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CHAPTER 4

VALUES OF MOTHERS SERVING PRISON SENTENCES WITH THEIR CHILD

Summary

The paper concerns the values of women prisoners rising their children in a prison, in particular the value assigned to the role of the mother. The question is whether the women inmates take their motherly responsibilities for love or for because they expect a more lenient treatment or have better conditions of serving a sentence. Considerable part of society have doubts about the true motherly love of women inmates.

Key words: mother, child, prison

INTRODUCTION

The family understood as a way of living together or as a social institution is generally highly evaluated with a value that cannot be replaced. Its unique feature is that being a social system it shows a tendency towards homeostasis: maintenance of internal equilibrium and harmonious relations with other social systems. Consequently a relatively coherent social macrosystem appears, showing high stability not in the sense of structural constancy but understood as the constancy of the direction of changes in internal structures and relations between them. Relations in this system are mutual, circular, in the simplest equilibrated system the relations are bidirectional. The way of living in a family has developed as a result of socialization. In this process the system of norms

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and values undergoes interiorization and continuous changes. The source of the family systems of norms and values stems from the superior systems of the society, culture at a given place and time and cultural tradition (Wrzesień, Żurek, 1999).

A child that appears in a family changes the everyday life, forces the family members to revise their aims, expectations and life plans, sometimes even outlook on life. The birth of a child starts the period of adapting new social roles, accompanied by difficulties and conflicts. In culture the mother holds a special position, according to the dominant idea the mother is a caregiving, sensitive and patient person bringing up future generations (Liberska, 2014). According to many Poles the stereotype of mother is invariable, she must be caring, loving, devoted to family, ready to sacrifice own good, associated with home, warmth and understanding. The ideal mother, still functioning in the mentality of Poles, is a woman that would with joy, hope, faith and love, take the responsibility of bringing up a child and is able to face all adversities. In the 19th century, psychologists pointed out the role of mothers when Fromm (after Johann Jakob Bachofen) identified the source of humanism in the motherhood: "Love, care, responsibility for others are what mothers do; motherly love is the grain from which all love and all altruism grow out. Moreover, this love is the basis for development of all humanism" (Fromm 1999, p. 18). Therefore it can be summed up that a mother is fully engaged in the new life – her new life and her child life – with love, convinced about the sense of this new life and does not have her interest in mind.

DEFINITION OF VALUE

Before starting the considerations on the values of incarcerated mothers, to avoid problems, we should define this concept. There is no unique precise definition of the value and this word has been interpreted in different ways. The fundamental values include the transcendent ones (sacral, religious), traditional ones (aesthetic, moral, cognitive and vital) and nontraditional ones (social ones or values of emotions). Value in the economic sense refers to a sum of money or amount of assets, in the axiological sense this word means that something is good or if and to which degree it is good (Puzynina, 2013, p. 58,68). According to the simplified definition of Jadwiga Puzynina: "good is what is like we want it to be, while bad is what is not like we want it to be" (Puzynina, 2014, p. 25). According to Kluckhohn, the value is "the open or hidden concept of what should be preferred, the concept that has impact on

the choice of action from all possible ones or the choice of means in order to act” (after: Marody, 1978, p. 178). According to W. Tatarkiewicz (1978, p. 61) “definition of the value is difficult if possible at all (...). What looks like a definition of value is rather a replacement of one word by another meaning more or less the same or its description”. The word value is used with reference to what is valuable, consistent with nature (working or evaluating), what we want, an aim or an object of current or future desire, what meets our needs, interests, provides pleasure or satisfaction, what should be, what should rather be than not be, what obligates, appeals to the receiver, what needs to be present (realized) (cf. Stępień, 2001, p. 3). A value is a standard that demands to be realized by human activity (cf. Szoltysek, 2003, p. 285).

