and more individual differences based agentic autonomy find their joint relevance. Even a small heterogeneous sample of Czech emerging adults considers autonomy in ways that cover most aspects of theoretical conceptualizations of autonomy. Present was the growing distance in the relationship with parents as well as the decision-making and self-determined action. This all comes with reflected ambivalent feelings including the ego-related feelings of pride and shame. Notably, participants talked about autonomy as something that is part of a process, the process of becoming adult. Only a few utterances mentioned dramatic jumps in autonomy. Usually autonomy is considered and taken bit by bit, some bits returned a few times before being definitely accepted. Few feelings of shame or guilt related to this forward-backward process were expressed. Thus, the idea that autonomy is to be responsibly accepted (taken) at one time and dealt with was not present. Although it may seem trivial, the

naturalness of the process of autonomy-taking chimes well with the idea of the period of emerging adulthood.

Autonomy appears to relate significantly to most of the characteristics of emerging adulthood, especially to identity exploration and self-focused orientation. However, the exploration, change allowed for by increased autonomy was not evident in our participants' descriptions of autonomy. This could suggest that the period of emerging adulthood with its designated time for exploration is not yet completely established in the Czech society. In this case the pressure of social desirability would be to show the awareness that one's task is to work on making the adult decision/commitments. It is worth noting here that the interviewers were also emerging adults. Thus the social desirability should not be activated by talking to an adult, a member of different generation/cohort. Also, the exercising of autonomy was focused more on the domain of self then on externally oriented behaviours. Along with the absence of explicit exploration this paints a quite static picture of autonomy in emerging adulthood.

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Development of Religiousness in Young Adults

Elżbieta Rydz

The issue of religion and spirituality has been an interest of theoretical and empirical studies, including many describing developmental changes that occur in the course of religious life. Problems of emerging adulthood, here referred to as young adulthood (see Rydz 2012), including the structure, function and dynamics of religiousness in this period of life have recently attracted particular interest of researchers.

Terminology Issues

The majority of researchers agree that religiousness and spirituality are fundamental processes and psychic phenomena. Thus, they cannot be reduced to other processes or limited to one-dimensional analyses (Zinnbauer & Pargament 2005). In their reflections on the evolution of scientific terms of religiousness and spirituality Zinnbauer and Pargament state that modern researchers note a polarization of their meaning. It consists of static-structural (social) approach to religion, an institutional affiliation to a religious community among with a system of values and principles, as well as a dynamic and functional (individual) approach to spirituality, associated with non-institutional and subjective experience of the transcendent reality (cf. Zinnbauer & Pargament 2005). According to the authors, this approach causes a simplification of the range of religious and spiritual experience, which disregards deep individual layers of religiousness, and historical and cultural context of human spirituality. Criticism of the polarized approach to the phenomena of

both religiousness and spirituality resulted in bringing up new approaches, which emphasize their richness and irreducibility. Pargament and Zinnbauer (2005) proposed two ways of distinguishing the terms: 1) recognizing spirituality as the one with a broader spectrum than religiousness, the point of reference looking for the sacrum, and 2) recognizing religiousness as the one with a broader spectrum than spirituality, where the emphasis is put not only on the search for the sacrum, but also for its traditional (institutional, cultural) context. In the second understanding, spirituality is the heart and soul of religiousness, its primary function, the core function of religious life (Zinnbauer & Pargament 2005).

Contemporary concepts of the development of religiousness, derived from various theoretical trends (among others: cognitive, psychodynamic, humanistic, comprehensive) provide their own definitions of religiousness (Fowler, 1981; Walesa, 2005). The researches focus on changes of its structure and function in the course of a lifetime, or on selected aspects of religion, such as development of religious thinking (Oser & Gmünder, 1992), religious language (Goldman, 1964) and others.

The Development of Structure and Function of Religiousness in Young Adults in the Light of Contemporary Theoretical Approaches

From the point of view of lifetime psychology the period of young adulthood is governed by mental processes which result from both prior experience and anticipation of the future. The majority of research on religiousness of adolescents is carried out in the normative understanding of development, which refers to general trends of human psychological development, especially cognitive development (cognitive developmental concepts of religiousness), personality development (humanistic concepts of the development of religiousness) and social-emotional development (psychodynamic concepts of the development of religiousness). These concepts assume stadiality of development of structure and function of religion.

Religiousness of young adults, as a phenomenon subject to developmental changes, is defined as a stage of personal-reflective faith (structural concept of faith development, Fowler, 1981), abstract thinking (development of understanding religious language, Goldman, 1964), pursuing an understanding of the environment (development of thinking and religious identity, Elkind, 1970),

absolute autonomy of orientation (absolute autonomy and deism, cognitive-structural concept of religious judgments, Oser & Gmünder, 1992), religious authenticity (cognitive-developmental concept of integral development of religiosity, Walesa, 2005), a stage of internal religious orientation (developmental concept of religious orientations of humanistic psychology, Meadow & Kahoe, 1984), transition to the level of reconstructed and internalized faith (object relations theory, Genia, 1990).

Non-normative concepts such as substance-functional approach, (Kwilecki, 1999), cognitive-cultural theories (Boyer & Walker, 2000; Harris, 2000; Johnson & Boyatzis, 2005), or theories of systems of development (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003) describe and explain the development of religiousness as changeable over time, not relating individual experience to certain principles as stadial-structural theories view it, but through analyses of functioning and adaptation of an individual in various social contexts, cultures and religions.

To conclude, it can be said that modern concepts of the development of religiousness seek for a comprehensive model which would not be limited to one aspect of religiousness; a model which would allow for a multifaceted and detailed perspective of religiousness, and would give broad scope for interpretation on the basis of the whole of one's psychosocial development. Such research perspectives are presented by normative cognitive-developmental concepts which may be supplemented with other aspects originating from various theoretical models.

A cognitive-developmental concept of religiousness by Walesa seems particularly promising as it allows for a thorough view on religiousness, which is especially evident in the analyses of the dynamics of development and subtle changes in religious life, possible because of a stadial, structural-functional and psychogenetic view on the development of religiousness. This perspective permits a notional view on the bond between people and God, levels of reference for religious experiences and for classifying signs of the quality of religious life. Walesa introduces a structure of religiousness by distinguishing a set of parameters representing a psychosocial descriptive definition of its nature, which allow to categorize empirical data and perform a developmental analysis. Because of the psychogenetic approach it is possible to evaluate religiousness from simple to more complex forms which extend beyond average aptitudes in this sphere.

In the chapter forming of religiousness in adolescents in the view of current concepts, both normative and non-normative, will be presented. Striving to fully comprehend the issue of the development of religiousness in young adults

the chapter was enriched with a review of research on the role and various cor-
relates of religiousness in everyday life of young adults.

Normative Concepts of Development of Young Adults

Theories of development of religiousness in the cognitive understanding derived
from cognitive psychology (Piaget, 1972), assume that cognitive development
is an axis of self-regulation of the psyche and is the basis for its structuring and
hierarchization, also in the sphere of religious life.

Fowler (1981) views faith as a universal pursuit to meanings and values which
are expressed in the transcendent ideal and revealed in the Christian religious
tradition (Socha, 2000, p. 167). Faith is expressed as structured knowledge
(belief system), valuation (commitment, ability to pay), and constructing the
whole of sense (interpretation of religious texts and other contents). Fowler
recognizes faith as an extensive phenomenon, taking into account the cognitive
aspect, emotions, knowledge, values and commitment, as well as the communal
dimension of religiousness (Fowler, 1981, p. 272). The author's inspiration is
drawn from cognitive (Piaget, 1972) and social-cognitive theories (Selman,
1980), which concern taking into account perspective of other people. Moreover,
he includes the role of religious symbols and a sense of coherence, expressed
in logical thinking about reality.

People in their young adulthood are in stage four in the conceptualization
of Fowler: stage of individual reflective faith. At this time the fundamental
change, differentiating this stage from lower ones, is observed. It happens when
heteronomy of faith, based on external authorities fluctuates to the internally
justified autonomy of faith. The most important change is related to the matu-
ration of cognitive functioning. It is expressed in the ability to be critical with
the increasing level of rationality, which is the basis for creating a personal
worldview. Fowler draws attention to the possibility of an open choice of values
from different sources, as well as internalization, which results in being aware of
one's own ideology while considering a broader social perspective at the same
time. Young individuals make a synthesis of their roles, which is associated with
an increased religious authenticity. Moreover, the ability to separate symbol
from the symbolized content as well as being able to demythologize are cogni-
tive achievements of the stage of individual reflective faith. This state of mind
is compared to the status of enlightenment (Fowler, 1981, p. 183; Socha, 2000,
p. 178). Nevertheless, a disadvantage of this period may be over-interpreting the

reality and a limited ability to take other people's perspective into account. As a consequence of this period, the fifth stage of faith: conjunctive (paradoxical-consolidation) emerges in people over 30. It is characterized by an increased sensitivity and religious tolerance towards self and others, and the ability to go beyond an established worldview.

In his theory of religious language development Goldman (1964) assumed that in regard to their nature, course and possible determinants, religious and non-religious thinking are the same. Religious thinking signifies the activity of mental processes focused on an object of thought, in this case, religion (Goldman, 1964, p. 3; Socha, 2000, p. 192). The assumption of the sameness of religious and non-religious thinking enabled him to use the theory of thinking development by Piaget (1972) in his analyses. The assumption was that mature religious thinking is the result of a preexisting stage of formal thinking. Quoting Piaget, Goldman argues that since religious language is symbolic and abstract, a correct understanding of religious messages requires one to be able to perform intellectual operations at the formal-logic stage. Young adults are in the fifth stage of abstract thinking, recognized by Goldman to be the final stage. At this stage people are capable of reasoning and formulating their thoughts using symbols and abstract terms, and do not need support from specific stimuli from the environment. They are able to move freely from a certain fact to theory, and vice versa. The ability to think in an abstract manner is acquired slowly and through training. Thought processes run faster and more efficiently, depending on age and familiarity with the subject of religious thoughts (Socha, 2000, p. 197).

Elkind (1970) proposed a definition of religion as a special form of adaptation to the surrounding world, which varies depending on the stage of its development, conditioned by one's cognitive aspirations. Those emerge gradually in different stages of psychosocial development.

The main aspiration of adolescents is to understand both their environment and themselves. The ability to think in terms of categories leads not only to establishing a relation between an individual and the world, but is also related to an urge of justifying these relationships rationally. This aspiration accompanies people throughout their whole life. A young person who has a desire to understand the surrounding reality, its meaning and relation to their existence finds a way of fulfilling it in religion, as long as they had accepted the concept of God, His presentation from the Bible, and a relationship between themselves and God offered by the Church in the form of worship.

Concepts of Oser and Gmünder (1992) belong to cognitive and interactionist trend. The authors state that the development of religious consciousness is closely linked to cognitive and social development. A relationship with God is a key point differentiating religious consciousness from its other manifestations. Hierarchy of religious structures explains changes in individual orientation of the relationship with the Ultimate Reality (God) over lifetime. Judgments result from intellectual processing of not only personal and social experiences but also different life dilemmas in the context of religion. The way of thinking determines not only interpreting the meaning of events or solving religious problems, but also selecting readings in the Bible and interpreting religious content.

Deriving from the theories of Piaget, Oser and Gmünder assume that the structure of religious thinking is universal, and at the same time, that stages of religious judgments are unique and specific to a particular religious tradition or culture. They assume that this structure is irreducible to logical-mathematical or moral patterns. Reaching higher levels of religious judgments is associated with the expansion of the world image and forming of appropriate intellectual tools, so an appropriate level of cognitive development is reached (Reich 1992). The authors describe stages of religious judgments, based on seven dimensions which presume the influence of God in human life. These are: freedom-dependence, transcendence-immanence, hope-despair, secrecy-openness of God's will, trust-fear, sacred-profane, aspects of life events and everlasting-ephemeral meaning of life choices.

Young adults go through the following stages : 1) the stage of absolute autonomy of orientation (perspective of absolute autonomy and deism), and 2) the stage of mediated autonomy and orientation to the plan of salvation (perspective of religious autonomy and plan of salvation), which undergo a process of self-determination (absolute autonomy) and separation of the sphere of action of God and the one of an individual (the sacred and the profane). God is understood as the First Cause, Donator of Rights who still leaves people their freedom. A significant improvement from the previous stages consists of taking responsibility and giving meaning and sense to one's actions. People are the only ones responsible for their conscience, awareness of good and evil, and personal choices related to it. Crisis can trigger an inadequate interpretation of causality in human activities (sphere of profane).

Gradually a focus on the plan of salvation emerges (mediated autonomy). God is seen as the basis of all existence, the guarantor of good who foresees everything, providing all the rights, the source of grace who creates opportu-

nities for meeting people, freedom and friendship. An individual discovers themselves as a part of God's plan of salvation which gives the opportunity to commit freely to God's purposes in the world (Oser & Gmünder, 1992; Socha, 2000; Król, 2002). However, these are not the final achievements of religious development. In further stages a person experiences God as the one "coming down to the people" and sees meaning through direct realization of God in the world, working for their neighbors or simply loving other people.

Walesa (1997, 1998, 2005, 2008) defines religion as a voluntary, personal and positive relation of a person to God. Religiousness is an integrated and unified phenomenon, even though multi-faceted, which is apparent in particular manifestations of mental and socio-cultural life. Religious development is essentially autotelic, transformative and transgressive, however, its transcending may have a vertical and/or horizontal direction, covering different areas (Walesa, 2005).

Religious young adults are at a stage of religious authenticity. Knowledge or beliefs, feelings, decisions, participation, religious practices, moral principles, experiences, prayers etc. become more authentic as they start to come from people themselves, and are not a means of adapting to the environment, its patterns and conventions. At this age religiousness is expressed via intransigence, stubbornness and radicalism in the search for sincere answers to various questions. It is also based on accuracy, agreement with internal ideals and principles, what is reflected in long term plans and difficult practices. It coincides with spontaneity, openness, radical honesty, vulnerability, escape from the stabilization, reorganization, modifying the established routines of prayer and forms of worship. Moreover, it is expressed in the criticism against noticeable wrongs in the world as well as in the Church. Religiousness develops together with a unifying philosophy of life. Young adults undergo a dynamic development of their worldview. This period involves a change in personal attitudes and beliefs related to one's religious life. Authenticity permeates all activities which people undertake. Along with previous attributes of God (e.g. moral anthropomorphism) come qualities of affection and subjectivity, that is trust, holiness, and the person of Jesus Christ becomes increasingly important. Young adults begin to display their faith in everyday life through their attitude, interpersonal relationships and activities. What is more, they accept different religious content with sensitivity and openness. Phenomenon of conversion, which is active siding with radical faith, occurs sometimes. Religious authenticity helps adolescents to find their role and place in the world, it becomes the source of specific meanings and sense.

For people who succeed with the development of religiousness, the next stages of development bring confrontation with nonconformist aspirations and various forms of religious authenticity with the reality of everyday life. Requirements of common life stimulate the formation of criteria to differentiate and distinguish religious and non-religious phenomena, and within religious ones: those which are hierarchically higher and lower. Sense of responsibility for passing on faith onto others, for instance through religious education of children, increases.

Meadow and Kahoe (1984) distinguish four stages in unidirectional sequence of development: (1) external religious orientation, (2) cult (social) religious orientation, (3) internal religious orientation, and (4) autonomous religious orientation (fully mature religiousness).

Religious young adults are at the third stage of that sequence of development, internal religious orientation. They gradually evolve from the stage of social religious orientation, when goal of faith is God, Transcendence understood differently in different religions. Pro-social action is not an end in itself, but it serves God. What is more, a reversal of the relation of reciprocity God – person happens then. A person with external religious orientation wants to get something from God. The one with internal religious orientation realizes that the ultimate justification of religious practices and pro-social activities is God who "gets" something from an individual. Only a commitment to the ultimate concern (Tillich 1957) gives a person an undeniable sense of existence. The development moves towards autonomous religious orientation which is the result of a sequence of interactions between one's characteristics and random unanticipated events. According to the authors it results in a courageous and creative improvement of truth and fullness of religious experience.

At the basis of the psychodynamic theory of religion by Genia (1990) is the development of ego as well as the primary determinant of development: the quality of relationships with people. Young people go through a transition period towards the level of reconstructed and internalized faith. Under favorable conditions, critical reflection of the transition stage reaches a climax when a person makes a choice of faith, which transcends their self-centered and utilitarian interests. At this level, religion provides a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Following the ideals of ego, superego makes religion an internalized basis for life choices. Religious standards are used extensively and consistently with regard to central matters of life.

Further development of religiousness moves towards the level of transcendent faith which is driven in a more flexible manner by universally justi-

fied morality. Relationship with God as an Absolute, a higher Being, becomes non-egocentric and devoid of utilitarian motives. Moreover, lifestyle and moral behavior is consistent with religious values. Religiousness experienced this way provides a deep sense of meaning and purpose in life.

