Conditions for Attitudes towards Native Culture, Religion and Church and Religiously Motivated Ethics

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Abstract:

Purpose: This article aims to diagnose the worldview and attitudes towards native culture, religion, and the Church as well as religiously motivated ethics.
Design/Methodology/Approach: The research involved 368 young Poles entering the labour market. It was assumed that these attitudes depend on a degree of approval of the traditional, modern, and postmodern worldview. The authors used the Borowiak Questionnaire "How do you view yourself and the world around you?" and a tool for attitude diagnosis.
Findings: The results of the research confirmed the construed hypothesis. Positive attitudes towards the issue under elaboration were associated with higher indicators of traditionalism and lower indicators of modernism (apart from the attitude towards native culture) and postmodernism. Negative attitudes, in turn, were associated with lower indicators of traditionalism and higher indicators of modernism (except for the attitude towards native culture) and postmodernism.
Practical Implications: The diagnosis of the worldview and attitudes of society is of great practical importance. People's attitude to political change is an important factor influencing its course and effectiveness.
Originality/Value: The worldview is a psychological construct that plays a key role in human functioning. In case of a mature individual it is characterised by systematisation (structuring of experiences) and coherence (elimination of contradictions between elements). It is also defined by universalism, which means that it refers to many areas of life. This research considered attitudes towards national culture and traditions, the role of religion and the Church in the public life of society, and religiously motivated ethics.

Keywords: Worldview, attitudes, culture, religion, morality.

JEL codes: Z1, Z12.

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1. Introduction

The article presents the results of the research which refers to the relationship between worldviews of young Poles (entering the labour market) – traditional, modern and postmodern – and attitudes towards native culture, religion and the Church (their role in the public sphere) as well as religiously motivated ethics. Is a positive attitude to the above-mentioned issues really connected with the traditional worldview, while a negative one – with the modern and postmodern worldview? Does postmodernism in particular reveal an ironic reaction to the past that undermines the sense of continuity and meaning of collective memory? As Harvey (1989) claims, in postmodernism, culture, together with its core – religion – loses its original meaning. This, in turn, fosters the creation of a new worldview, a different definition of key concepts and a particular way of perceiving the world and oneself.

A worldview is a complex and multi-factor psychological construct. It is usually defined as *"a system of beliefs and conjectures about the world, nature, man and his place in the world, linked to a system of values being part of the cognitive personality system"* (Cieciuch, 2005, p. 155). As Cieciuch (2005) notes, a worldview involves all spheres of human functioning, i.e. cognitive, motivational, emotional, and behavioural. The author draws attention to personality factors in shaping the worldview, especially in a situation of "culture cracking", i.e., when undeniable truths are questioned. The emphasis on personality factors does not negate the importance of culture in creating a worldview. According to Bauman (1996), culture shapes human bodies and minds, manifests itself in common views, public opinion, as well as common-sense knowledge. This takes place from the moment of birth, because man is capable of accepting the cultural meanings that surround him. Culture provides the "content" that guides a child's thinking, and thus teaches the child what to think (Czerniawska, 2010). Since an individual's worldview is usually embedded in a given culture, it fosters adaptation – thought patterns, values, norms, and behaviour become similar.

The importance of culture in shaping the worldview allows for comparing different cultural groups. It is also possible – considering the historical dimension – to include a given cultural group in the analysis and observe changes taking place over the centuries. This approach was proposed by Bauman (1999), who pointed to the relevance of distinguishing three stages (formations) in Western culture traditionalism, modernism, and postmodernism. Each of them was connected with the prevailing worldview in the society which shaped an individual's worldview. It was used to explain social events and justify one's behaviour (Boski, 2009). These three cultural formations are described below with regard to their constitutive features.

Traditionalism, which is in fact a religious worldview that has its roots in the Middle Ages, is inscribed in Christian faith in a single transcendent, timeless and supra-cultural truth (absolute trust in God, who can interfere in man's earthly life). It disregards rational verifications and evaluations as well as confrontation with "other

truths". Religious doctrine cannot be challenged even by science. Knowledge is of revelation nature, and moral virtues are clearly defined. A moral person is one who unconditionally accepts and implements the commandments of faith and the social order approved by the Church. Fate and destiny determine what will happen in life, while the sacrum allows for finding their meaning. An eternal vision is an essential aspect. The most important goal is salvation, and the Church becomes a helpful institution in this respect. Man should accept that he or she will not experience happiness but suffering. Once committed, the sin can be erased by repentance (Gellner, 1997; Bauman, 1999; Borowiak, 2001; Boski, 2009; Brandt and Crawford, 2020).