To the most popular psychological theories of values belongs the one proposed by Milton Rokeach who divides values into instrumental and terminal. The division follows from the differentiation between the preferred types of behavior and preferred ultimate aims of existence, between the values representing the means and the aims. The instrumental value in this approach is a single belief in the form: “I believe that this particular type of behavior (e.g. honesty, bravery) is personally and socially preferred in all situations and towards all subjects” (Rokeach 1968, p. 160). The terminal values can be expressed as: “I believe that the particular ultimate aim of existence (e.g. salvation, peace on Earth) is worth fighting for” (Rokeach 1968, p. 160). The instrumental values according to Rokeach (1973, p. 7-8) include moral ones and competence ones, while the terminal ones comprise personal and social ones. Moral values refer to specific acts and not to the ultimate aims of existence, so most often to interpersonal relations and concern e.g. honesty, love, sensitivity, politeness, caring, pricks of conscience, etc. The competence values (creative imagination, abilities, ambitions, etc.) are more personal than social in character and usually refer to the self-actualization, to the sense of embarrassment rather than the sense of guilt. The terminal values can refer to the individual (self-centered) and have intrapersonal character (e.g. salvation, exciting life, internal harmony) or to the society (society-centered) and then have interpersonal character (e.g. peace on earth, brotherhood of men). In this context it is obvious that domination of certain social values leads to preference of certain other social values at a simultaneous depreciation of individual values and vice versa. According to Rokeach (1968, p. 161) “individual system of values is a learnt organization of the rules of choice and conflict solving”.

A different understanding of this concept has been proposed by Schwartz. In his theory he defines the value in categories of cognitive representation usually in

the form of a motivating conviction (Cieciuch, 2013a). He claims that the values are ordered in the mind according to the following two principles (Brzozowski, 2002):

1. similarity and dissimilarity – similar values are close to one another, dissimilar ones are far from one another,
2. compatibilities and contradictions.

Schwartz proposed a presentation of the structure of values in the form of a universal, motivational and circular continuum (Cieciuch, 2013). Originally this model differentiated ten values that were related to four ones treated as superior. The superior values defined the borders between the two dimensions (1) self-transcendence vs self-enhancement and (2) openness to change vs conservation (Cieciuch, 2013a). These superior values are defined to include a set of components. The ‘openness to change’ (after: Cieciuch, 2013a) was composed of self-direction (SD) which is independence in thinking, acting and making choices, creativity and freedom. The second component was stimulation (ST), characterized by variability, novelty and excitement.

The “openness to change” was bordered on hedonism (HE) so pleasure and sensual satisfaction. Hedonism (HE) made a border between the openness to change and self-enhancement. The latter superior values is composed of achievements (AC), so personal success achieved thanks to own competence in agreement with social standards and power (PO) in the understanding of social status and prestige, domination over others and control of resources. The third superior value is conservatism, composed of security (SE) understood as harmony, order and stabilization in society and interpersonal relations, own safety, security of family, nation, conformity (CO) so self-restriction in order not to harm or annoy others, contravene norms or expectations and tradition (TR), in the sense of sticking to habits, ideas and traditions of local culture, religion or family, respect of tradition (cf. Cieciuch, 2013a).

The last superior value in the model is self-transcendence, composed of benevolence (BE) which stands for taking care of close persons, family members, friends, neighbors and universalism (UN) that includes the understanding, respect and tolerance of others, also to the natural environment.

It should be mentioned that in this model the values make a continuum. Some researchers have proposed division of particular categories into smaller units, however, such divisions are arbitrary. Another important feature is the motivational aspect of the circular arrangement of values. It means that the values arranged next to each other show motivational similarity and can be realized in one action (Schwartz, 1992, 2006; Cieciuch, 2013a; Brzozowski, 2002).

The originally distinguished values and the circular structure have been later developed as a result of verifications of the conception. The modifications included a more detailed division of the continuum into 19 values and permitted a possibility of other divisions, as illustrated by the figure below (Fig.1).

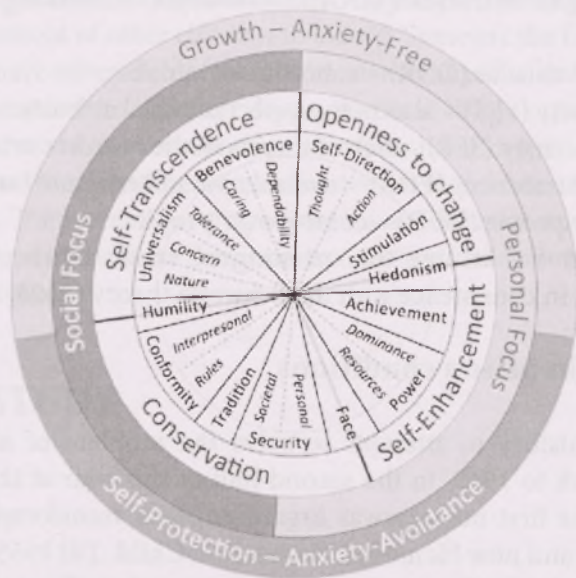


Figure 1. The Schwartz circle in the modified model. Source: Ciecuch, J. (2013a, p. 27).