Non-Normative Conceptions of the Development of Religiousness in Young Adults

A representative of the substantial-functional trend, Kwilecki (1999), defines religion in qualitative terms. Growth or development of personal religiousness happens when one increases their range of ideas and experience of supernatural reality. Criteria of religious development by Kwilecki are: scope of religiousness, its depth, presence of religion in life and dominance of religious values in overall hierarchy of values (Kwilecki, 1999, p. 32–33). The author defines faith as a source of strength. This person-centered approach sensitizes religious scholars to cultural, life events and personality factors. The author argues that religion cannot be assessed using only cognitive-developmental patterns taken from Piaget and Kohlberg.

Kwilecki's works show the importance of certain forms of thinking and behavior, e.g. the importance of religious imagining in adults, which are often explicitly criticized and not recognized by the followers of normative theories. According to the author, it is the religious imagination, not perception, which is the basis for qualitative changes and growth of religion. Kwilecki focuses on qualitative methods in analyzing religion, however, she occasionally refers to the normative and quantitative definitions of development. She concentrates on religiousness of adults because she assumes that at this time most diverse and significant forms of religiousness occur. In her research she deals with ordinary as well as extraordinary examples of spiritual experiences. Describing such figures as Mother Teresa of Calcutta she shows a motivating force of faith in achieving goals, especially in the face of adversity. They are based on religious imagination which makes people aware of the supernatural reality.

In the cognitive-cultural approach the issues of stadiality and directing the changes of development are absent (e.g. Boyer & Walker, 2000; Harris, 2000; Johnson & Boyatzis, 2005). Supporters of this theory claim that children are more similar to adults in basic patterns of reasoning than it would occur from Piaget's premises. At the end, it is the system of cultural factors which explains age-related fluctuations in religiousness (Boyer & Walker, 2000; Harris, 2000). In thinking there is a process of a merger of ontology intuitive (intuitive logic of perceived

events), which takes a predominant part of everyday thinking and acquiring knowledge about the world, with counterintuitive ontology (knowledge contrary to empirical logic), used in contact with products of culture and religion (Harris, 2003). The result of the merger of the two systems is the ability to transfer conclusions from the world of beliefs to everyday life, and vice versa (Harris, 2000).

On the other hand, researchers of human religiousness in the trend of systems of development attract attention to the relations between an individual and the complexity and diversity of contexts in which he or she lives (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003). The basic dynamism of development is the process of adaptation, and the rate of development is the quality of this adaptation to the environment. Functionality of this approach in the research on religiousness is expressed in a notion that religion and spirituality support better adaptation. What is more, they become an area of interest to researchers in this trend only if they serve a good (plastic) adaptation (Benson et al. 2003; King & Furrow, 2004). These concepts abounded in many interesting empirical studies, e.g. on adaptation of children, adolescents and adults in the context of risky behaviors (Regnerus & Elder, 2003).

Role of Religiousness in Young Adulthood

The majority of studies carried out in this trend revealed a positive, protecting and integrating function of religiousness in adolescents. Wink and Dillon (2002) as well as Aldwin and Lewenson (2001) showed a positive relation between religiousness and difficult life events (Rydz & Zarzycka, 2008, 2009). It was found that higher levels of personal religiousness in adolescents is associated with a lower level of risk behaviors, such as substance use and sexual activity of minors (Donahue & Benson, 1995), and with a higher level of positive behaviors (Regnerus 2003). Adolescents more interested in religiousness were actively involved in different forms of voluntary events (Youniss, Mclellan, & Yates, 1999).

In their research involving parents and their adolescent children Gunnoe, Hetherington and Reiss (1999) found a strong direct relationship between high level of parents' religiousness and greater parental authority, as well as a mediating relationship between religiousness of parents and social responsibility of adolescents. The majority of results state a positive function of religion in achieving one of the key developmental tasks of young adulthood: building an intimate relationship with a person of the opposite sex, starting a family and deciding to have and raise children.

Results of a meta-analysis of contemporary research on the function of religion in family by Mahoney and Tarakeshwar (2005) showed that religiousness of spouses is positively associated with overall satisfaction of marriage, marital commitment, positive strategies for recovering from conflict, as well as preparing for parenthood and parental roles (Dollahite, Marx, & Goodman, 2004; Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001; Mahoney & Tarakeshwar, 2005). Studies show that higher individual religiousness of spouses is related to a greater commitment to marriage, with control variables such as demographic factors and marital satisfaction (Larson & Goltz, 1989; Wilson & Musik, 1996; Mahoney et al., 2001). Moreover, religiously homogeneous couples show a higher positive relationship with commitment than married couples who are religiously inhomogeneous (Mahoney et al., 2001). Sharing religious values can help cement the relationship in the form of "pair identity", which was proven to be associated with higher dedication and harmony in marriage (Stanley & Markman, 1992). High compatibility of religious beliefs of spouses is associated with a lower frequency of conflicts and improved verbal communication (Curtis & Ellison, 2002; Mahoney & Tarakeshwar, 2005). Moreover, the issue of religion is rarely the subject of direct disputes (Oggins, 2003). Higher religiousness of both spouses is associated with a more constructive conflict resolution strategies (Brody, Stoneman, Flor, & McCrary, 1994; Mahoney et al., 1999).

A protective function of religiousness against marital problems like divorce, domestic violence and betrayal was put forward by Mahoney and Tarakeshwar (2005). People religiously measure, those who perform religious practices of their church, manifest a lower risk of taking a divorce than those who do not (Mahoney et al. 2001), even when factors like alcohol or drug abuse appear (Booth, Johnson, Branaman, & Sica, 1995).

People with high scores in indicators of religiousness, less than people with lower ratios, are victims of spousal abuse (Fergusson, Horwood, Kershaw, & Shannon, 1986), and are less violent with their partner (Ellison, Bartkowski, & Anderson 1999). Higher religiousness is associated with a higher disapproval of outside of marriage intercourse in the United States, Germany and Poland (Scott, 1998), especially among the Catholics and the Protestants (Cochran & Beeghley 1991). Moreover, Mahoney and Tarakeshwar (2005) conclude that marital infidelity can be more stressful and traumatic for more religious spouses.

Religiousness of spouses may be a facilitator for psychological readiness to have children (Mahoney & Tarakeshwar, 2005). Higher frequency of attending church is closely linked to higher number of children within a marriage (Krishnan, 1993). Becker and Hofmeister (2001), and Palkowitz (2002) describe birth of

children as entailing positive transformations in spiritual orientation of parents. Findings of various research show that high religiousness of mothers can facilitate the adaptation to being a parent and increase the sense of well-being in difficult circumstances (e.g. single motherhood) through religious coping (Garcia, Perez & Ortiz, 2000; Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001). In case of having children with special needs many parents spontaneously state that religion helps them with parenthood (Dollahite et al., 2004). One of a positive form of religious coping with parenting a special needs child is religious re-analysis and reinterpretation of the child's problems of the parents' role as caregivers.

Conclusion

Detailed studies on the development of structure and function of religiousness done in the cognitive-developmental conception of C. Walesa allowed me to construct a pattern of dynamic, structural-functional religiousness of people in the period of young adulthood (Rydz, 2012). Its specificity is expressed in a characteristic arrangement of specific components and in the occurrence of developmental processes common to young adults. Results of these studies show that the following stages can be distinguished:

early phase of religious authenticity (from 18 to 21 years of age), which is characterized by (1) dominance of formal-logical forms of reasoning with a pre-dominance of negative criticism (negative doubt), (Rydz, 2012), which is also known as religious uncertainty (Levenson , Aldwin & D'Mello, 2005), (2) lower motivating power of religion and its lower power of adjustment, (3) lower level of religious authenticity;

late phase of religious authenticity (from 21 to 24/27 years of age), which is characterized by: (1) an increase in harmony between the components of religiousness, (2) a reduction of differences in the structure of religion related to gender, (3) post-formal thinking in religious reasoning, with dialectical reconciliation of contradictions, expressed by the development of critical thinking in constructive characteristics (positive doubt), (4) an increase in the level of internalization and centralization of truths and principles of religion, (5) an increase in regulatory capacity, based on religious commitment, expressed in philosophical and vocational decisions (involving religion in one's life plans, reflected in deciding to join the church, the community, and setting up a family), (6) an increase in the level of authenticity of religion, expressed in deepening one's own existence, and (7) a stabilization in the sphere of religious feelings and other parameters of religiousness.

The results show the development of integrating, regulating and significance-giving function of religiousness in young adults.

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Family of Origin Parenting and Young Adults' Psychosocial Competencies

Chris Segrin, Michelle Givertz, and Paulina Swiatkowski

Introduction

While human beings are still in the early stages of adulthood, it would be difficult to imagine a process more consequential to their psychological and social well-being than the parenting that they received in their family of origin. There is clear evidence that the parenting experienced by children during the first two decades of their lives sets the stage for development of social and psychological competencies that persist well into adulthood and perhaps even throughout the duration of the lifespan.

During the formative years, the human mind processes an astonishing amount of information, much of which comes through parents. In so doing, people seek "if-then" rules of human behavior and their consequences and form internal working models in which the self and others are represented as trustworthy and reliable, or suspicious and inconsistent. While this is going on, parenting practices can meet or thwart the developing child's basic needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, and in so doing facilitate or inhibit the development of his or her competencies as an adult. The residual effects of parenting practices are abundantly evident during the years of emerging adulthood and influence the course of the entire lifespan of offspring.

In this chapter, we review research and theory that illustrates and explains how parenting practices influence young adults' psychological and social competencies. The review starts with parenting styles, family communication pat-

terns, and overparenting as significant contemporary process in the parenting literature that document numerous connections with the competencies of families' offspring. Next, three theoretical accounts are reviewed to explain how parenting influences child competencies. These include social cognitive theory, attachment theory, and self-determination theory. Collectively, this research and theory shows how parenting practices are extraordinarily powerful determinants of core social and psychological competencies in young adults.

Parenting Practices That Affect Young Adult Competencies

A. Baumrind's Parenting Typology

A parenting style refers to a cluster of parental practices that produce relatively stable and identifiable patterns of child adjustment outcomes. Parenting styles reflect variations in the attitudes and practices of parents, and are comprised of discrete parenting behaviors. Baumrind's (1966, 1967, 1970, 1978, 1989, 1991) parenting styles typology represents the leading typological approach to parenting. It treats the family as a system, and a parenting style as a gestalt made up of parenting practices that interact in such a way that their joint effects differ from the sum of the individual effects of the parental practices. A typology assumes that the types are more than and different from the sum of their parts.

The original aim of the typology was to understand and promote ways that parents could socialize their children for the best possible outcomes for themselves and society. Baumrind (1970) introduced the construct of instrumental competence to describe behavior that is socially responsible, independent, friendly, cooperative, achievement-oriented, dominant, and purposive. For Baumrind, the goal of parenting was to raise a child whose identity was grounded in both agency, the drive to distinguish oneself from others through self-determination and self-assertion, and communion, the desire to be of service and to be included and connected with others. Optimal competence reflects the integration of agentic and communal qualities, and the typology assumes that parenting styles differ in their ability to produce optimally competent children.

The typology is based on two orthogonal higher-order dimensions of parenting: demandingness and responsiveness (Macoby & Martin, 1983). Demandingness reflects a parent's willingness to act as an agent of socialization and references the behaviors used to integrate a child into family and society. Being a demanding parent involves confrontation, maturity demands, and monitoring, as well as consistent discipline and a willingness to address disobedient

behavior. Responsiveness reflects a parent's pleasure in parenting and recognition of the child's special needs and references parental behaviors that foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion. It involves parental behaviors that express warmth and reciprocity of attachment and are accepting, attuned, and aware of developmental stages. By crossing the two major dimensions of parenting, Baumrind (1991) identified four parenting styles comprised of different combinations of demandingness and responsiveness.

Authoritarian parents are highly demanding but nonresponsive. They have extensive rules and assert parental power through punishment, relying on behavioral and psychological control, and in some instances, rejection. Parental demands often take the form of edicts, while simultaneously placing strict limits on a child's allowable expression (i.e., speak when spoken to). Authoritarian parents are not tolerant of a reciprocal relationship with their children, nor do they encourage their child's independence and individuality.

Authoritative parents are highly demanding and highly responsive. They exercise firm behavioral control, but do not hem the child in with restrictions. They establish clear and reasonable rules and standards for conduct, and expect children to be responsible and behave age-appropriately. Authoritative parents are consistent and reasonable in their disciplinary action, and enforce their parental role while simultaneously recognizing their child's individuality. They communicate mutual respect and reciprocity by allowing the child to make demands, expressing acceptance of the child and recognition of his/her psychological autonomy. An authoritative style does not strike a balance between demandingness and responsiveness, it treats them as separate dimensions to be reconciled (Baumrind, 1971).

Permissive parents are low on demandingness but high on responsiveness. They demonstrate lax behavioral control, avoid confrontation and asserting authority, and make few demands for mature behavior. Instead, children are allowed to regulate their own behavior and make their own decisions. Permissive parents do not set age-appropriate rules, and when misconduct occurs, children are not reprimanded nor held accountable. Parental guidance and influence are eschewed in favor of tolerance, acceptance of the child's impulses, and the desire to be a friend to the child.

Rejecting-neglecting parents are low on demandingness and on responsiveness. These parents are uninvolved. They may be emotionally and/or physically disengaged from the child, or they may actively neglect or reject their childrearing responsibilities altogether. Parenting may be a burden, and the uninvolved parent may be motivated to minimize interaction with the child. The rejecting-

neglecting parent doesn't provide support, structure, or monitoring of the child's behavior, and instead communicates the desire to keep the child at a distance.

Parenting style impacts child psychosocial adjustment, achievement level, academic success, and substance use (Baumrind, 1991; Macoby & Martin, 1983; Park & Buriel, 1998). Research has produced a consistent picture of the type of parenting conducive to the successful socialization of children in the United States. Parenting that is emotionally supportive, that sets high standards while simultaneously granting appropriate autonomy, and that privileges bidirectional communication, is critical to the development of instrumental competence. Both concurrently and prospectively, the highest level of instrumental competence in children is linked to authoritative parenting (Baurmind, 1989; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994). Moreover, studies of samples in the United States suggest that in general, adolescents do best when their parents are authoritative, regardless of their racial or social background, or their parents' marital status (Steinberg, 1990). Authoritative parenting is associated with greater independence, self-reliance, and social responsibility, as well as with higher self-confidence, self-esteem, and academic achievement (Baumrind, 1991; McClun & Merrell, 1998). Authoritative parental control encourages responsible conformity with group standards without the loss of autonomy and assertiveness.

Both authoritative and authoritarian parents are demanding, but the quality of their demandingness is different. Demandingness can range from firm behavioral control to restrictive psychological control. Psychological control intrudes on the psychological and emotional development of a child, whereas behavioral control attempts to manage or control a child's behavior (Schaefer, 1965; Steinberg, 1990). Psychological control is indirect, covert, intrusive, and attempts to manipulate the child's psychological world and personal identity through withdrawal of affection and guilt induction (Barber & Harmon, 2002). Behavioral control is direct, overt, and geared toward inducing compliance with parental directives through limit setting, maturity demands, and monitoring. Psychological control is coercive, whereas behavioral control is confrontative. The distinction highlights the difference between being controlling and being in control. Authoritative parents rely on behavioral control, whereas authoritarian parents rely on both behavioral and psychological control.

The two forms of control tend to have opposite effects on adolescents. Adolescents tend to be adversely affected by psychological control because of the level of intrusiveness; psychological control stifles children's expression of autonomy and independence (Barber, Olsen, Shagel, 1994; Schaefer, 1965).

Adolescents' benefit, however, from behavioral control because it sets limits and establishes standards for behavior. Ultimately, it is the kind of power assertion, confrontative versus coercive, not the amount of power assertion, that differentiates authoritative from authoritarian parenting (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Authoritative parents temper high expectations and demands with sensitivity and open communication. They allow children leeway to make decisions and speak freely. By tempering demands with responsive behavior, they avoid the harmful effects of coercive control.

Research has shown some similarities in the child outcomes of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (Baumrind, 1966). In both cases, children tend to be more withdrawn, to lack independence, and to be more angry and defiant. There are also some differences. Children of authoritarian parents tend to lack social competence with peers, lack initiative and spontaneity, and demonstrate less evidence of conscience (Macoby & Martin, 1983). Children of permissive parents tend to have difficulty with impulse control and aggression, and they tend to be less responsible and self-reliant (Macoby & Martin, 1983). Although authoritarian and permissive parenting styles appear to be opposite to one another, they share the common quality of minimizing opportunities for children to learn to adaptively cope with stress and challenges. The authoritative style does this by exerting high levels of behavioral and psychological control that restrict the child's autonomy and inhibit the development of self-efficacy. The permissive style is just the opposite, the lax behavioral control and lack of standards does not demand anything of the child, which also interferes with the development of self-efficacy. In this way, both parenting styles reduce the child's ability to cope with frustration and disappointment, and to deal effectively with everyday challenges (Baumrind, 1966; Trumpeter, Watson, O'Leary, & Weathington, 2008).