The modern worldview is rooted in the ideas of the Enlightenment, when the driving force was attributed not to religious faith and its dogmas, but to reason. Hence, modernism particularly worshipped science and stressed its role in learning about the world. It was still maintained that there is only "one truth" – an objective reality – which can be reached by means of a precise research procedure, by making the mind work by rationally analysing facts and conditions. The sources of the laws governing the world were found in the impersonal Logos. Religion and tradition were not refuted; however, relations with God were considered a personal matter. Still, the measure of man's value was not so much observing God's commandments, but achievements, i.e., great deeds ensuring fame in future generations. Modernism valued effective actions and a stable identity which has its source in rational and conscious goals. Morality was identified with functioning in accordance with the knowledge that refers to objective moral norms. A mature person is able to reach these norms, respect them and interpret life events by referring to them – though in a specific, individual manner. This subjectivity consists in a personal discovery of objective reality, not in an individual's generated beliefs or emotional preferences. Although all mankind was promised happiness in mortal life, it was the belief in the existence of universal "first principles" that led to totalitarianism and painfully inflicted mankind although, paradoxically, the advocated values were freedom, equality and brotherhood (Gellner, 1997; Lyotard, 1997; Kiereś, 1998; Bauman, 1999; Borowiak, 2001; Boski, 2009; Geertz, 1979; Deleuze, 1992; Gesteland, 1999; Kostera, 1996).

Postmodernism is a cultural formation which in the middle of the twentieth century began to modify thinking about science, society, and the individual. It is a reaction to modernism. It departs from logocentrism and objectivity, leaning towards irrationalism as well as cognitive and axiological relativism. It diverts from faith in science and the possibility to explain reality with a single, holistic theory. The existence of "objective truth" is doubted and replaced by the term "convention". It as well questions the conviction that Western culture, religion, and tradition born on its basis occupy a privileged position. Postmodernism points out the legitimacy of revising the past and the need to deconstruct it as it is devoid of deeper meanings (self-irony towards cultural conventions). The credo of this formation is reflected in the words of Barthes (1981) *"I renounce any knowledge, any culture, I refrain from*

inheriting any other view" (p. 91). The way of interpreting religion and experiencing religiousness also changed (it was deprived of cohesion). Postmodernism questioned divine providence and unshakeable principles – religiously motivated ethics (disappearance of religious values) and all kinds of moral absolutisms. An indicator of postmodernism became moral relativism. The only unquestionable value is freedom (liberation from restrictive structures) and the associated autonomy of an individual, also in the moral sphere. People have the right to the pluralism of beliefs, different lifestyles and customs, authenticity, self-determination, searching for novelty, changing decisions and different choices – subject to various situations and made in a short time. However, they should abide by tolerance and political correctness. Man does not live to suffer, to sacrifice himself, to strive for success and postpone gratuities. He or she has the right to derive pleasure, satisfaction and private happiness, the achievement of which, however, requires eliminating the sense of uncertainty and existential fear (Lyotard, 1997; Bauman, 1996; Kiereś, 1998; Borowiak, 2001; Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2008; Boski, 2009; Szydło, 2013; 2018; Czerniawska and Szydło, 2020; Derrida, 1988; Hassan, 1987; Khlyscheva *et al.,* 2020; Zanocco and Jones, 2018; Magee, 2014; Fedotova, 2017; Bawden and Allenby, 2017).

The three fundamental worldviews are presented in chronological order. However, it does not mean that the appearance of each of them is associated with the disappearance of the previous one. Worldviews coexist, and people differ in the degree to which – at a psychological level – they realise their properties and act consistently. As Boski (2009) points out, the dominating worldview of present-day Poles contains mainly traditional and modern elements (not necessarily coherently related), and to a lesser extent – postmodern ones. The traditional worldview is shaped by the Church, religiously engaged families and religious education at school, the modern worldview – by school and educational institutions, the postmodern worldview – by the media, popular culture and peer groups (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2008). An individual is challenged to integrate information coming from various sources and confront it with individual characteristics in order to formulate a relatively coherent concept of oneself (although this coherence is less important in postmodernism).