Besides emphasized complexity of the earlier distinguished values, the modified model includes new elements such as humility localized between conformity and benevolence and prestige set between power and security. Humility (HU) is recognition of the fact of little importance of one's place in the world and history, while face (FAC) refers to maintenance and protection of one's image.

To understand the new elements in the Schwartz model, we should at first explain the terms in the original model, (after: Ciecuch, 2013a):

- self-direction in activity (SDA) is independence in taking decisions and realization of aims chosen by oneself
- self-direction in thinking (SDT) is independence of thinking
- universalism in the dimension of tolerance (UNT) is acceptance and understanding of others - universalism in the dimension of nature (UNN) is acceptance and engagement in protection of the natural environment
- universalism in the dimension of civilization (UNC) is striving to equality, justice and good of all people

- benevolence in the dimension of care (BEC) is the care for the good of other members of the group
- benevolence in the dimension of dependability (BED) – means being a dependable and reliable member of the group
- conformity to individuals (COI) – avoidance of harming and annoying others
- conformity to rules (COR) – subordinate to rules
- social security (SES) – also in the aspect of social stability
- personal security (SEP) – lack of threats in the nearest environment
- power over resources (POR) – control over material and human resources
- power over people (POD) – control over people.

In this paper we assume the meaning of values in the understanding described above, in consistence with the Schwartz theory (2006, 2012).

Motherhood in prison conditions

In Poland the history of attempts to solve the problem of motherhood in prison dates back to 1949, in the second half of this year at the Prison no. 1 in Grudziądz the first nursery was organized, later transformed into Young Children Home and now Home for Mother and Child. Till 1955 children were not born in prison conditions, but a growing number of pregnant prisoners impelled organization of an obstetric ward, which has been since then the only ward of this type in Poland.

Besides the children born in prison, the Home for Mother and Child accepts the children who after the mother arrest have been given under the care of other persons or have been directed to Home for Children. Then, mothers from the prisons applied for the possibility of serving a sentence with a child. Sometimes women who have a court order to go to prison apply for serving a sentence with a child and appear at the prison with the child.

The above possibilities are regulated by the act of law art. 87 §4 of the penal code. (in order to permit the imprisoned mother to take continuous and direct care of her child, at appointed prisons homes for mothers with children are organized. At these homes, if the mother wills, the child can stay till reaching the age of 3 years, unless other reasons related to upbringing or health, confirmed by the opinion of medical doctor or psychologist, weigh for separation of the child from the mother or for extension or shortening of this period.) At present there are two such homes, at the Prison no. 1 in Grudziądz and at the Prison in Krzywaniac. Their functioning is regulated in details by the Directive of the Minister of Justice of 17th September, 2003, Journal of Laws 2003, no. 175, entry 1709 and other regulations.

Mothers residing at the Homes for Mother and Child represent different ages, levels of education, origins and personalities. They come from diverse environment, from the deeply pathologic ones to correctly functioning families and stable relationships. Their sentences vary from life to 15 days of alternative punishment. The crimes they committed vary from stealing a chocolate bar through harassment of other children to killing. Some are the first-time mothers some already have other children, some are demoralized with distinct antisocial traits, often addicted to alcohol, drugs, medical drugs or other substances, some with disturbed personalities or mentally handicapped. However, there also are women from good families, educated, of high material status and with no addictions. The women serving sentences are different and it is difficult to find something they have in common besides the child. But perhaps there is something like that?

II. OWN STUDY

Aim of study

The study was aimed at answering the question on which values are the closest and which are the farthest to mothers upbringing their children in prison conditions.