In contrast to the authoritative parenting style, which is associated with the highest level of instrumental competence in children, the rejecting-neglecting parenting style is associated with the poorest child outcomes (Macoby & Martin, 1983; Baumrind, 1991). Children of neglecting-rejecting parents are the worst off, and tend to be the least instrumentally competent. They tend to be higher in antisocial behavior and lower in overall competence, and relative to the other parenting types, the adolescent children of neglecting-rejecting parents are the most likely to use drugs and alcohol (Baumrind, 1991). The research findings associated with this parenting style suggest that abject abdication of parental responsibility is far worse for child development than family environments that are harsh, restrictive, and discouraging. Parental involvement, even of low quality, is better than no parental involvement at all.

Regardless of how important it is, parental involvement must be linked to the child's developmental level, with high levels of involvement in the early stages, decreasing incrementally as the child is able to function more independently (Barnes & Olson, 1985). Parenting research suggests that adolescents benefit from an imbalance that increasingly favors freedom over control (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). Ultimately, adolescent development is inhibited by authoritarian, permissive, and disengaged parenting practices, and is facilitated by reciprocal, balanced, and caring parenting practices characteristic of authoritative parents.

B. Family Communication Patterns

The family's socialization of its members has been widely researched with the use of various theories and concepts, including family systems (Cox & Paley, 1997) and symbolic interactionism (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). The underlying mechanism for this socialization is a common thread inherent in most perspectives—communication. Families create a shared social reality, that the members of the family use to be understood and to understand each other (Samek & Reuter, 2011). Specifically, research on family communication patterns points out that family communication directly influences offspring, shaping their behaviors, psychosocial outcomes, and communication practices beyond the family (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997, 2002a; Schrodt, Witt & Messersmith, 2008). Unfortunately, what is appropriate for one family may be considered dysfunctional for another, a concept that drives the need to understand how family of origin communication patterns influence how emerging adults communicates in their individual development and their relationships outside the family (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b).

Theory of family communication patterns (FCP) began with McLeod and Chaffee (1972), who sought to identify how mass media messages and family communication patterns are related. Specifically, they looked at how family communication patterns influence mass media message interpretations. They presented concept-orientation and socio-orientation dimensions of the family communication environment, measuring whether parental discussion of ideas or social roles/relationships, respectively, influence a child's decision-making. In an effort to iron out inconsistencies in research using family communication patterns theory, Ritchie (1991) and Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997, 2002a, 2002b) reevaluated McLeod and Chaffee's (1972) orientations and reestablished the concept- and socio-orientation dimensions as conversation orientation and conformity orientation. These are the dominant dimensions today, which have been expanded into the family communication environment instrument

(FCEI). FCEI furthers FCP theory and identifies that "husband-wife and parent-child schemata interact in systematic ways" (Schrodt, et al., 2008). However, the split in research with regard to family communication patterns has stayed central: old versus new. Mass, political, and business communication scholars continue to rely on McLeod and Chaffee's (1972) original FCP measure, while interpersonal and family scholars focus on the revised FCP or the FCEI (for a review, see Schrodt et al., 2008).

As emerging adults shift from interacting with their family to focusing more on themselves and interactions with individuals outside of their family, the family communication patterns they experience will affect various cognitive and behavioral elements (Schrodt, et al., 2008). The experiences in the family depend on levels of conversation orientation and conformity orientation, and how the two orientations interact. Conversation orientation refers to how open the family climate is to free communication, participation, and interaction about a variety of topics (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Conformity orientation, on the other hand, is how much the family's climate "stresses homogeneity of attitudes, values, and beliefs" (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 60).

Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997, 2002a, 2002b) lay out four family types that result from the conversation and conformity orientations' interactions: consensual, pluralistic, protective, and laissez faire. Consensual families experience high levels of both conversational orientation and conformity orientation, valuing open communication while still trying to maintain the hierarchical structure in the family. Pluralistic families also are high in conversation orientation, valuing unconstrained communication and communication competence, but also have low conformity orientation, promoting independent ideas of the family's members. Protective families are high in conformity orientation and low in conversation orientation. These families promote obedience rather than open discussion, which likely results in children being easily influenced/persuaded by figures with authority outside the family as well. Finally, laissez faire families are low on both conversation orientation and conformity orientation. This type of family is likely to limit family member interaction and only communicate about certain topics. Research dealing with FCP theory has utilized it both for the orientations perspectives and the family types perspectives, revealing a wide array of findings on offspring outcomes. These findings help us understand how the different elements of family communication patterns can shape emerging adults and, as a result, shape future interactions outside the family.

Young (2009) investigated the connection between family communication patterns and person- versus position-centered parenting. Participants in her study

reported a significant positive association between person-centered, reflection-enhancing parenting and their perceived development of communication and emotional competencies. This type of parenting focuses, in part, on communication orientation, though the study also found that high conformity orientation did not add or detract from the participants' perceptions. Family communication patterns are also linked to young adult development of identity style, making the connection beyond just communication competency and social skills (Bosch, Segrin, & Curran, 2012). Specifically, higher conversation and higher conformity in family communication predict identity styles in which young adults are willing to make decisions, whether the information comes from experience and information processing (i.e., informational identity style) or whether the information comes from social norms and/or significant others (i.e., normative identity style). Therefore, it seems that individuals are more comfortable making decisions, regardless of where the information comes from, if they have experienced both open communication and a sense of hierarchy and organization.

Conformity within communication has been shown to have some positive impact on some relationships. For example, Dunleavy, Wanzer, Krezmine, and Ruppel, (2011) found that daughters who felt that their communication skills were similar to that of their fathers were more likely to be high in conversation orientation within the general family patterns, were more satisfied with the relationship with their father, and engaged in conversations with their father more frequently. However, this finding did depend on the family type. Specifically, families that promoted open and frequent communication were more likely to have relationship satisfaction in the father-daughter dyad. However, conformity was also important, as the results of the study showed that a "certain degree of likemindedness" was also important to relationship satisfaction, as daughters in consensual style families reported higher satisfaction, with daughters from protective style families showing no significant difference than those in consensual style families (Dunleavy et al., 2011, p. 592).

Family communication patterns have also helped inform knowledge of adjustment patterns of young adults, with particular focus on adopted versus nonadopted individuals. For example, researchers have looked at how adopted young adults develop their identities, attachment development to parents, and the development of various mental health issues, as compared to nonadopted young adults (Rueter & Koerner, 2008; Samek & Reuter, 2011). Based on the idea that families create a shared reality to better communicate with each other, Rueter and Koerner (2008) found that families that emphasized both conversation and conformity orientations were least likely to have children, adopted

and nonadopted, with adjustment problems. However, in adoptive families, styles that emphasize conformity over conversation (i.e., protective) or did not emphasize either orientation (laissez faire) were likely to have more adjustment issues and/or were less likely to work on lessening these issues. On the other hand, a degree of control is necessary, as communication without control also leads to poor adjustment in both adopted and nonadopted children, though adopted children are generally at higher risk of adjustment problems. This was also the case when looking at sibling relationships between adopted and nonadopted siblings.

Sibling closeness was found to be highest in families that emphasized both conformity and conversation, as both are important for reduction in family conflict and improved family relationships since both help establish a shared reality (Samek & Rueter, 2011). With regard to adoption, consensual families (high in conversation and conformity) fostered the most emotionally close bonds between genetically unrelated siblings (i.e., adopted siblings), with the other family types presenting equally low emotional closeness in genetically unrelated siblings. Behavioral closeness in adopted children, on the other hand, was not significantly different from nonadopted children, and was strongest in consensual families.

With regard to how these various characteristics of family of origin shape emerging adult's behavior in other interpersonal relationships, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002b) found evidence to support the idea that how individuals act in interpersonal relationships is influenced by the communication patterns they learned in their families of origin. Specifically, an individual tends to approach conflict in a romantic relationship similarly to what he or she experienced within his or her family of origin, with particular focus on conformity's role in conflict and conversation orientation's effect on conformity's strength. This adds to earlier findings that conformity orientation in families was positively correlated with conflict avoidance (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997) and in instances of high conversation orientation, conformity was also positively correlated with an individual's negative reaction, often verbal aggression, to conflict in romantic relationships (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Schrodt and Carr (2012) supported these findings in their research, which found that conversation orientation is inversely correlated and conformity orientation is, in fact, positively correlated with trait verbal aggression. Together, these relationships were found to be significant predictors of verbal aggression in emerging adults.

On a lighter note, conversation orientation is positively associated with relational maintenance behaviors in young adult romantic relationships, which

is consistent with research that finds families with high conversation orientation producing offspring with greater perceived interpersonal skills (Flowers, Pearson, & Beck, 2011; Koesten, 2004). Family communication patterns have also been found to influence how emerging adults interact with friends. Specifically, through his incorporation of Bandura's (1977, 2001) social cognitive theory, Ledbetter (2009) found that families with high conversation orientation and low conformity orientation produce young adult children who experience more friendship closeness.

The one area of family communication where family communication styles seem irrelevant is in having difficult conversations. Difficult conversations are considered those that are emotionally charged and have uncertainty, such as those dealing with end-of-life decisions, sexual behaviors, etc. (Keating, Russell, Cornacchione & Smith, 2013). Regardless of family type, Keating et al.'s (2013) participants reported that they initiated difficult conversations. This suggests that the importance of a difficult conversation may outweigh the conversation/conformity orientation set up.

Overall, the family communication pattern a child encounters while growing up directly and indirectly influences the child's behavior, psychosocial outcomes, and communication competence. This is especially true when considering the child's behavior in other interpersonal relationships outside the family as an emerging adult.

C. Overparenting

"Helicopter parenting" is a colloquial term used to describe overly involved parents who hover over their children, ready to swoop down and resolve any problems that the child might encounter (Cline & Fay, 1990; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2012). In the research literature, this type of parenting is also referred to as parenting out of control (Nelson, 2010) or overparenting (Locke, Campbell, & Kavanagh, 2012; Munich & Munich, 2009; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, & Murphy, 2012). Although we use the term "overparenting," all of these terms appear to describe a type of parenting that is developmentally inappropriate for the needs of what is usually a late adolescent or young adult child. Overparenting involves excessive levels of control over the child, high levels of tangible assistance, excessive parental involvement sometimes to the point of enmeshment, risk aversion, and anticipatory problem solving by the parent. These hyperinvolved and risk-averse parents try to shield their children from any perceived obstacle and appear to take a high level of personal responsibility for their children's success and happiness – outcomes that they perhaps also

experience vicariously. All of these parenting behaviors are supposedly enacted with the goal of keeping the child out of harm's way and ensuring successful child outcomes. Examples of helicopter parenting or overparenting can be found in parents involving themselves in salary negotiations between their university educated child and a potential employer (e.g., Collegiate Employment Research Institute, 2007; 2011), parents arguing about a grade with a university professor on their young adult child's behalf, or more simply paying bills and doing laundry for their young adult child—tasks that the young adult child could easily perform on his or her own.

Ordinarily, high levels of parental involvement are adaptive for child outcomes. Accordingly, at first, it may seem that overparenting is just a form of parental involvment that should theoretically promote young adults' competencies. However, the available research evidence uniformly suggests that this is not the case, and this is the paradox of overparenting. Despite seemingly good intentions, overparenting appears to promote traits in young adults that are not adaptive to success in later life and that may hinder the development of important psychosocial competencies.

Among the important competencies to be cultivated in young adults through effective parenting, few are more consequential than sound mental health. It is safe to assume that an implicit goal of virtually all parents is to raise a child who is happy, rational, relatively free of anxieties, and unburdened by psychological distress. Unfortunately, overparenting appears antithetical to this goal. For example, young adult children exposed to overparenting experience higher levels of depression and lower levels of life satisfaction than those who were not exposed to overparenting (Schiffrin et al., 2013). Similarly, young adults exposed to high levels of overparenting are more likely to be on prescription medications for anxiety or depression, compared to those exposed to lower levels of overparenting (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011). A structural equation modeling analysis showed that overparenting has an indirect effect on increased young adult anxiety, through compromised coping skills (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013). Collectively, these findings show that overparenting is associated with compromised mental health among young adult offspring. This appears most evident in symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Another basic competency that one might look for in young adults is involvement in harmonious family relationships. Obviously at this critical developmental juncture, positive family relationships are beneficial to young adults' well-being and ability to cope with the stressors of emerging adulthood. However, once again, research shows that overparenting is not adaptive to the

development of this type of competence. Among young adults, overparenting is negatively associated with open parent-child communication, assessed with statements such as "It is very easy for me to express all of my true feelings to my parent" (Segrin et al., 2013). Overparenting is also positively associated with young adults' reports of a critical family environment (Segrin, Givertz, Swiatkowski, & Montgomery, 2014). In the Segrin et al. (2014) investigation, a critical family environment was measured with negative parent attitudes toward the child, negative child attitudes toward the parent, and criticism in family communication. This initial evidence points to potential ill effects of overparenting and the young adult child's ability to sustain harmonious relationships with his or her parents and perhaps other family members.

The difficulties in family relationships raise significant questions about both the motivations behind overparenting as well as how this behavior is received by young adults. It would not be wise to assume that all parents who engage in this behavior have purely benevolent attitudes toward their child. For example, some might see their child as incompetent and in need of excessive, even intrusive, parental involvement. Similarly, it may not be accurate to assume that young adults are desirous of overparenting. Some might reject and resent these parenting behaviors. In either case, an environment marked by overparenting does not appear optimal for developing the family relationships that will be a source of support and positivity for young adults.

Most parents hope to raise children who possess personality traits that are adaptive to success, achievement, and amicable relationships with other people. Traits such as agreeableness and conscientiousness represent such competencies in the domain of personality. Overparenting has been associated with greater narcissism (Segrin et al., 2013) and a greater sense of entitlement (Givertz & Segrin, 2012; Segrin et al., 2012) in young adults. Researchers have also found no significant association between overparenting and more socially adaptive personality traits such as self-worth and identity achievement (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) or self-efficacy and emotional intelligence (Segrin et al., 2012). Consequently, it can be concluded that overparenting may contribute to personality traits that would likely make it difficult for young adults to get along well with other people, and that overparenting does not appear to promote personality traits in offspring that will allow them to succeed and flourish in life.

The influence of overparenting on the personality traits of offspring is likely an insidious process. The extraordinarily high levels of involvement, problem solving on the child's behalf, and provision of tangible assistance may teach children of helicopter parents that they are important, always worthy of atten-

tion, and the center of the family, if not community. Over years, this learning process might alter ordinary ego development, resulting in a young adult with a high sense of entitlement and narcissism. Consequently, the same parenting behaviors that were perhaps intended to make life better for the child, might actually cultivate traits that will elicit ridicule and rejection from peers later in life.

One final aspect of young adults' competence that has been studied in relation to overparenting is coping. Coping skills are an essential element of healthy psychosocial functioning. All people experience stressful events. What often separates those who are damaged by stress from those who may actually flourish under conditions of stress are the coping skills possessed by the person confronted with the stressors. We have conducted two studies that collectively included over 1000 parent-young adult child dyads, showing that overparenting is negatively associated with young adults' coping skills (Segrin et al., 2013, 2014). These deficient coping skills appear to put young adults at risk for experiencing stress and anxiety.

It is easy to understand how overparenting could potentially corrupt the development of young adults' coping skills. The hallmark of overparenting is intensive problem solving on the child's behalf and even anticipatory problem solving that prevents the child from ever having to confront some problems or even realize their existence. Although some might view this as an idyllic context for young adults, it may actually work against the development of their competencies in the long run. Coping skills are acquired and honed through practice. People are confronted by stressors and must learn how to address them and solve their attendant problems, often through trial and error. This is consistent with theoretical models of parenting (e.g., Kohut, 1977; Winnicott, 1953) in which effective parents allow the child to experience some challenges and frustrations in the service of building better coping and problem solving skills. When others intervene to solve problems on behalf of the child, the child never has the opportunity to develop these skills. This explains one of the many paradoxical aspects of overparenting.

It should be noted that virtually all of the research in this emerging area has been correlational in nature. This raises ambiguity about supposed causes and effects of overparenting. It would be entirely reasonable to assume that overparenting is deleterious to the development of psychosocial competencies in young adults. Many of the elements of overparenting may corrupt basic developmental processes (e.g., learning coping skills through trial and error). However, it is equally possible that young adults with poor psychosocial competencies may elicit overparenting from their caregivers. Parents who notice that their children are anxious, have poor coping skills, etc. might intensify their efforts and ef-

fectively begin to overparent their child. In fact, both of these possibilities are real. It would only be through very lengthily longitudinal research studies that these potential causal effects could be effectively sorted out.