Is it possible to measure the three worldviews described above at a level of an individual? Such a tool was prepared by Borowiak and used in various studies (Borowiak, 2004; Borowiak and Golec, 2004; Borowiak and Szarota, 2004; Barlińska and Szarota, 2014). The author defines the worldview as an abstract cognitive metastructure that consists of two types of beliefs. These are epistemological claims about the nature of truth and reality and axiological claims about values defining the subject's own identity. In the context of a worldview, man considers his or her life experiences (Borowiak, 2001).

2. Research Problems and Hypotheses

The research presented in this article is aimed at diagnosing the persons worldview traditional, modern, and postmodern. The aim was to verify empirically whether attitudes towards national culture and traditions, the role of religion and the Church in the public sphere of society and religiously motivated ethics depend on the three afore mentioned worldviews. Traditionalism – as indicated above (the theoretical part of the article) – is a religious worldview. Therefore, it can be expected that a more traditional worldview will be associated with positive attitudes towards national culture and traditions, the role of religion and religious institutions in public life and religiously motivated ethics. A less traditional worldview will, however, co-appear with opposing attitudes (hypothesis 1).

Modernism and postmodernism differ in their attitude to culture and religion. The former "puts a stress" on progress (rather than being stuck in cultural tradition), recognises religion as a personal matter of man, but considers morality in terms of objective principles (although divergent from religion). The latter shows a negative attitude to what was before, to what is objective and to what restricts freedom. Both worldviews are not religious by nature. Therefore, it can be assumed that higher indicators of modernism and postmodernism will characterise those persons who advocate the quickest possible cultural accession to the West, attribute a negative role to religion and the Church in a democratic society (limiting pluralism) and accept moral relativism. Lower indicators, on the other hand, will characterise those persons who have opposing attitudes (hypothesis 2).

As Ziółkowski (2000) states, the theories of modernism and postmodernism assume abandoning absolute and universal values – it is connected with the right to make independent choices, especially in personal life. Nevertheless, these dependencies are more likely in the case of postmodernism since it overly highlights cultural and religious ignorance as well as questions objective, religious values.

3. Methodology

The survey involved 368 young Poles entering the labour market. The age of the respondents was between 20-24 years. The research was based on the Borowiak Questionnaire *"How do you view yourself and the world around you?"* (Boski, 2009), on the basis of which the indicators of three worldviews were obtained for each surveyed person traditional, modern, and postmodern. Each worldview is provided with 12 statements. They were addressed on the basis of a 7-grade scale. The indicators range from 12 to 84.

The attitudes were diagnosed with the use of three pairs of statements that represent alternative beliefs. The task of the respondents was to choose one of the two options, i.e., the one that better reflects the views of an individual in relation to the problem under consideration. The statements included in Attitude A come from a publication

edited by Reykowski (1993) *"Values and attitudes of Poles versus political transformations"*. The B and C attitude were construed by the author of the research and used to analyse a mental shift in Polish society (Czerniawska, 2009a; 2009b; 2010; 2012; 2013a; 2013b; 2017; 2018).

ATTITUDE A:
1. We have to come out of the backwardness rooted in our tradition and our Polish limitations. Poland must join the West as soon as possible.
2. Poland must remain Poland and we must ensure that the imported modernity does not destroy our culture and national traditions, without which we would not be Poles.

ATTITUDE B:
1. Religion rather limits democratic thinking: Churches are ruled hierarchically, and worshippers accept the truth communicated from above without questioning.
2. Religion integrates believers and allows them to consciously participate in the life of society.

ATTITUDE C:
1. In today's complicated world it is difficult to clearly define moral principles. Unfortunately, everything is relative.
2. The source of morality are eternal truths contained in religious ethics.

4. Research Results

If the worldview is the source of attitudes, people who differ in its approval should present varying attitudes to the understood reality, including the one that is related to culture, religion, and morality.

It appeared (Table 1) – according to hypothesis 1 – that the higher indicators of traditionalism were attributed to those respondents who appreciated national culture and traditions and their role in shaping social identity (attitude A), associated religion and the Church with a function integrating worshippers and fostering participation in social life (attitude B) and believed that the source of morality is religious ethics (attitude C). Lower indicators of traditionalism were associated with opposing attitudes, i.e., the persons claimed that Poland should adopt cultural patterns from the West as soon as possible (attitude A), religion and the Church are not conducive to the functioning of a democratic society (attitude B), while moral principles are relative (attitude C).