Method of study

The study was performed with the use of the Questionnaire PVQ-R3, which is a modified version of the classical model of values, measured by the Questionnaire PVQ, proposed by Schwartz and coworkers (Schwartz et al., 2012). Adaptation of PVQ-R3 to Polish was made by J. Ciecuch. The questionnaire measures preferences of 19 types of values. According to the Schwartz theory (Schwartz, 1992, 1996, 1999, 2006) the circle he proposed can be divided in different ways, e.g. into four values making two dimensions: self-transcending – self-enhancement and conservatism – openness to changes. The questionnaire has 57 questions that describe the degree of similarity between the person described in particular sentences given in the questionnaire and the respondent. The items from the questionnaire describe the values from the circular system, Fig. 1, described in detail above. The indication of preference of a given value is the mean result obtained by the respondent. Results permit drawing conclusions on the hierarchy of values of the respondent, positive results indicate a strengthened

preference of a certain group of values, above the mean preference of all values, while the negative results indicate a poor preference, below the mean in a given population.

Characterization of respondents

The study was performed on a group of 25 women serving sentences at the Home for Mother and Child at Prison no. 1 in Grudziądz. The women were from 22 to 32 years old, with basic or secondary level education, none of them had higher education. Prior to imprisonment the majority of them lived in the city (85%) and a small group in the country (15 %).

RESULTS

The plot given below illustrates the preferred values in the studied group of imprisoned mothers (Fig. 2).

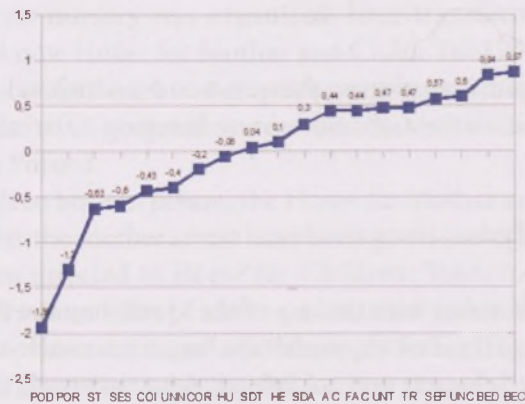


Figure 2. Distribution of mean values assumed by the mothers serving sentences with children (own study); (the symbols are explained above in the text).

The values closest to the mothers serving sentences with children include benevolence. According to Schwartz it is taking care of close persons, family members, group of friends. A little closer was benevolence in the dimension of care (BEC) understood as the care for the good of other members of the group than benevolence in the dimension of dependability (BED) means being a dependable and reliable member of the group. The most distant values in the group studied were the power over individuals in the sense of control of

other people and power over resources in the sense of control over material and human resources.

Psychological analysis of results

The study was aimed at learning about the values of mothers serving sentences with their children in prison conditions. The results revealed that the closest value to this group of women was benevolence in the dimension of care and in the dimension of dependability. These two values constitute the dimension of benevolence proposed in the Schwartz theoretical model, understood as caring for the good of close persons, family members, friends etc. This result is consistent with the standard image of a mother and it falls into the main tasks following from the role of a mother (Liberska, Matuszewska, 2001, 2006). Moreover, this results undermines the stereotypic opinion on the instrumental approach of the imprisoned women to serving a sentence with the child in the Home for Mother and Child. The most distant values for this group of respondents proved to be those of power and social prestige, dominance over others, control of material and human resources. This result can be interpreted as the lack of interest in other people by the group of mothers. While serving a sentence with the child, the mothers are concentrated on their children taking care of them for 24 hours a day. The children are the centers of their lives, the reference of all activities and decisions. However, another possible interpretation is that in the conditions of restricted freedom and necessity of subordination to the prison guards, the possibilities of realization of prestige and domination are limited, which induces changes in the hierarchy of values. Assumption of the second interpretation would indicate the possibility of changes in the hierarchy of values impelled by the change in the context (cf. Liberska, 2007). In order to verify this supposition, the values should be measured after the change of conditions, after the end of imprisonment, and should be compared with the results obtained while in the prison. Such a study would permit verification of the supposition that the hierarchy of values is susceptible to changes in response to external conditions and to some extent it would reveal the weakness of socialization prior to imprisonment and the effectiveness of resocialization. It could also provide interesting grounds for analysis of changes in aggressive behavior in women (Farnicka, Liberska, Niewiedział, 2016).

The study reported above is a starting point for further exploration. It would be worthwhile to repeat it on a more numerous group of women. Interesting results could be obtained by comparing the data with those obtained for a reference group, e.g. mothers upbringing their children in families or a group of women serving sentences without children. Another interesting comparison

would be with the results obtained for the women after they had to pass the child into the care of others (children older than 3 years) or after their release from prison.

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PART II.
IN THE WORLD OF
MIND