Theoretical Explanations of Parenting and Child Competencies

A. Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandua, 1986) grew out of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) as an explanation for how people acquire behaviors through a variety of different mechanisms rooted in reward, punishment, and very often, observation of other people. Parents are perhaps *the* primary role models for their children. As children's cognitive and behavioral capacities develop, they often look to their parents as guides for appropriate behaviors.

According to social cognitive theory, people come to learn about the consequences of behavior through (1) direct experience or (2) vicarious experience. In direct experience, people perform a behavior and then experience the consequences of that behavior. If the consequences are positive, the behavior is likely to be reenacted in the future in pursuit of those same positive consequences. If the consequences are negative, the behavior is likely to be avoided or extinguished in an effort to avoid those punishing outcomes. What is unique about human cognition is the ability to learn about the consequences of behaviors through observation of a model. When models perform behaviors that are rewarded, observers are likely to enact the same behaviors, and when models perform behaviors that are punished, observers ordinarily avoid enacting these behaviors themselves (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963). In social cognitive theory, when people start performing a previously inhibited behavior because they saw someone rewarded for enacting the same behavior, this is known as a disinhibitory effect. Similarly, when people stop performing a behavior that was previously part of their repertoire because they saw someone punished for performing the behavior, this is known as an inhibitory effect.

Obviously, parents generate and shape consequences for their children's behaviors. Whenever parents reward or punish their children's behaviors, they are creating learning through direct experience (e.g., "If I do not keep my room clean, then I will have some of my privileges taken away"). Parents who reward conformity and punish expressions of individuality teach their children that it is best to fit in and not go against group norms, and they do so through generation of direct experience.

A more subtle but equally powerful form of learning occurs when children observe their parents' behaviors. Through the process of parenting, parents enact behaviors that can potentially shape children's world views and motivate or curtail children's own behaviors. For example, an anxious parent who is hyper sensitive to threats in the environment may therefore insist that the child carries a cell phone at all times, forbid the child from spending time away from adult supervision, and not allow the child to partake in activities that might include some strangers. This type of parenting may unknowingly teach the child that the world is a dangerous place and that unknown people are to be feared. In effect, the child has observed his or her parent acting on these fears and therefore comes to internalize those same fears. Such a process of observational learning could easily corrupt the development of basic social competencies in the child by generating a preponderance of socially avoidant tendencies.

Social cognitive theory identifies three major motivations for performing a behavior: direct incentive, self-produced incentive, and vicarious incentive (Bandura, 1986). In direct incentive, people perform the behavior because it is inherently rewarding (e.g., drinking water when thirsty). Self-produced incentive motivates people to perform a behavior because they essentially reward or congratulate themselves for doing so (e.g., a golfer who feels happy about hitting a hole in one on the golf course). People are sometimes motivated to perform a behavior because they see others doing so with positive consequences and this is the process of vicarious incentive.

Every behavior of a parent is susceptible to the observation of his or her children. When parents demonstrate competencies (e.g., greeting other people, solving problems through reasoning and persistence, resolving conflicts through compromise), if there are positive outcomes (e.g., other people expressing liking for the parent, effective problem solving, resolution of the conflict) children are likely to appreciate, value, and even attempt to enact these same behaviors. In so doing, the children are initiating the development of their own competencies. However, the acquisition of these competencies does not come about by learning through direct experience in such cases. Rather, the acquisition of the competencies happens as a result of observing a parent enacting and modeling competent examples of these behaviors.

B. Attachment Theory

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980) proposes the existence of an evolutionarily derived, psychological-cognitive system that regulates how individuals perceive and relate to significant others to maintain a sense of safety and security. The theory suggests that based on early childhood experiences

with primary caregivers, individuals develop an attachment style that shapes how they interact with others. The attachment style developed during infancy and childhood is thought to be relatively stable across the lifespan (Shaver, Collins, & Clark, 1996; Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, & Albersheim, 2000).

As a result of consistent patterns of interaction with primary caregivers early in life, individuals develop chronically accessible working models of self and other. Differences in internal working models lead to relatively stable individual differences in attachment-system functioning, which shapes the attachment system in adulthood, and predisposes the individual to respond to attachment figures in predictable ways. The theory predicts that consistent and responsive care leads to the development of a secure attachment orientation, whereas neglectful, rejecting care or inconsistently attentive care leads to the development of an insecure attachment orientation (i.e., avoidant and/or anxious). Attachment avoidance reflects the extent to which an individual is uncomfortable with closeness and depending on others and prefers emotional distance and self-reliance. Attachment anxiety reflects the extent to which an individual craves closeness and connection with others, but simultaneously worries about partner unavailability or not being valued by the partner. People who score low on both dimensions are said to have secure attachment; higher scores on either or both dimensions reflects insecure attachment.

The intrapsychic and interpersonal consequences of insecure attachment have been well documented. A wealth of evidence has demonstrated that insecure attachment is associated with higher rates of depression (Heene, Buysse, & Van Oost, 2007; Scharfe, 2007; Sutin & Gillath, 2009). Whether the attachment insecurity is based in anxiety or avoidance (or both), individuals high on these dimensions tend to experience greater psychological distress and psychopathology (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2007). There is also ample research demonstrating that attachment style impacts communication behaviors (Godbout, Dutton, Lussier, & Sabourin, 2009; Guerrero, Farinelli, & McEwan, 2009). Insecure attachment is associated with ineffective self-disclosure (Bradford, Feeney, & Campbell, 2002; Milkulincer & Nachson, 1991), lower levels of supportive and responsive behavior (Kane et al., 2009; Kobak & Hazan, 1991), lower levels of positive affective expression (Guerrero et al., 2009; Noller, 2006), ineffective caregiving (Millings & Walsh, 2009), and higher levels of destructive conflict communication (Shaver & Milkulincer, 2005; Heene et al., 2005, 2007).

Given the tendency of insecurely attached individuals to experience psychological distress and to demonstrate a lack of communication competence, it is not surprising that insecurely attached individuals tend to report lower relationship

quality. This is largely because insecure attachment has a negative impact on perceptions of relationship quality (Mikulincer, Florian, Cowan, & Cowan, 2002). Compared with secure counterparts, insecurely attached individuals have been found to have more negative interpersonal cognitions (Pietromonaco & Carnelly, 1994), relationship expectations (Mikulincer & Arad, 1999) and relationship beliefs (Whisman & Allan, 1996). They have also been found to hold more negative views toward their romantic partners (Feeney & Noller, 1991), to perceive their partners as less supportive (Collins & Read, 1990), and to provide more negative explanations for a romantic partner's behavior (Collins, 1996). Overall, individuals with insecure attachment report more negative relationship experiences in the areas of relationship satisfaction, intimacy, commitment, and trust (Feeney, 1999; Givertz, Woszidlo, Segrin, & Knutson, 2013; Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

C. Self–Determination Theory

According to self-determination theory, there are three universal psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Competence is a feeling of security and confidence in one's own ability, autonomy reflects the need to make one's own choices, and relatedness is the need for involvement in genuine and caring relationships. The pursuit and satisfaction of these needs are postulated to be essential for growth and wellness. In general, the need for autonomy is viewed as having paramount importance in the development of adolescents into emerging adults. When thwarted, opportunities to develop competencies are compromised. Parenting practices can play a major role in the satisfaction or frustration of these basic needs. Parenting practices characterized as autonomy support actively encourage and support the child's capacity to be self-initiating and help to fulfill the child's need for autonomy. Autonomy support involves encouragement of initiation, exploration, and responsible choice. This practice is associated with positive child outcomes, particularly the internalization of positive values. Autonomy support is a key component of successful parenting that contributes to the development of child competencies (Joussemet, Landry, & Koestner, 2008). In contrast, parenting practices that entail psychological control are detrimental to both the child's need for autonomy and development of basic competencies.

Overparenting poses a substantial threat to all three of the needs identified in self-determination theory. For example, excessive problem solving on the child's behalf could easily diminish the child's perceived sense of competence and perhaps the child's actual competence due to poorly developed coping skills (Segrin et al., 2013) and low self-efficacy (Givertz & Segrin, 2012).

Some of the more intrusive and controlling qualities of overparenting could damage parent-child relationships, thus compromising the child's relatedness. Indeed, prior research shows that overparenting has an indirect effect on young adults' diminished family satisfaction through more problematic parent-child communication (Segrin et al., 2012). The intensive guidance, lack of child self-direction, and intrusive involvement that are components of overparenting clearly present major threats to an adolescent or emerging adult child's desire for autonomy, and this is the core human need identified in self-determination theory.

The parenting styles identified by Baumrind have obvious implications for the development of child competencies as explained by self-determination theory. For example, authoritative parenting is an autonomy supportive form or parenting, whereas authoritarian parenting aggravates the child's autonomy. Among young adults, exposure to authoritative an parenting is predictive of greater academic competence and higher intrinsic academic motivation (Turner, Chandler, Heffer, 2009). Excessive maternal control, a practice common in authoritarian parenting, has been shown to predict lower levels of empathic support for a romantic partner, and lower empathic concern for others more generally in young adults (Kanat-Maymon & Assor, 2010). Such findings illustrate the wide range of competencies that are potentially corrupted by overly controlling parenting practices. The autonomy supportive authoritative parenting fosters the development of child competencies whereas the psychological control inherent in authoritarian parenting interferes with development of basic competencies and often leaves the child vulnerable to developing a range of psychopathologies (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010).

Like overparenting and the parenting practices identified by Baumrind, family communication patterns have obvious implications for the fundamental needs of children and young adults. Families high in conversation orientation surely do more to support the autonomy of their offspring than those with a low conversation orientation. Conversation oriented families place a high value on open expression of ideas that would theoretically allow family members to easily assert their own thoughts and build their own identity with the support of their family. In contrast, families with a high conformity orientation would clearly aggravate the autonomy needs of their members by continually stressing family harmony at the expense of any individuality. By failing to support young adults' autonomy needs, such families are likely to also threaten relatedness needs and perhaps even competence needs of young adults. Family conversation orientation in particular has proven to be a substantial predictor of psychological

well-being in mostly young adult samples (Schrodt, Witt, & Messersmith, 2008) as would be predicted by self-determination theory.

Conclusion

As this review indicates, parenting practices are a compelling determinant of how children, adolescents, young adults, and perhaps even older adults, come to understand and interact with the world in which they live. Parenting practices that provide consistency, nurturance, rationale, support, supervision, and allow for a reasonable amount of child self-direction, expressiveness, and individuality tend to promote sound mental health and functional interpersonal relationships well into adulthood. In contrast, less effective parenting practices that are overly punitive, capricious, excessively lax, with too much emphasis on conformity, that allow insufficient individuality, and that do for children what they could easily do for themselves, do not adequately promote social or psychological competence. The unfortunate and enduring legacy of such parenting practices appears in the form of depression, low self-efficacy, anxiety, poor coping skills, and a myriad of interpersonal relationship problems both within and beyond the family of origin.

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Being Single as a Result of Experience from Their Family of Origin

Julita Czernecka

INTRODUCTION

"Who are these singles really? What does their life look like? Do they have anything in common with their image in the media?" .These questions were present in many discussions which I followed on academic debates at many universities and on Internet forums (Czernecka, 2008). That is why the study which I conducted was aimed at gaining in-depth knowledge into singles living in big cities. I wanted to identify the reasons for them being alone, which the respondents were aware of. I was interested in which reasons they would state themselves. This article focuses on negative experiences to parents' relationships, as well as those of close family members, which the respondents might have observed and which were important in their decision to remain single. Furthermore it describes other aspects of singlehood associated with family life such as overly strong bonds with parents, ideal relationship between parents, the consequences of being only-children, and involvement in helping relatives.

PROBLEMS WITH THE DEFINITION "SINGLE"

In our everyday life we often use the word "single", which we to some extent understand automatically. But when we have to precisely define the term we find it quite difficult. Formally, singles are unmarried people. This group consists of people who have never married, as well as those who are divorced, widowed and separated. In a dictionary we can find: *single*: one in number; solitary

or sole; lone; unmarried; pertaining to the unmarried state. In English and American literature, single is a very big category of people with no distinction of their formal situation, marriage or social status. Additionally "single" is used interchangeably with such terms as singlehood and singleness, not married, unmarried, and bachelor, all of which describe marital status. By contrast, terms such as lonely and loneliness are usually used to describe mental loneliness, or the state of being abandoned.

For some researchers terms such as feeling lonely, loneliness and living alone mean pretty much the same, and yet there are quite significant differences in their definitions. According to Gordon loneliness cannot be proved based on objective measuring scales of number and frequency of social interactions, it needs to be considered together with factors which determine the quality of social interactions and living alone as a preference, the choice of such a lifestyle (Gordon, 2003). Studies on loneliness refer to lots of different aspects, including emotional loneliness or emotional alienation due to an unfulfilled need to be close to someone who will return our love. The results of the studies show that this type of loneliness might lead to depression, tension, sleeping disorders, somatic problems, and feeling empty and meaningless (Cockrum & White, 1985). Another type of loneliness refers to the social dimension, i.e., when someone has no friends, relatives or people to spend their time with and share information (*social isolation*). This type of isolation results in feeling excluded, bored with life and discontent (Cockrum & White, 1985).

Unmarried people were usually called "spinsters" or "bachelors", and their loneliness was associated with their helplessness, beauty defects or mean character. Changes in the system of values had an impact on the transformation of terms which describe living alone and at the same time their perception in society. The category of being single out of choice was born. As emphasized by Gajda, living alone no longer means being "strange" or "worse" (Gajda, 1988). Although the traditional perception of singles as passive and lonely people is nowadays replaced by the "active" type, there are still a lot of stereotypes about these people (DePaulo & Morris, 2005). The concept of spinsters and bachelors is still present and has negative connotations of people who are lonely, isolated and passive.

One of the pioneers of studies on singles, Peter Stein, described them as people who are not married and are not in a steady, informal homo- or heterosexual relationship (Stein, 1976). This definition, however, does not solve the problem of whether we can call someone single if the person has been alone for a long or a short time. We should clearly define here time categories – can we use the

term single with those who have not been in a relationship "only" for a couple of weeks or months? Or maybe only those who have been living alone for years.

Another problem with the term is whether we can only refer to people living in single person households as single, or maybe those who live with their family or friends, too. If we assume that single means living in a single person household, this does not mean that they cannot be in a steady relationship with someone who does not live with them. We also need to define what a "stable" or "serious" relationship means, and what we call a "casual" relationship, "passing acquaintance" or "sexual escapade". Another important issue concerns having children – can single people raise children or is it a term reserved for people with no children only. As Żurek rightly points out, the definition of a single person does not include the stage of personal development at which a certain person is. "The term single does not evaluate whether it was a success or not. This does not mean tagging people, but the fact is that we use the word for a person who has chosen such a lifestyle as well as for somebody who finds himself alone and without a partner, something he finds traumatic and a result of unfortunate coincidences" (Żurek, 2008, p. 24).

Some researchers define this term precisely. For instance Muller (Żurek, 2008) classifies all those who do not live with their parents or partner as being single. For others, they are individuals who live in single person households and occasionally have sex with someone (Żurek, 2008). These definitions do not solve the issue of experiences and current motivations of single people, which can be very different. Another definition is given by an American sociologist, Timberger (2008), who states that single people are both those who live in single person households and those who live with their relatives or friends; those who are unmarried or divorced; with or without children; in a relationship ("romantic" relationship), and also those who have never been in a relationship.

Yet another definition refers to singles as young adults who do not have steady partners and live with their families (Masahiro, 1999). Masahiro uses the term "spoiled singles", as according to him these are grown up people who work and are quite independent financially, but still live with their parents. They do not want to live by themselves nor be in a relationship. Parents provide for them and do not "interfere" with the way they live. Thanks to that they have "board and lodging," and treat their parents as maids and their home as a hotel. The result is that they can save a lot and spend their savings on luxurious goods, which they would not be able to afford if they lived on their own (Motohiro, 2000).

In her book on single women, Paprzycka (2008) notices that the Western definitions of single life take into consideration a few basic criteria of this

social category: (1) being unmarried and not in a hetero- or homosexual relationship (excluding cohabitation), (2) living alone or running a single person household, (3) not missing having a partner and (4) accepting such a choice of lifestyle.

The definition of "a single" in Polish literature is also not very accurate. Grzeszczyk (2005), when writing about *single professional women,* defines them as heterosexual, unmarried or without a steady partner, professionals with secondary or higher education, living in big cities. Paprzycka (2008) defines "new single women" as educated, financially independent and not in a stable relationship. On the other hand, Slany indicates that singles chose such a lifestyle without a steady partner, but at the same time loneliness is not a final decision for them. They actively consume cultural and material goods which are created especially for them in big cities. Singles often live with people in a similar situation (Slany, 2002). Another definition of the term was created by Żurek who believes that singles are "people who have not yet made a decision about changing their family status, those who, due to some circumstances, have been made to live alone, and those who chose such a lifestyle…The age structure of singles includes very young people, who often study, and those who are in the stage of late adulthood and the elderly" (Żurek, 2005, p.77).