The verification of hypothesis 2 provided the following information (Table 1). A more modern and postmodern worldview is associated with the conviction that religion and the Church limit democratic thinking (attitude B) and that moral principles are relative (attitude C). Lower indicators of both worldviews were characteristic of those respondents who had opposing attitudes, i.e. they perceived the positive role of religion and the Church in a democratic society (attitude B) and accepted religious

ethics (attitude C). The results were different in case of analysing attitudes towards national culture and traditions (attitude A). It turned out that these attitudes did not differ in terms of modernism indicators. However, these differences were observed in case of postmodernism, those who advocated the necessity of cultural integration with the West had higher indicators, while those who appreciated native culture and tradition had lower indicators.

Table 1. *Approval indicators for traditional, modern, and postmodern views in groups of persons differing in their choice of options (1 or 2) for attitudes A, B and C and the results of statistical analysis.*

Attitudes A, B and C and their options (1 and 2)			traditionalism		modernism		post-modernism	
			$\overline{x}_1 =$ $\overline{x}_2 =$	$r =$ $l =$	$\overline{x}_1 =$ $\overline{x}_2 =$	$r =$ $l =$	$\overline{x}_1 =$ $\overline{x}_2 =$	$r =$ $l =$
A	1	We have to come out of the backwardness rooted in our tradition and our Polish limitations. Poland must join the West as soon as possible.	50.62		53.87		49.47	
	2	Poland must remain Poland and we must ensure that the imported modernity does not destroy our culture and national traditions, without which we would not be Poles.	53.31	2.23 0.026	53.61	0.79 n.s.	47.99	1.97 0.048
B	1	Religion rather limits democratic thinking: Churches are ruled hierarchically, and worshippers accept the truth communicated from above without questioning.	49.95		54.85		49.63	
	2	Religion integrates believers and allows them to consciously participate in the life of society.	54.67	3.29 0.001	52.61	2.83 0.005	47.44	2.56 0.010
C	1	In today's complicated world it is difficult to clearly define moral principles. Unfortunately, everything is relative.	50.74		54.56		49.14	
	2	The source of morality are eternal truths contained in religious ethics.	55.01	3.13 0.002	52.31	2.61 0.009	47.48	2.07 0.038

 Note:

$\overline{x}_1$ – *arithmetic mean of traditional, modern, and postmodern worldview indicators in selecting option 1 in attitudes A, B and C;*

$\overline{x}_2$ – *arithmetic mean of traditional, modern, and postmodern worldview indicators in selecting option 2 in attitudes A, B and C;*

r – result of statistical analysis with the Wilcoxon test for two independent samples;

l – level of statistical significance;

n.s. – statistically non-significant result of the analysis.

Number of interviewees selecting option 1 and option 2 in attitude A: 128 and 240

Number of interviewees selecting option 1 and option 2 in attitude B: 179 and 189

Number of interviewees selecting option 1 and option 2 in attitude C: 277 and 141

Arithmetic mean of traditionalism indicators in the entire research group: 52.39

Arithmetic mean of modernism indicators in the entire research group: 53.77

Arithmetic mean of postmodernism indicators in the entire research group: 48.47

Source: *Own elaboration.*

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The worldview is a psychological construct that plays a key role in human functioning. In case of a mature individual it is characterised by systematisation (structuring of experiences) and coherence (elimination of contradictions between elements). It is also defined by universalism, which means that it refers to many areas of life. This research considered attitudes towards national culture and traditions, the role of religion and the Church in the public life of society, and religiously motivated ethics. The authors tried to answer a question whether these attitudes differ depending on the degree of approval of the traditional, modern, and postmodern worldview. It turned out that these opposing attitudes have their source in the first and last worldview.

Higher indicators of traditionalism and lower indicators of postmodernism were achieved by those who were attached to national culture and traditions, saw a positive role of religion and the Church in a democratic society and accepted objective, religion-related moral standards. On the other hand, lower indicators of traditionalism and higher indicators of postmodernism were obtained by those who considered it legitimate to join Western culture, saw religion and the Church's activity as a factor hindering the functioning of society in a democratic system and claimed that moral principles – faced by the complexity of the world – were relative. The analysis of the indicators of the modern worldview provided a basis for the following conclusion: in case of attitudes towards the role of religion and the Church in a democratic society and the sources of morality, the dependencies were analogous to the ones resulting from the analysis of the indicators of the postmodern worldview.