The results of the studies presented here will also concern different social categories, but they are mostly associated with singles living in big cities, young, well-educated people who are financially independent and unmarried.

The Current Research

Due to the ambiguous concept of "singlehood" I decided to define singles as people who live in cities (of 500,000 citizens and more), who are not in stable relationships, do not have children and do not live alone due to an unexpected event (e.g. death of a spouse, disability). The selection of participants for the study was purposive. They were heterosexual people aged 25–40, because this is the age when people usually decide whether or not to set up home. This is also when they decide to pursue personal development, education and a professional career. The youngest respondents were 27 years old, the oldest was 41. There were 60 participants – 10 women and 10 men in each age category: 25–30, 31–35 years old, and older than 36. The average age of those studied was 32.8 for women and 32.7 for men. At the time of the interviews the respondents had not been in a relationship for at least two years (a stable

relationship defined as being considered "serious" and "exclusive" by those involved), had never been married and had no children (but were not too old to potentially have them).

The respondents were university or college graduates and were financially independent. The singles who participated in the study were of different professions and held different positions: manager in a corporation (12), sole trader (7), journalist (6), teacher (6), administration worker (4), sales representative (4), manager in a small company (3), lawyer (3), specialist in public sector (3), academic teacher (2), IT specialist (2), policeman (1), stockbroker (1), veterinarian (1), accountant (1), photographer (1), financial advisor (1), nurse (1), psychologist (1).

The participants of the study live in Poland, in cities of 500,000 people or more. The reason for choosing residents from big cities was that currently cities are the scene of many social and cultural changes, and because it was in big cities in the West that the biggest growth in the number of singles was noted. Studies conducted by van Hoorn show that the percentage of people who live alone is highest among people in metropolises, where they are generally well educated, with high incomes, and considered "achievers" (Hoorn, 2000).

The respondents were chosen based on the snowball method. This is a technique which is applied in studies on specific social categories, and singles can be counted as such. The snowball method is based on collecting information about some members of a particular group which the author was in or managed to access. Later, these people were asked to name other potential participants of the study who met the above criteria. "The term snowball refers to the process of accumulation because every found person names the following ones" (Babbie 2009, p. 206). The analyzed material comes from 60 free-form interviews, oriented and conducted with 30 women and 30 men. Each interview lasted 40–90 minutes.

The issue required qualitative research. It was decided that the conducted study would be within a mainstream lifestyle study, with the qualitative approach allowing for complete analysis of the collected data. From the very beginning it was assumed that the study would not be statistically representative. It was supposed to help gather vast, precise and detailed information on the reasons for being single and the characteristics of chosen aspects of the lives of Polish singles.

In this article the quotations from respondents are signed with their name and age (e.g. Ewa, 30 – which means the respondent is 30 years old). I use also other symbols denote the experience the respondents have had in relationships:

S – serious relationships, C – casual relationships, SC – serious and casual relationships, N – no experience in relationships.

Parents' Unsuccessful Marriage

The results of the studies presented on the following pages show that the family of origin, especially the quality of the parents' relationship, strongly influences the attitude of young people towards their own marriage or being in a relationship. The respondents admitted that a negative image of father-mother relationships is an important reason for them being single. Firstly, they indicated the formality of the marriage of their parents, who actually lived not together but "next to each other." During their early youth and childhood they often witnessed their parents fighting in a disrespectful manner and with no will to compromise. The singles observed that the relationships of their parents lasted, although more in a virtual sense, as each of the parents had their own life, and only lived together for the sake of the children. The current life situation of the single is a consequence of the careful selection of partners. They are motivated to constantly reject potential candidates due to a very negative image of the relationship of their parents. Some of the respondents cannot imagine living in relationships or marriages similar to those of their parents, and therefore they prefer to be single than to live with the wrong partner: "My parents have been married for 34 years and I think that they are not happy, as they have different views, plans, or priorities, and little in common. And I think it's very important in marriage. I wouldn't like to repeat their mistakes" (Patrick, 35, C); "My parents have been married for over 30 years and their relationship is an absolute disaster. They are so different – their personalities, attitude, opinions… They live together because they learned how to tolerate each other and they got used to being together. I prefer to be alone" (Robert, 38, C).

Another explanation of the single life and not having confidence in happy relationships is the fact that parents were formally married but lived separately. One of the respondents admitted that it made her realize that in order to have a happy relationship the good will of two people who love each other is not enough. There are other factors which influence the success of a marriage, for instance harmony, communication and compromise: "My parents… are not separated or anything, but some time ago they simply decided that they did not want to live together anymore because they would kill each other. In fact, they are individualists and they each need a lot of space" (Nina, 31, SC). This made the respondent have negative connotations of living as a couple. Singles

admit that each partner at the beginning may seem perfect, but over the passage of time the image changes: we see a completely different person from the one who we fell in love with. The participants of the study were convinced that getting to know the partner well, and not being able to accept differences in the way they see the world or accept their different visions of the future result in the break-up of a relationship.

Other factor which influences their decisions on being single is their mother or father being together and having affairs at the same time. Watching parents cheating and hearing mutual accusations which resulted in numerous conflicts also impact the image of a relationship children have. One of the respondents said that, had it not been for the unsuccessful marriage of his parents, he probably would be able to trust a woman and build a stable relationship: "I started noticing and considering things when I was very young. The marriage of my parents had its ups and downs. I tried to memorize it, such a lesson for the future, to choose well, to think twice and to take care of everything…Both of my parents had steady lovers, they both knew about it. I even knew my father's lover. He was with the same woman for a few years. I think that if I had got a positive image from my parents, then later in life, my verification (of creating relationships – J.C.) would be completely different" (Adam, 33, SC). Unfortunately, as he admitted himself, based on his considerations, he created his own theory of a "perfect relationship" which he cannot make come true due to his anxiety of being in an intimate relationship with a woman.

One more reason for being single mentioned by the participants of the study was their memories of the divorce of their parents. For one of the respondents, the divorce of her parents was a very bad experience as she witnessed a bitter fight over her custody when she was still a little girl. She said that due to these experience she is "petrified" at the very thought of marriage and admitted that she lived without a partner also because of the memories of how difficult it was for her mother to get a divorce from her father (Julia, 38, SC). Another respondent emphasized that a strong need to be in a "true, deep and stable relationship" often cannot be fulfilled due to memories of parents breaking up. His strong desire to have a partner is suppressed and blocked by the fear of very negative emotions which he felt during his parents' divorce, and which are still vivid in his imagination: "My parents are divorced, but they were in a bad relationship for a long time. I was still a teenager when they got divorced. I wanted to punish them and kept running away from home and we lost touch. They live separately now, they are single. My father is an alcoholic and lives with his mother. My mother could be with someone but I think a relationship

with my father was too much for her and she does not want to have anything in common with him. She prefers to be alone" (Karl, 33, N). Arguments supporting their status, which are repeated by many of the singles interviewed for this study, are the various traumas from childhood, a mark left by the their parents' break-up and fear of being in a relationship. One of the respondents, for example, had psychological problems after his parents divorced – high anxiety that any relationship could fall apart regardless of how much effort we make to build it (Dominic, 27, SC).

Another reason for being single listed by the participants of the study was lack of faith in the stability of relationships. The singles talked about their parents trying to find new partners after the divorce and building new relationships. Unfortunately, these friendships did not turn into anything serious. One of the respondents revealed: "When I was a student, my mom was with one guy for a few years, but then they split up. And my dad… got divorced from his second wife a year ago and now has a fiancée who is four years younger than I am. But he told me that he won't remarry because it doesn't make any sense, so I don't have such a model (of a relationship – J.C.) at all" (Julia, 38, SC).

Singles from one-parent families gave one more reason for their lifestyle. They said that the parent who brought them up did not decide to have another relationship; therefore they do not have patterns of living as a couple. Those respondents were, consciously and subconsciously, not open to stable relationships as they did not know how to build happy ones. The respondents who had lost their mother or father in childhood admitted that they did not remember what the relationships of their parents looked like (widowed parents did not get involved with somebody else in any of the cases). One of the respondents, who was raised by her father, said that as she had had no opportunity to observe the relationships of her parents, she does not know much about how to behave in a relationship (Maya, 29, SC). The respondents from broken families, whose mothers did not decide to have a new relationship, admitted that these experience had had a real impact on their lack of skills associated with dealing with the opposite sex and playing the proper roles in a relationship.

The results of the studies show that experience of unsuccessful, unhappy marriages of parents caused various difficulties in adulthood: high emotional tensions, inhibitions, a passive attitude and the tendency to withdraw from social situations (Dąbrowska, 2001). "For the first time in our lives we observe a marriage as it is, role-played by our mothers and fathers, under the parental roof" (Przybył, 2001, p. 112), so people from single-parent and unsuccessful families can have a deeply rooted negative image of living as a couple, or have

no such image at all. Their numerous fears, together with only a little knowledge of the positive aspects of living together, can result in not being willing to be in a relationship, or difficulties getting on with potential partners.

The Perfect Relationship of Parents as an Unrealistic Standard

Another reason for being single was the perfect image of their parents' marriage, which was found to be impossible to achieve or repeat. The singles admitted that it was hard to find a partner with whom they could be as happy as their parents were: "My parents have a good and happy marriage, they are on the same page, and there are no serious conflicts between them. Since I moved out, they have had more time for each other, that's obvious. So when I call them, they are either in town, getting ready for a party, or going to the cinema or shopping. They are simply young again. It would be great to live like that when I'm their age" (Eve, 30, C). This participant is afraid that she will not meet the right man who will make her as happy as her mother is with her father. She said that there are very few relationships as well matched and happy as her parents'. She believes that only one in ten couples is happy, live in harmony and feel they have found their "other half". Another respondent described his parents as being of the same mind and having a good marriage, adding that they never argued or fought. They like spending time together, discussing various social issues or international politics. He is convinced that you cannot build such a relationship overnight, but you work on it for many years as people get to know and become comfortable with each other (Matthew, 30, S).

The studied singles believe that their parents, who live happily together, have a lot of time for each other and can spend it together, which makes their relationship stronger. One of the men who participated in the study said that his parents spent almost all their free time together, and although they had been married for so many years they were still emotionally involved: "My parents have been together for over twenty five years, but they can talk from dusk till dawn, sipping cocktails. They still seem to be in love with each other" (Michael, 28, S). Another man thought that it would be difficult to build a relationship as good and lasting as his parents': "My parents have a good marriage. I can't remember any serious crisis or anything. It would be nice to have the same" (Martin, 33, C). He also said that they are still happy after so many years because they always had time for each other, talked a lot and thanks to that their relationship is built on strong foundations.

It turns out that some singles treat their parents as ideal role-models and would like to follow their example. They do not want chance relationships. They want true love. They claim that they are single because they cannot meet the right partner who they could have a perfect relationship with. It seems, however, that some of them do not notice that each of the described marriages has lasted for over 30 years. During this period, their parents had time to get to know each other and learned how to live together, compromise and please each other. It seems that their adult single children are not aware that happy and strong relationships are not built quickly or with no effort.

Strong Bonds with the Family of Origin

When a family of origin fulfills all the emotional needs of single people and gives them a sense of closeness, they sometimes become very, even symbiotically, attached to their parents or siblings. Some of them indicate that close relationships with family members are the main reasons for them being single.

Occasionally, when a single lives with his parents for too long, they may, according to some respondents, get emotionally addicted to their mother and/or father. Those respondents do not feel like having other close or intimate relationships with a partner. Some admit that they are still single because they cannot cut the cord: "I may be slightly too close to my family and they are still the most important people in my life. I have always come back home from my boyfriend's, even for the night or early in the morning, and I did not treat my relationships 100% seriously. My parents and my sister were always most important for me" (Eve, 30, C). This woman believes that she could only truly love her family members, not "a stranger". She also believes that her family is always there for her, helps her whenever she needs it and fully accepts her. She thinks that a man could always walk away, because the relationships between men and women are not as inseparable as the bonds with parents and siblings. Another woman who lived with her single mother till she was 31 claims that her mother meant everything to her. She believes that this makes a relationship with a man unnecessary for her. She did not even think of finding a partner before she moved out from her mother's house a year ago (Iris, 32, N). Another single also believes that she would have had a husband and children by now if she had moved out from her parents before she turned 32: "I am just beginning to be a woman; so far I have been a little girl, always with her parents, always safe" (Agatha, 35, N).

The respondents often mention that their parents are overprotective, therefore they cannot move out from their house. Their parents often make them feel like

they would not manage without help in everyday life. Some respondents get the impression that even though they are adults, their parents still treat them like little children who need help with everything. One of the respondents said that he was single due to his overprotective mother. He was asthmatic as a child and he thinks this made his mother take care of his health and his life. She thinks that no one can replace her. Whenever he brought a new girlfriend home and presented her to his parents, his mother was very critical and had high expectations of the potential candidate. The respondent admitted that he adopted her way of thinking and he has too high expectations towards women. On the one hand, his mother tells him to get married while on the other she makes it impossible, as she claims no one will take care of him 'the way she should'" (Conrad, 33, N).

Some of the male participants of the study said that they were not in a relationship because their mother did everything for them. One of them admitted that he still lived with his parents mostly because it was convenient, as he did not have to worry about meals, laundry or cleaning the house. His parents did that for him (Patrick, 35, SC). Others, although no longer living with their parents, admitted that they see no reason to build a relationship with a woman because their mothers did most of the housework for them. They admitted that if it was not done, they probably would look for a partner who would take care of the house.

By contrast, when the studied women described their reasons for being single, they talked about being too involved with helping other family members. As they feel so close to their family, they cannot say no to them. They think they devote too much time to family issues and neglect their own life: "I often have to do something for my parents, so they call me and treat my time as if it was theirs. I'm slightly fed up with it, because they do not ask whether I could do it for them, they just inform me that it needs to be done" (Ashley, 30, C). Another example of excessive involvement in family issues was mentioned by a respondent who had to take care of her disabled grandmother who she lived with. She also often had to help her sister with her baby. No wonder she said in her interview: "I think that I am a good-natured person, I help my sister a lot, my parents, too and I take care of my granny. Sometimes I even don't have enough time for myself" (Anna, 29, C). Giving emotional support to family members is similar to the above mentioned examples. One of the respondents admitted that if her friend hadn't told her how much time she devoted to family and their problems, instead of taking care of her own live, she would not have noticed it: "I was always worried about everybody and was so busy with my parents and sisters' life that I had no time left for myself" (Agatha, 35, N).

The interviewees also said that they lived on their own because their families of origin gave them the opportunity to spend time together. Frequent phone calls (sometimes even a few times a day) or daily visits allow singles to spend time with their parents and siblings. One of the participants talked to her parents on the phone several times a day for any reason, e.g. asking them for advice, how their day was, plans when they would meet. She left home a while ago, but every Friday after work she goes there and spends entire weekends with them. She comes back home Sunday evening or Monday after work. Her mom often visits her during the week. Thanks to all of this, she does not feel lonely, and as she has someone to spend time with, she is currently not looking for a partner (Dorothy, 37, N). It seems that by spending time together, the parents of singles mostly give their children a sense of security and make them not feel lonely.

Many singles, when they talked about their relationships with their parents, stressed that they could always count on their parents' help and support in difficult times, and also in everyday life. Often this sense of proximity, bonds and family background, strengthened by living together for many, many years, had become so deep and strong that some of them do not feel lonely and do not feel the need to be with someone else. Their family gives them all the emotions and helps them to satisfy their needs. The examples described above are show that for some singles bonds with their family are more important than having a relationship.

Living Alone as a Habit of Only-Children

The results of the study show than when it comes to singles who are only-children, their lifestyle may be a result of the habit of being the only child in the family, who gets all the attention; a result of an egocentric or even egotistic attitude. It is worth mentioning here that only men spoke about it even though the group also consisted of women who were only-children.

Some men stated that as only-children they did not have an opportunity to learn how to live with siblings, and that is why they are now not very good at building relationships with other people. They find it difficult to compromise and share things. They are used to being the center of attention and taking care of their own needs only. One of the respondents said: "I am very fond of myself and sometimes I can turn into a narcissist and show off with my opinion about myself… I don't know, maybe this is because I am an only-child, I never had to share anything, compromise, I was the master of my own fate and I still am" (Paul, 30, C). The respondent admitted that it is hard for him to be in a stable relationship with a woman, because he and his needs always come first. Another said that his

parents always did what he asked them to, he was spoiled and his opinion was always most important: "I think this is natural that when you are an only-child your parents are fixed on you. This is not good, because it twists and creates barriers when trying to socialize. Those who have brothers and sisters know that they have to share; their opinion is not always the most important. Not all only-children are like that, but there are also special cases like myself" (Luke, 33, SC).

Another said that he was single because he had got used to such a lifestyle. He has always had his own room, which he locked himself in whenever he wanted to be alone. Today he also appreciates his loneliness and the peace in his life: "I am an only-child and I have always had this little room of mine, I didn't mind it, I locked myself in there when I wanted to, always alone. Sometimes I called someone or went out. I was always alone and had no problem with it, like some people do – they cannot imagine living on their own, like I do now, but I've simply got used to it" (Matthew, 30, S).

Another respondent openly admitted that if he had had brothers or sisters – which had been his dream – it would be easier for him to socialize with other people and be more open to relationships with women (Conrad, 33, N). Another interviewee was at first not sure if his single life was associated with him having no siblings, but after giving it some consideration he admitted: "I've always felt better alone because I was an only-child. It had it good sides, but I don't think that I am this way now because I was brought up alone, although maybe…" (Patrick, 35, SC).

It is worth mentioning that these were statements of the men only. This could be explained by differences in the process of socialization of men and women: men are directed on themselves, whereas women focus on others. This means that women define themselves through values and interpersonal relationships. They are taught that taking care of other people should be most important. Men are more often educated to be independent individualists, to focus on their own goals (Czyżowska, 1993). This is why some only-sons who do not have partners believe that they are single because of their egocentric attitudes.

Other Reasons for Being Single
Associated with Family Conditions

When it comes to reasons for being single other than those described above, some women believe that they are single due to the way they were brought up and the values that were instilled. Their mothers put a lot of emphasis on teaching their daughters to be independent and to make independent decisions. One of the respondents said that she managed great with everything, could make dif-

ficult decisions and organizes her life, and even though she would like to have a partner in the future, she admitted that she hardly needed him (Iris, 32, N). Another woman said that her mother taught her to be smart and independent in life, and she admitted that she never really felt the need to share her life with someone, although she had been in a relationship which had lasted a few years (Julia, 38, SC). Another single woman knows that her current attitude towards men is a result of the way her mother treated her husband, the father of the respondent: "My parents are basically happy. My mother is a very strong woman, very strong. Dad cleans up, does the shopping, and simply takes care of the house, which mum has provided for most of her life. She makes the most important decisions. I kind of think that my sister and I sister looked up to her, and now, unfortunately, this has had an impact on our relationships with men. My sister is exactly the same. She imposes her opinions on her current boyfriend. We don't look for compromise; we are princesses who can put our foot down and do what we want, and the man can't say even one word. Who would take that?" (Eve, 30, C). This woman added that her mother often warned her to pick her future partner carefully, so that she wouldn't have to suffer with a wrong man. She has never managed to create a happy relationship because she was thoroughly convinced that a domineering woman is the right attitude to have, but on the other hand she knew that this was not the way to build a partnership. It seems that parents, with their behaviors, opinions and judgments, have shaped the image of marriage or family which their children later have. The advice they give may become instructions on interpersonal relationships, communication and behavior.

An extraordinary reason for singlehood mentioned by one man only was his low self-esteem. His parents' marriage was happy and successful, but he mentioned the negative impact their relation has had on his life. He blames them for feeling less important due to their close bonds with each other: "They were always most important for each other. I sometimes feel that I was just in the background, because their relationship was more important" (Michael, 28, S). At present, he is looking for reasons for the failure of his relationships in his lack of self-acceptance and low self-esteem, caused by his parents.

According to one of the single women her love failures and choosing "the wrong" partners to fall for is a result of the bad relationship she has with her father. He showed her no feelings – not when she was a child, nor now when she is an adult. He never told her he loved her, did not hug her and did not give her a shoulder to cry on at difficult times. He created a distance and a communication barrier which she could not overcome. She admitted that she often chose married men who had

their own families because she thought they would fulfill her need for "paternal love", take care of her and understand her problems. She thought that as they were mature – and their family was supposed to be proof of that – they knew how to show their feelings. But after a few affairs with married men she realized that their positive features and behaviors were sort of a game, an illusion that she longed for: "Maybe subconsciously I chose men who already had something – a house, a wife, and children and are different, but they weren't" (Hanna, 37, C).

As a result of the conducted studies, it turned out that families gave single people many reasons to live alone: the way they were brought up, the relationships between the parents, and between the parents and the children. In some cases, these factors had a strong impact on choosing this particular lifestyle.

Conclusion

To sum up this part of the analysis of social reasons behind singlehood which are related directly to families of the single people, we can observe some factors – repeated in their statements – which influenced their attitude to relationships. They are as follows: the negative image of their parents' relationship, emotional ties to family members which are too strong to build relationships with other people, parents' perfect marriage as an unrealistic example, a model which is impossible to repeat, and the habit of living alone.

Negative memories of parents' relationship have a big impact on the decisions whether to live with or without a partner. Single people are either inspired or warned not to repeat the same mistakes by their observations. The participants of the study have often considered how deep and true a feeling to another person has to be in order to be able to build a lasting relationship with them and include them and their goals in single's life strategy. Some of the respondents chose the single life as the lesser of two evils or, according to them, a more efficient lifestyle.

On the other hand, an almost perfect marriage of the parents makes the single people feel obliged to build relationships which would be as perfect. In order to do that, one must meet the right partner who singles are looking for constantly, but in vain. It is typical for them not to understand and to have no patience to build a deep and lasting relationship of two people, based on many years spent together and a deep feeling based on mutual experience. One can judge from the statements of some of the singles that they expect and believe in the possibility of creating happy relationships "here and now." With no suitable partners, nor the time to find them, they decided to live alone.

Among those people studied, we also found people who did not want to have their own relationship at all, as their family of origin satisfied their need for intimacy. Staying very close to their family, especially their parents, made it possible for them to live the single life with no danger of feeling lonely.

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Exploring Marital Belief Systems of Single and Partnered Polish Young Adults

Katarzyna Adamczyk and Scott S. Hall

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a basis of family functioning (Bakiera, 2009). It has unique relational properties compared to other romantic relationships such as assumed permanence, and is conducive to unparalleled dynamics and outcomes (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). Marriage is typically assumed to serve common functions of providing personal fulfillment and the expression of love (Wyatt, 1999), as well as the need for companionship (Coontz, 2000). However, marriage has become more diverse and subjective and less narrowly institutionalized (Cherlin, 2004). Despite the heterogeneity of marital and family life observed today (Cherlin, 2004; Slany, 2006), and an increasing acceptance of its alternative forms such as singlehood, living apart together, cohabitation without marriage (Cherlin, 2004; Lehnart, Neyer, & Eccles, 2010; Slany, 2006), searching for a lifetime partner/spouse remains an area of significant interest and importance to young adults (Erikson, 1980; Havighurst, 1981; Willoughby & Dworkin, 2009). In Poland, like in many in other countries, most adolescents and young adults desire to marry and have a successful marital and family life (Bakiera, 2009; Koropeckyj-Cox, 2005; Rostowski, 2009). Though most young adults experience a committed relationship (Carver, Joyner, & Udry, 2003), many of which culminate in marriage (Braithwaite, Delevi, & Fincham, 2010), a sizable number young adults remain single, be it by choice or involuntarily (Palus, 2010; Reynolds, Wetherell, & Taylor, 2007).

To appreciate the diversity within young adulthood, it is important to understand what factors are associated with relationship status (single *vs.* partnered)

in young adulthood. One of these possible correlates of relationship status and marring may be attitudes and beliefs about marriage (Bakiera, 2009; Mahay & Lewin, 2007). Marital beliefs and attitudes can also influence satisfaction in dating relationships (Sullivan & Schwebel, 1995) and the nature of one's marriage, primarily regarding levels of distress, satisfaction, and communication negativity (Baucom, Epstein, Rankin, & Burnett, 1996; Bradbury & Fincham, 1993; Foran & Slep, 2007; Hamamci, 2005; Neff & Karney, 2005). Differing beliefs about marriage are manifestations of underlying meanings that marriage holds for individuals, some of which are reflections of larger societal expectations (Hall, 2006). For instance, Polish young adults perceive marriage as a union of an emotional nature, which also includes obligation, responsibility, commitment, dedication and sacrifice (Bakiera, 2009).

Gender is often a contributing factor when considering the role of marital beliefs in the formation of romantic and marital relationships. Traditional developmental tasks for women are defined in regard to bonds with others, among them the most significance being marriage (Mandal, 2004). In general women are found to display a stronger desire of intimacy and higher motivation for it than men, whereas men are often described as focused on instrumentality and achievement (Feldman, Gowen, & Fisher, 1998). These gender differences appear to hold true in Poland. For instance, in a Polish study by Bakiera (2009), women expressed greater approbation of marriage than did men, and men expressed more disapprobation than did women. Societal assumptions and customs likely contribute to such gender differences, in that for women but not for men being single after a certain age often results in being labeled as a spinster (Zubrzycka, 1993). For many centuries in Poland it has been assumed that all women desire to marry and failing to do so fostered assumptions about her having some personal deficits (Duch-Krzystoszek, 1995) or as being unattractive (Tymicki, 2001, p. 78).

One area of inquiry that remains less known is if an association exists between attitudes toward marriage and relationship status (singe *versus* partnered) during young adulthood. To the best of our knowledge, prior research in Poland has not thoroughly examined relationship status for unmarried adults in the context of marital beliefs. The vast majority of relevant research in Poland (e.g., Bakiera, 2008; 2009; Braun-Gałkowska, 1992; Duch-Krzystoszek, 1995; Żurek, 2008) has focused on people's beliefs, expectations, standards, or attitudes related to marriage in general but not in regard to relationship status. Understanding if and how single and partnered young adults differ in their marital beliefs can inform scholarship related to the development and implications of marital beliefs.

Though marital beliefs are often studied in isolation or as a narrow set of beliefs, one comprehensive investigation of marital beliefs resulted in a conceptualization of marital meaning along five interrelated dimensions (Hall, 2006). The first dimension was classified as a Special status of marriage *versus* neutral alternative. Marriage can be seen as the highest expression of love and intimacy and the most satisfying type of relationship *versus* being just one of many types of similarly valid couple relationships (or simply a "piece of paper"). The second dimension, Self-fulfillment *versus* obligation, refers to seeing marriage as a key means for meeting one's needs, such as emotional fulfillment or economic security, *versus* a type of social obligation for individuals that would take some priority over personal fulfillment. The third dimension, Mutuality *versus* individuality, incorporates ideas that marriage requires spouses to give up individuality and merge identities, *versus* marriage being compatible with (or even promoting) maintaining clear individual identities. The fourth dimension, Romanticism *versus* pragmatism, corresponds to viewing marriage as a relationship perfectly fit for soul mates or that a good marriage is inherently full of agreement and spontaneity, versus being primary a practical exchange system that requires effort and compromise to maintain. The final dimension is Role hierarchy *versus* role parallelism, which focuses on concepts of control and power and a hierarchy of roles often associated with gender, versus being a horizontal and mutual relationship primarily based on sharing and companionship. Incorporating a multi-faceted approach to studying marital beliefs is likely to represent a more complete mindset or paradigm related to marriage (Willoughby, Hall, & Luczak, 2013).

The Current Study

The current investigation is a part of a larger research project concerning identity, self-construals, romantic beliefs and marital beliefs in single and partnered young adults in Poland. The results regarding identity and self-construals were presented in other paper (Adamczyk & Luyckx, 2013) and the findings regarding romantic beliefs were presented in a paper by Adamczyk and Metts (2013). The current article presents the results of the study which, to the best of our knowledge, is the first study to use a Polish sample aimed at investigating marital beliefs among young adults in regard to relationship status. This study specifically extends previous research by using a foreign instrument to measure marital beliefs and by focusing on the content of marital beliefs and not merely on positivity and negativity of attitudes. This contribution is par-

ticularly important as marital beliefs can influence decisions relevant to marital and family life (Bakiera, 2009). In this study, three main research questions were addressed. First, we investigated how relationship status is related to the five dimensions of marital meaning (i.e., Special status of marriage *vs.* neutral alternative, Self-fulfillment *vs.* obligation', Mutuality *vs.* individuality, Romanticism *vs.* pragmatism, and Role hierarchy *vs.* role parallelism). We hypothesized that partnered individuals will hold greater levels (scores toward the first concept listed on each dimension; e.g., special status, self-fulfillment, etc.) on all of marital beliefs compared to single individuals. Second, we hypothesized that the marital belief systems identified by Hall (2006) would also emerge in the present study through the use of cluster analysis. "Classically idealistic marital belief system" would have high scores on mutuality, romance, and role hierarchy. "Individuated and practical marital belief system" would have high scores on self-fulfillment and lowest on mutuality and role hierarchy. Finally, the "realistic marital belief system" would have high scores on special status and lowest on self-fulfillment and romance. With respect to the link between relationship status and these marital belief system, we hypothesized that both classically idealistic system and realistic belief system would be mainly represented partnered individuals who will hold greater level of marital beliefs. Conversely, we expected that individuated and practical belief system would be mainly represented by single individuals. Third, in regard to gender, we expected that women will report greater level of all of marital beliefs given tendencies identified in the literature of women being more relationship-oriented than men (e.g., Mandal, 2004; Plopa, 2002) .

Methods

Participants and Procedure

The study was carried out on a sample of university students from different faculties of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland. Four hundred questionnaires were originally distributed of which 305 were returned. Thirty-nine participants were excluded from the study due to incomplete data and not meeting the inclusion criteria, yielding a final sample of 291 students – 155 females (53.30%) and 136 males (46.70%). Participants were 20–25 years old ($M = 22.29$, $SD = 2.05$) and resided in large Polish city with a population exceeding 500,000 inhabitants. All the respondents were never married, had no children, and were heterosexual. The minimal duration of being single and partnered was arbitrarily defined as "at least 6 months (see Donnelly, Burgess,

Anderson, Davis, & Dillard, 2001). One hundred and thirty- seven students (47.10%) declared being in a romantic relationship at the time of the assessment while 154 students (52.90%) were not.

The first author distributed the measures to the participants across the different courses. The questionnaire packages were administered in classrooms to groups of 20 to 30 students at a time and participation was voluntary. An explanation as to the purpose of the study was given as was an assurance that the information provided would remain anonymous and confidential. The instructions were read aloud. Participants completed a demographic questionnaire and the Polish-language version (translated for this study) of the Marital Meaning Inventory (Hall, 2006).

Measures

The questionnaire package presented to the study participants was comprised of the following instruments:

Demographic Questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed by the first author to obtain general descriptive information such as age, gender, faculty and current relationship status.

Marital Meaning Inventory (MMI; Hall, 2006). It is a 21-item instrument to examine the meaning that the institution of marriage can hold for young adults, based on their systems (or collections) of beliefs about marriage. The statements include in the MMI were inspired by the five themes of marital meaning identified in the literature and, to the extent possible, were similar to single items used in the studies from prior reviewed literature. Each dimension contains polarized and contrasting conceptualizations of marriage. These dimensions are as follows: (1) Special status of marriage *versus* neutral alternative (e.g., '*Marriage is the highest commitment couples can make to each other*'); (2) Self-fulfilment *versus* obligation (e.g., '*A person's marriage should take priority over individual goals*'); (3) Mutuality *versus* individuality (e.g., '*Married couples share all the same interests*'); (4) Romanticism *versus* pragmatism (e.g., '*Loving each other is enough to keep marriages together*'); (4) Role hierarchy *versus* role parallelism (e.g., '*Each spouse should be in charge of different aspects of the family*'). Respondents were given the following prompt: "What do you believe about marriage? How true are the following statements about what you think marriage is like?" Possible responses range from *1* (not true at all) to *5* (very true). The Polish-language version of the MMI indicated relatively good psychometric properties. In the present study, Cronbach's alphas were as follow: .63 for Special status of marriage *vs*. neutral alternative, .73 for Self-fulfilment *vs*.

obligation, .61 for Mutuality *vs.* individuality, .60 Romanticism *vs.* pragmatism, .and 61 Role hierarchy *vs.* role parallelism.

Data Analysis

The analysis was divided into three phases. First, to test whether group differences exist between single and partnered individuals in regard to marital beliefs, and whether gender differences existed among these variables, we performed a one-way multivariate analysis of variance followed up by univariate analyses and discriminant function analysis. Second, we performed an iterative *k*-means clustering procedure on the marital beliefs to retain clusters representing different marital belief systems. Third, we examine the distribution of relationship status in the retained clusters by using chi-square testing. An alpha level of .05 was used for significance tests.

Results

Mean–Level Analyses

First, to examine possible mean differences between single and partnered samples in regard to marital beliefs a one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used resulting in a significant multivariate effect (Wilks's Λ = .95, $F(5, 283)$ = 3.12, p = .009, η^2 = .05 (see Table 1).

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations on Marital Beliefs by Relationship Status

Variable	Total sample (N = 291)	Single sample (N = 154)	Partnered sample (N = 137)	F ratio	$\eta2$
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Multivariate test				3.12**	.05
Special status of marriage *vs.* neutral alternative	15.99 (3.11)	15.59 (3.10)	16.44 (3.06)	5.13*	.02
Self-fulfillment *vs.* obligation	14.16 (2.62)	14.08 (2.65)	14.26 (2.59)	1.44	.01
Mutuality *vs.* individuality	8.02 (1.91)	7.73 (1.90)	8.34 (1.87)	6.05*	.02
Romanticism *vs.* pragmatism	10.68 (2.31)	10.26 (2.39)	11.16 (2.13)	9.44**	.03
Role hierarchy *vs.* role parallelism	8.50 (1. 83)	8.49 (1.78)	8.51 (1.89)	.08	.00

** p < .01; * p < .05.

Follow-up univariate analyses revealed significant differences between single and partnered individuals in regard to three dimensions of marital beliefs. As shown in Table 1, partnered individuals scored higher on Special status of marriage, Romanticism, and Mutuality than did single individuals. In the area of the Self-fulfillment *vs.* obligation, and Role hierarchy *vs.* role parallelism no significant differences emerged.

In regard to gender, multivariate analysis of variance did not result in a significant multivariate effect, Wilks's $\Lambda = .98$, $F(5, 283) = .96$, $p = .443$, $\eta^2 = .02$ (see Table 2).

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations on Marital Beliefs by Gender

Variable	Total sample (N = 291)	Women (N = 155)	Men (N = 136)	F ratio	$\eta2$
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Multivariate test				.96	.02
Special status of marriage *vs.* neutral alternative	15.99 (3.11)	15.87 (3.02)	16.13 (3.20)	.01	.00
Self-fulfillment *vs.* obligation	14.16 (2.62)	14.39 (2.63)	13.90 (2.59)	3.80	.01
Mutuality *vs.* individuality	8.02 (1.91)	7.88 (1.88)	8.17 (1.94)	.15	.00
Romanticism *vs.* pragmatism	10.68 (2.31)	10.51 (2.42)	10.88 (2.17)	.06	.00
Role hierarchy *vs.* role parallelism	8.50 (1. 83)	8.42 (1.79)	8.60 (1.88)	.70	.00

As Table 2 displays, women and men did not differ on five marital beliefs.. Furthermore, the interaction between relationship status and gender was also found to be not significant, Wilks's $\Lambda = .99$, $F(5, 283) = .53$, $p = .754$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

Discriminant Function Analysis

In the second step, as it is recommended in the literature (e.g., Field, 2009) the MANOVA was followed up with discriminant analysis (DFA) to examine how the dependent variables discriminate the single and partnered groups. We employed a two-group, stepwise discriminant analysis with the maximum significance of *F* to enter of .05, and minimum significance of *F* to remove of .10. The analysis revealed one significant discriminant function, Wilks's $\Lambda = .96$, $\chi^2(1) = 10.97$, $p < .001$. The eigenvalue of the discriminant function was .04 and the canonical correlation was .19. The variable included into the model was Romanticism *vs.* pragmatism, $F(1, 289) = 11.20$, $p = .001$. The standardized discriminant function coefficient for

Romanticism *vs.* pragmatism was 1, and the pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardized canonical discriminant function was also 1. These coefficients provided congruent pattern of results, indicating that Romanticism *vs.* pragmatism is a variable which in the highest degree contributed to the distinguishing between the single and partnered individuals.

The group membership prediction accuracy was measured on the analysis and the holdout sub-samples. The hit ratio for the analysis sample and for the holdout sample was the same and was 60.50%. To assess the appropriateness of these hit ratios and the classification accuracy for groups, the Press's Q statistic was employed. The Press's Q statistic calculated for this study was 12.79, which is greater than the critical value (6.64) from the Chi-square distribution with 1 degree of freedom at the significance level of .01. Thus, the prediction was significantly better than chance and the classification accuracy was satisfactory. With a canonical correlation of .19, it can be concluded that 4% (square of the canonical correlation, $R^2 = .04$) of the variance in the dependent variable was accounted for by this model.

Cluster Analysis

In the next stage of our analyses an iterative *k*-means clustering procedure on the marital beliefs was conducted in the total sample resulting in three clusters retained. Figure 1 presents the final cluster solution with the *y*-axis representing *z* scores.

Figure 1
Three clusters of the five dimensions
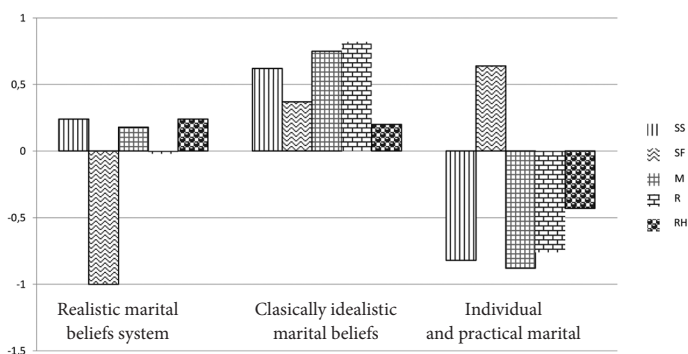
SS – Special status of marriage vs. neutral alternative; SF – Self-fulfilment vs. obligation; M – Mutuality vs. individuality; R – Romanticism vs. pragmatism; RH – Role hierarchy vs. role parallelism.

A one-way ANOVA was employed to examine mean differences between the three clusters. The results of one-way ANOVA indicated that the three clusters significantly differed in the area of five marital beliefs: Special status of marriage *vs.* neutral alternative, $F(2, 288) = 85.79$, $p = .000$; Self-fulfillment *vs.* obligation, $F(2, 288) = 160.38$, $p = .000$; Mutuality *vs.* individuality, $F(2, 288) = 121.90$, $p = .000$; Romanticism *vs.* pragmatism, $F(2, 288) = 104.12$, $p = .000$; and Role hierarchy *vs.* role parallelism, $F(2, 288) = 15.65$, $p = .000$.

The 1 cluster (98 participants; 33.70% of the sample) scored positively low on Special status, Mutuality, and Role hierarchy, and very low on Romance, and scored negatively and highly on Self-fulfillment. The 2 cluster (94 participants; 32.30% of the sample) scored moderately and high on all marital beliefs with the exception of low scores on Role hierarchy. Finally, the 3 cluster (99 participants; 34% of the sample) was distinguished by negative and high, and moderate scores on all marital beliefs, excepted for positive and high scores on Self-fulfillment.

The final step of the analyses employed the chi square test to examine if the three clusters differ in regard to relationship status (see Table 3).

Table 3
Distribution of Relationship Status in the Three Clusters

	Clusters					
	1 (n = 98)		2 (n = 94)		3 (n = 99)	
Relationship status	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Single status	53	54.10	38	40.40%	63	63.60
Partnered status	45	45.90	56	59.60	36	36.40

Note. *N* = 291.
* Percentage within cluster

As shown in Table 3, three clusters differed on the relationship status, $\chi^2(2) = 10.51$, $p = .005$, Cramer's $V = .19$. It is clear that cluster 2 has a much larger (and a majority) of partnered individuals than the other clusters. Furthermore, cluster 3 had the largest proportion of single individuals.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to provide preliminary insight into the meaning that the institution of marriage can hold for Polish, single and partnered, young adults, based on their relationship status. Specifically, we were interested to investigate whether being single *vs.* partnered and gender differentiate the levels of specific marital beliefs.

The first hypothesis which predicted that relationship status will differentiate all marital beliefs was partially supported. The performed analysis revealed that significant differences between single and partnered individuals exist in the extent of such marital meaning dimensions as Special status of marriage *vs.* neutral alternative, Romanticism *vs.* pragmatism, and Mutuality *vs.* individuality. In regard to the above-mentioned marital beliefs individuals committed in a serious relationship hold greater levels of beliefs concerning marriage to be the ultimate expression of love and intimacy, be the most satisfying type of relationship, be only good when there is complete acceptance and agreement, it should always be happy, spontaneous, and satisfying. In turn, in the scope of Self-fulfillment and Role hierarchy single and partnered respondents were in similar in how they perceived marriage as a means for receiving emotional fulfillment and/or economic security, completing one's sense of self, and as a hierarchy of roles. Moreover, the results of discriminant function analysis revealed an unique contribution of one from five marital beliefs, namely Romanticism *vs.* pragmatism for distinguishing between single and partnered status.

These findings suggest that certain selected beliefs concerned marriage may be associated with being in a serious relationship. These findings, however, are of a correlational nature, so it is uncertain as to the direction of influence between beliefs and relationship status. However, beliefs about marriage being special and romantic may act to motivate young adults to partner (with eventual marriage in mind) given that romantic love has begun to constitute the primary basis of the marriage (Bakiera, 2009; Rostowski, 1987). The overall high scores on these particular marital belief may reflect a contemporary perception among Polish young adults of marriage as being a more emotional than institutional bond (Bakiera, 2009). It seems probable that some degree of romanticism can be useful to initiate and sustain a relationship (Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Romantic ideals promote optimism and positive emotions during initial interactions and serve as a buffer during relationship maintenance by helping individuals not distract themselves from concentrating concentrate on their partner's negative traits (Murray & Holmes, 1997). Holding some romantic ideals may

motivate romantic partners to invest in their relationship and may contribute to working harder and more persistently on relationship problems (Medora, Larson, Hortačsu, & Dave, 2002). Romantic beliefs may function to prolong relationships (and thus avoid the likelihood of being single) because they foster the ability to view imperfect relationships more favorably and thus potentially experiencing more satisfying, stable relationships (Murray & Holmes, 1997).

Our second hypothesis concerned the possibility to retain three clusters distinguished on the basis of five marital meaning dimensions. In this area the current finding partially replicated the original results obtained by Hall (2006). In the present investigation the first cluster resembles the cluster labeled by Hall (2006) as "realistic marital belief system." Individuals included in this cluster hold a moderate conviction of special status of marriage, the possibility of achievement of one's fulfillment through marriage and possibility to arrange marital roles in a hierarchical way; at the same time, these individuals among other clusters are extremely skeptical of romantic ideals, and were more prone than the other clusters to believe that marriage is more of a social obligation for individuals, and to be placed ahead of personal fulfillment. The second cluster can be named, as in the Hall's (2006) study, "classically idealistic marital beliefs system." The individuals included in this cluster hold a belief that marriage is thought to be a special union with a joint identity of spouses, and romance, simultaneously holding a moderate belief that marriage is a means for receiving emotional fulfillment and/or economic security and for completing one's sense of self, and a lower endorsement of marriage being a hierarchy of roles. Finally, the third cluster, to some degree, replicated the cluster retained and termed by Hall (2006) as "individuated and practical marital belief system." The individuals who constituted this cluster believed that marriage can provide spouses with emotional fulfillment and/or economic security. At the same time these individuals believed in high degree that marriage as an institution amounts to a "piece of paper." Additionally, spouses are regarded as primarily independent with little dependency and/or restriction of autonomy and the spouses engage in a more practical exchange system based little on romantic ideals, with an egalitarian union of sharing and companionship. This cluster also included the highest percentage of participants form the total sample. This pattern may reflect contemporary social changes associated with a prevalent promotion of individualistic values such as autonomy, sense of freedom, self-realiablity and privacy (Bakiera, 2009; Żurek, 2008). Individualism appears to coincide with viewing marriage as more of a business agreement or company in which both partners engage in for the sake of personal gratification (Bakiera, 2009).

A key element of our analyses was to also investigation the association between relationship status and three retained clusters. The results of performed analysis revealed that all three clusters differed in the regard to the proportion of single individuals with the highest rate of single respondents being in the third cluster termed "individuated and practical marital belief system" (63.60%). This pattern of results may reflect that domination of individualistic goals over collective goals (Bakiera, 2009) which may discourage young adults from commitment in a serious relationship, especially if they are meeting their individualistic goals as singles. It is important to note that we did not collect information on reasons for remaining single and we cannot conclude that specific configuration of marital beliefs directly determine the state of being single. It is possible that this association is bidirectional and that single individuals adopt certain meanings of marriage as a result of living without a lifetime partner. In regard to partnered individuals whose percentage was nearly the same in three clusters we may assume that any configuration of marital beliefs can be conducive to the possibility of being in a committed relationships. However, it is also possible that being in a serious relationship affects an individual's beliefs about marriage in the direction of developing more realistic, individualized and pragmatic notions of marriage.

Finally, contrary to our expectations, no gender differences emerged in the present study. The performed analysis revealed that men and women hold similar marital beliefs. This results is, however, a bit surprising taking into account prior research that suggests that women define themselves through the prism of their relationships with others, among them being of most significance is marriage (Mandal, 2004). Additionally, taking into account that for many centuries it has been assumed that every women desires to marry, failing to do so would result in social stigma (Duch-Krzystoszek, 1995), the current findings, may therefore, confirm a more contemporary tendency among women and men to achieve similar meanings of love and marriage, or in general, of intimate relationship (Brannon, 2002). However, the desire to marry was not measured so we cannot draw conclusions about gender differences in that regard.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study has some important limitations. First, correlational nature of data precludes any statements regarding the casual direction of effect. Although on theoretical grounds it is tempting to assume that marital beliefs, at least

in regard to notion of romantic aspects of marriage, may dictate relationship status, the possibility that relationship status (single *vs*. partnered) influences marital beliefs cannot be excluded. For instance, relationship outcomes can lead to adopting certain romantic beliefs (Sprecher & Metts, 1999). Longitudinal research is encouraged to provide better insight into the formation of marital beliefs and romantic relationships, both as antecedent and consequence. Second, it would be useful to include a wider range of factors which may determine the level of marital beliefs, and their association with relationship status and gender. Personality factors, family and relational factors, and past history of relationships might be relevant. It is also plausible that individuals with different relationship histories (e.g., never-married, divorced, or widowed) may differ in regard to specific marital beliefs. Moreover, it would be desirable to expend the notion of relationship status from a two-level categorical variable to one that includes greater variation, for instance, single, steady relationship, cohabiting unmarried, engaged, married (see Soons, & Liefbroer, 2008). Third, the demographic distribution of the sample in the present study is another potential limitation. All participants were university students within the age range of young adulthood (20 to 25 years). Thus, results from the present study can be referred only to population of university, heterosexual, never-married, childless students at this developmental stage. Never-married or cohabiting individuals may differ from engaged or married adults (Bumpass, Sweet, & Cherlin, 1991) in regard to marital beliefs, and relationship expectations. A broader, more representative sample needs to be obtained for future research on these issues. Finally, the sample utilized for this research consisted of Polish university students and lack of a cross-cultural comparison to determine differences between Polish and other (e.g., US) samples in another limitation. In the future, it would be informative to perform cross-cultural studies on marital beliefs, relationship status, and gender with the inclusion of Polish samples. Previous studies have demonstrated that there may be cultural differences in romantic beliefs and attitudes toward romantic love (Medora et al., 2002; Simmons, Wehner, & Kay, 2001; Sprecher & Toro-Morn, 2002).

Despite the indicated limitations and the preliminary character of this investigation, they current findings provide an additional step toward the understanding of factors associated with marital belief systems and relationship status. They function to confirm the importance of incorporating contextual factors in peoples' beliefs systems, including their relationship status.

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What Young Employees Expect from Their Work

Sabine Raeder and Andrea Gurtner

INTRODUCTION

It is widely assumed that young adults who are currently entering the labour market differ from older generations in their expectations towards their work life and their employer (Twenge, 2010). Young employees are perceived to value work-life balance and flexibility; they request feedback and mentoring and cultivate their social relationships also on social networks. This generation of young adults, who started their work life only recently or a few years ago, are termed Generation Y in contrast to earlier generations. Young adults of Generation Y are assumed to be born in the late 1970s or in the early 1980s (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, & Gade, 2012). We rely on a widely used definition of Generation Y beginning with the birth year 1982 (see Twenge, 2010; Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). Generation Y is also known as Digital Natives, because they grew up with internet, mobile phone and all the options coming with it.

There is much debate about young employees' different expectations towards employment which might also be triggered by the specific situation on the labour market. Shortages of specialized staff are expected in many European countries due to low birth rates. Further, young employees are well educated and sought for. This favourable situation on the labour market allows them to claim more demands in an employment relationship than older generations were able to. It is thus an interest of employing organizations to better know young employees' expectations and to maintain the organization's attractiveness for this group.

In this chapter, we report existing research evidence on young adults' expectations towards work and specifically focus on differences compared to older generations. The psychological contract capturing expectations and promises between the parties in an employment relationship serves as the main theoretical framework. We then present results of an empirical study investigating expectations of young adults conducted by one of the authors.

Employment Relationships and Psychological Contracts

The employment relationship is an exchange relationship, in its most basic form the exchange of work time against salary as specified in the legal employment contract. Due to the length and scope of the employment relationship, employers and employees develop expectations and make promises beyond the basic form of exchange (Rousseau, 1989). Support for development and work-life balance, loyalty and hard work are among these expectations and promises, also known as the psychological contract.

The psychological contract is defined as obligations, promises and expectations between the employee and the employer existing beyond the legal employment contract. The psychological contract captures those obligations, promises and expectations developed in the employment relationship, but excludes expectations derived from experiences outside the specific job. In the context of young employees in this chapter who have only entered their first employment relationship, we advocate for an overlap between clearly employer-related expectations and more general expectations related to one's career or work life. While only the first type of expectations belongs to the psychological contract, the latter provides additional evidence for understanding attitudes of the young generation. This suits our goal to explore expectations of young adults towards their work and employment relationship and present empirical evidence.

Only few studies on psychological contracts of young employees exist (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010; Hess & Jepsen, 2009), but research on psychological contracts in general helps to understand why young employees' expectations are relevant in employment relationships and to what extent they are specific. Among the variety of approaches to measure psychological contracts, those focusing on different dimensions of contract contents are most promising in this context. Employee expectations within the psychological contract for example refer to the content of the job, career development, social atmosphere,

financial rewards, work-life balance, participation, job security and retention (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2003; Raeder, Wittekind, Inauen, & Grote, 2009). The most commonly used concept, however, distinguishes relational psychological contracts with socio-emotional contents from transactional psychological contracts with economical contents.

More general research has established that the psychological contract is relevant for desired employee behaviour. Employees who perceive that the promises and expectations in their psychological contract are fulfilled invest more in their job performance, are more committed to the employing organization and less likely to search for a new job (De Vos & Meganck, 2009; T. W. H. Ng, Feldman, & Lam, 2010; Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2003). Further, It is important that the employee's and the employer's view on their psychological contract correspond. A higher mutuality and reciprocity in the psychological contract results in higher performance and career advancement (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Ye, Cardon, & Rivera, 2012). A longer time of cooperation between employee and supervisor allow both parties to adjust their psychological contract to one another (Tekleab & Taylor, 2003). This is an important argument to motivate organizations to take the expectations of young employees into account.

Psychological contracts are formed during organizational socialization, that is, after someone has started to work in an organization. Newcomers adapt their psychological contract to the psychological contract offered by the employer (De Vos et al., 2003). A formal introduction process helps newcomers to discuss their expectations with their employer (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). More generally, communication during work is conducive to realistic perceptions of psychological contracts (Conway & Monks, 2008). If young people enter an organization after their education and are for the first time full-time employed, the process of socialization and adapting expectations towards work is more consequential.

Expectations and Attitudes of Young Employees

Some studies present clear differences between expectations and attitudes of young employees and older generations, while others only observed small differences. Young employees are reported to be ambitious and career centred, more socially oriented and more conscientious (Wong et al., 2008). In a recent meta-analysis, young employees were found to be slightly more dissatisfied with their job and less committed to their organization (Costanza et al., 2012). On

the contrary, a recent study reported higher satisfaction in the job, with career development and with recognition at work (Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010). Furthermore, they perceived their job as more secure.

Studies describing more specifically the psychological contract of young employees also found only few clear differences between Generation Y and older generations. Younger employees value flexible work schedules and work-life balance more than their older colleagues (Bellou, 2009). Young employees in the hospitality industry value a stimulating job more than older generations, and they are less interested in job security, work-life balance and autonomy (Lub, Bijvank, Bal, Blomme, & Schalk, 2012). However, their commitment to the organization is lower and their turnover higher compared to older generations. Other studies have not found a clear difference in relational and transactional contracts between Generation Y and older generations (Hess & Jepsen, 2009).

An increasing number of highly educated and self-confident women are entering the professional world. It can be expected that their values and expectations do not match those espoused by earlier generations or their male peers. For instance, Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons (2010) see a clear impact of gender on the expectations and values of the Canadian students they surveyed. Generational effects should therefore always be considered with one eye on the gender question.

New recruits adjust their expectations both to match what companies promise and what they deliver and their general experience at those companies (De Vos et al., 2003). It can be expected that the number of years spent with a company and the industry it operates in, have an influence on what an employee expects from his or her employer. The change of attitudes and expectations since young employees started their first full-time employment might also explain the wide interest in Generation Y despite the lack of empirically supported differences. Young people who had only entered the organization recently or a few years ago, increasingly work long hours, although they value work-life balance highly (Sturges & Guest, 2004). Work hours hence increase with tenure, and this leads to the fact that young employees experience conflict between work and non-work spheres of life. They then perceive that the employers fail to fulfil their obligations regarding workload. Organizational career management might help to better fulfil the psychological contract.

Overall, the research results show that expectations of young adults toward their work might differ in a significant way from older generations. This indicates that it is wise for employers and researchers to take expectations

of young adults into account and to further explore them. In this vein, we introduce research results from two studies conducted by one of the authors in Switzerland.

Empirical Study and Research Results

Knowing the values, expectations, and abilities typically ascribed to a generation or age group of employees can offer invaluable insights to help understand each other in conversation, in leadership, or general workplace routines (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). To be able to achieve this, the ascribed attributes should, however, come as close as possible to the values and expectations expressed by the young employees themselves. In the study presented here self-reported expectations of young employees were contrasted with the external perceptions of HR professionals and leading executives at Swiss companies. The study addressed three key questions. (1) What do young employees expect from their employers? (2) How do gender, the length of employment, or the sector of industry influence the expectations of young employees? (3) Do the perceptions of employers match the actual expectations of young employees?

Parallel surveys were conducted with young employees completing a degree course at Swiss universities of applied sciences (bachelor or master in Business Administration or Business Information Technology) and managers in responsible positions at Swiss companies.

The young employees were asked about their expectations concerning their employers; the company representatives were requested to state how they perceive the expectations of their junior employees. This sample suggests a valid and meaningful insight into the expectations of young professionals, seen both from within and from without.

Sample

In total, 190 students aged between 19 and 30 years completed the survey, with two thirds of the respondents being male. A large majority of the respondents were studying part-time in parallel to their employment, including 73% holding contracts of more than 50% employment. The respondents' professional experience ranged from 0 to 13 years of work, with average experience of four years. The company-side respondents were recruited from HR (43%) and executive management (26%). Two thirds of the managers were male

and they were aged between 25 and 61 years. Young employees and managers represented a similar spread of industries: 50% represented services, including public administration, financial services and insurance sector and other services and another 50% represented manufacturing, transport, and technology businesses.

Method

The young employees were asked about their expectations concerning their employers. A list of items was produced for the purpose on the basis of past surveys on work values in different generations (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; E. S. W. Ng et al., 2010; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Other items were inspired by the current popular science and press discourse to reflect the media image of the Generation Y. Finally, items were included to cover the wish for networking via digital social media. Items were boiled down to a list of 39 in pre-tests. The young employees were asked: "If you consider the expectations that you have concerning your employer: How much could you agree with the following statements?" They answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The managers were asked to rate the same items according to how they perceive their young employees. The headline question in this case was: "If you consider what is expected from your company: To what extent could the following statements come from your employees in their 20s?"

Results

The first research question addressed the young employees' expectations from their employers (Figure 1). An exploratory factor analysis allowed us to represent the expectations by nine factors. The structure of the factors could be replicated in the data coming from the companies. On average, three factors are seen as the most important expectations: (1) The current object of a person's work which is expected to be a source of enjoyment and a place to develop new skills, (2) the question of sense and ethical responsibility, especially to work with good people and to have the opportunity of personal impact, and (3) the demand for appreciation of performance and feedback from superiors and the expectation that the superior acts as a role model.

Taking up the motif of the "digital natives", people often attribute the generation in question with an interest in digital networking even in the workplace. This attribution is not supported by the findings. The oft-mentioned wish for flexible working hours (part-time, home-office, work-life balance), or international experience also plays a minor part in the responses. Generally average importance is placed on the factors of prestige (of oneself personally and of the company one works for), and career prospects.
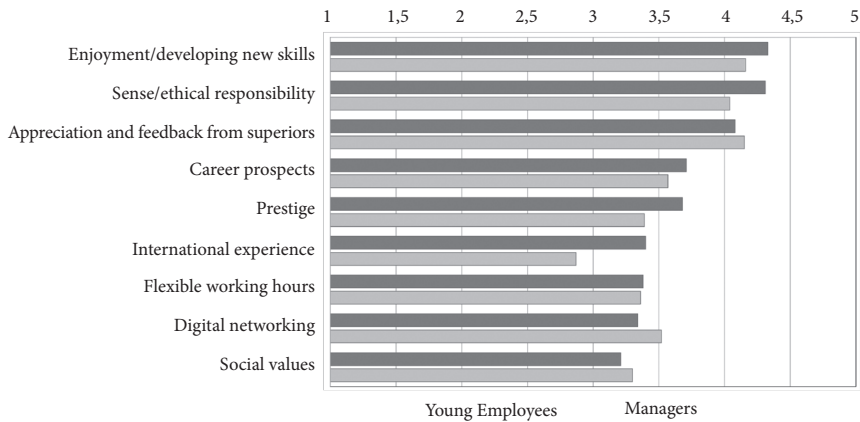
The second research question addressed factors that may influence the expectations of young employees, such as gender, the length of employment, or the sector of industry. Statistically significant differences between genders were visible in four of the nine factors. Women tend to attribute more importance to flexible working hours and sense and ethical responsibility than their male peers, who tend to value digital networking and social values more highly. These results are in line with earlier findings (E. S. W. Ng et al., 2010) that had suggested different emphases in the employment expectations of men and women.

The professional experience of the surveyed young employees ranged from 0 to 13 years in employment. A statistically significant link between the time the respondents had been in employment and their expectations was only found in two cases. The more experienced young employees are, the less importance they place on sense and ethical values on the one hand and on career prospects on the other hand. This could be a sign indicating that the originally high expectations of young employees tend to be watered down to fall in line with the realities in business due to organizational socialization.

The sample population hailed from a diverse range of industries, which were grouped in four categories for the purposes of this study. Interestingly, young employees do not differ in their expectations among industries. There is one exception: Young employees in public administration and in other services expect more opportunities to share knowledge and to use social media at work (digital networking) than young employees in the financial services and insurance sector and at manufacturing, transport, and technology businesses.

Figure 1
Work related expectations, young employees self-perception (1 = strongly disagree,
5 = strongly agree; N = 190) and managers outside perception (N = 85).

Finally, the third research question addressed the perceptions of the managers and asked, whether they match the actual expectations of young employees (Figure 1). Contrasting the average self-descriptions and outside perceptions by managers, there is a considerable degree of overlap in the relative importance given to the nine factors. The young employees' superiors also recognize the increased relevance of enjoyment and developing new skills, the importance of sense and ethical responsibility, and the role of appreciation shown to them. At the same time, digital networking is awarded too much significance, while matters of prestige and internationality are underestimated. A direct comparison of both perspectives for the nine factors reveals statistically significant differences in only four cases: Young employees value international experience, prestige, sense and ethical responsibility, and enjoyment and developing new skills in absolute terms more highly than the managers.

Discussion

In many European countries shortages of specialized staff puts young well educated employees in a favourable situation. Companies are asking for reliable insights about young employees' expectations to maintain the organization's attractiveness for this group. Young adults enter the workforce with general

expectations related to their career or work life. The psychological contract only captures expectations developed in the employment relationship. However, in the case of young employees, we advocate for an overlap between general and employer-related expectations. Organizations that take expectations of young employees into account facilitate newcomers' socialization processes and make it easier for them to adapt their psychological contract to the psychological contract offered by the employer. A study was conducted to cast some light on the expectations of young adults and how these are perceived of employers.

The results show that intrinsic values – such as fun at work, good people to work with, a job, where you can learn new things, as well as the question of sense and ethical responsibility, and the demand for appreciation and feedback from superiors – are given considerable importance. While training opportunities and developing new skills were also named as important in the study by Ng and colleagues (2010) sense making and ethical responsibility are given less significance there. The often reported finding of great importance being attached to family and private life (as expressed by the wish for much free time to pursue things other than work or the preference for part-time or home-office work) was not replicated in this study. These factors rank only seventh among the replies by the surveyed young employees. Similarities with Ng and colleagues' findings are also evident in the only average or even minor importance placed on prestige and career prospects or international experience. The findings are also in line with other studies, where young employees valued a stimulating job more than job security or work-life balance (e.g., Bellou, 2009).

The second phase of our inquiry considered whether the expectations of the young employees differed depending on their gender, years in employment, or sector of the company they are working for. This reveals some notable differences: Women rate flexible working hours and sense and ethical responsibility more highly than their male peers who, in turn, place greater value on digital networking or social values. With increasing professional experience, the importance of sense and ethical values and that of career prospects diminishes. Newcomers seem to adapt their expectations to the psychological contract offered by the employer (De Vos et al., 2003). One not surprising finding is the reduced interest in digital networking among employees in sectors with higher security standards (financial services and insurance sector and manufacturing).

The young employees' superiors also recognize the increased relevance of sense making and opportunities for learning in their jobs and the role of appreciation shown to them. At the same time, digital networking is awarded too much significance, while matters of prestige and internationality are un-

derestimated. In these aspects, the two perspectives differ explicitly from the characteristics popularly ascribed to the 'Generation Y' – differences that suggest particular attention in relation to the psychological contract offered by the employer. Prospects of international experience and opportunities for digital networking may not be seen as a special advantage by all young employees. Special efforts of organizations here may not pay off. However, since these two expectations may be especially prone to cultural and gender differences, results should be treated with caution and more research is needed here.

Conclusion

Most assumptions that the younger generation makes a difference when entering the labour market and starting work in an organization are based on perceptions in daily life. It is methodologically demanding to figure out whether these differences are due to the allocation to a specific cohort, age group, life or career stage or even current historical events (Joshi, Dencker, & Franz, 2011). Ideally a study design would compare cohorts of different generations at the same age on an identical set of variables. However, few of such studies exist (for example Kowske et al., 2010) and they show limitations with regard to the use of constructs to ensure comparability across waves of data collection and generations.

From the currently existing base of research, it cannot be concluded that young adults' expectations towards work life are substantially different from older generations, albeit the existing research results support the relevance of further research. However, results reported here shed some light on similarities and differences between the expectations of young employees expressed by themselves and perceived by managers of organizations. Organizations should be aware that their views on young employees may be deficient, shaped by the public discourse about the Generation Y. The message of our findings is that the new generation of employees deserves to be seen in much more differentiated terms than the simplistic picture conveyed by popular science suggests. Treating the new generation of employees only on the basis of popular stereotypes wastes the opportunity for applying a more differentiating perspective and to raise their potential by developing corresponding psychological contracts.

Future research should be more aware of potential differences not only between but also within generations and take these into account. Research designs that allow researchers to identify and separate effects of age, cohort. career stage as well as gender and life stage are needed to reach this objective. Although it might not be possible to consider all dimensions in one study, it could be a goal

to build up cumulative evidence in several studies. This however requires that studies are aligned with one another and linked to complement each another. It might also be worthwhile to pay more attention to current developments than is usually done in research. While critics argue that the typical features of Generation Y might have disappeared, when the young adults grow older and established their position in the world of work, more profound changes might develop from what is seen now only as a trend. When the expectations of Generation Y are discussed in the media, this also encourages young adults to stick to their principles and search for ways to make them happen. This process might thus reinforce attitudes and expectations of the young generation to develop into a stable profile of Generation Y.

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CHRIS SEGRIN (Ph.D. 1990, University of Wisconsin) is a behavioral scientist whose specialty is interpersonal relationships and mental health. His research focuses on social skills, relationship development and satisfaction, and such problems as depression, anxiety, loneliness, and marital distress. This research can be found in journals such as *Human Communication Research, Communication Monographs, Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, Communication Research*, and *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships.* He is author of the books *Interpersonal Processes in Psychological Problems* (2001, Guilford Press) and *Family Communication* (2005, Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers). Professor Segrin was also the editor of the journal *Communication Theory* from 2003–2005. In addition to his appointment in the Department of Communication, Professor Segrin is an Adjunct Professor of Psychology and Family Studies. Recently he has been conducting research studies on the intergenerational transmission of divorce, how social skills deficits make people vulnerable to depression, and why lonely people have more health problems. In addition, Professor Segrin has recently conducted a number of studies with colleagues at the University of Arizona College of Nursing to develop methods for improving quality of life (e.g., depression, anxiety, relationship satisfaction, social support) for women undergoing treatment for breast cancer and their partners, as well as for men with prostate cancer and their partners. This research has been funded by the National Cancer Institute, Lance Armstrong Foundation, Oncology Nursing Foundation, and the American Cancer Society.

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„The main subject of the thesis is young person's functioning in the stage of young adulthood analyzed not only from individual but also social perspective. The individual perspective of young adult's functioning is mostly related to the process of forming identity, perceiving the feeling of autonomy and being religious, whereas the social perspective is focused on the concept of multi-aspectual impact of family with generations on building intimate relationships in certain phase of development, young person's attitude towards marriage and his/her expectations of his/her own work. Depiction of early adulthood as a long process of becoming an adult person is clearly marked here.

In my opinion the subject matter of the publication was chosen accurately. Multi-aspectual analysis of young person's development at early adulthood stage is an interesting and important to be known and understood issue. The book is a set of chapters connected logically and consequently with the leading thought defined in its title. It is a valuable contribution into the considerations in the scope of human development psychology which enters the stream of theoretical and empirical analyses of particular aspects of young adulthood period."

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