However, the attitude towards national culture and traditions was not associated with any differentiation of indicators of the modern worldview. Based on results, it should be stated that attitudes towards the above-mentioned issues are a derivative of a worldview. However, the traditional worldview shapes different attitudes compared to the modern, and especially the postmodern worldview (as it involves questioning not only the importance of religious institutions and religious ethics, but also native culture). The three worldviews differ in their characteristics (the theoretical part of the article), but with regard to the analysed attitudes, the differences are mainly in the dimension traditionalism – modernism and postmodernism.

In the traditional worldview, culture, especially religion and morality, are united. This cohesion promotes the ordering of an individual's worldview, the similarity of the worldviews of his or her co-worshippers and the achievement of a goal that involves cultivating the past. It undoubtedly facilitates functioning in a religious community, promotes group solidarity, the fulfilment of commitments and strengthening a sense of security. Modernism primarily considers the perspective of the future (focus on progress), postmodernism – the present (focus on pleasure). Both cultural formations (although in different ways) cut themselves off from culture, religion, and religiously restricted morality. Admittedly, modernism accepts the assumption of epistemological and axiological objectivity, but it is connected not with religion, but with science.

Postmodernism, however, questions "top-down normalisation" and accepts radical pluralism. People "came out" of the community, diversified their worldviews and began to value freedom of choice. The price was the loss of a sense of security, but also hope for happiness.

Does the departure – following the example of Western societies – from the traditional worldview have a positive impact on the functioning of Polish society in the new political conditions? According to the principles of free market economy and liberal democracy, it was assumed that individualism was desirable. Individualism stands in opposition to the traditional worldview, which approves community. The modern and postmodern worldviews are based on individualism in the sense that both are connected with internal locus of control. However, it is a twofold individualism: in the case of the modern worldview, internal locus of control manifests itself in accomplishments and success achieved by one's own efforts, in the case of the postmodern worldview – in hedonism and following novelty (an eventful life). The modern worldview and its specific individualism "fits" with the principles of the free market economy, which – according to the assumptions of political transformation – were supposed to contribute to raising the socioeconomic status.

It became more probable that people would take "matters into their own hands", take care of their own careers, develop their competences and material matters, and persistently pursue their goals in order to assimilate the Protestant work ethos (which in the long run was to determine economic development as well as civilisational, scientific and technological progress of the whole society). Does the second type of individualism – the one that fits into the postmodern worldview – foster the development of democracy? The answer to this question seems more complex. In many aspects, the postmodern worldview, and the individualism it promotes are compatible with the ideology of liberal democracy. It should be noted that in democratic societies the emphasis is placed on freedom, independence of thought and action, favouring changes, legitimising the pursuit of pleasure and interest in the quality and comfort of life, promoting equality and the associated tolerance for otherness, and protesting against the domination of interpersonal relations.

The lack of pressure to accept certain ideas by all citizens makes it obvious that people will be characterised by different worldviews. This was pointed out by Schwartz and Sagie (2000) in their research on value systems (values are an important element of a worldview). The authors stated that the development of democracy is more likely to take place in conditions of differentiation of value systems within society. A different case was while considering indicators of socioeconomic development which is more effective when members of society are characterised by more similar value systems. Considering the above, it can be assumed that the postmodern worldview fosters the development of a democratic society as people have the right to evaluate information and different opinions on their own.

On the other hand, however, unrestricted freedom and discretion to choose lifestyles does not have to result in interest in the problems of the formal system or society, and the activity of an individual can be channelled in completely different areas or even have an undirected, casual, episodic character. Hence, an individual is no longer considered as a "democrat", but a man with a fragile and incoherent identity, who wanders across the city without aim, destroying hierarchies and questioning faith both in God and in reason (Bauman, 2000). Such a manner of using freedom is usually a matter of concern for education scientists (Szkudlarek, 2009; Melosik, 1995; Melosik and Szkudlarek 1998; Cichosz, 1999; Biernat, 2006; Nowak, 2008; Mariański, 2010; Cybal-Michalska, 2011). Do we, by abandoning traditional ideologies and educational methods as well as allowing the child to create his or her own worldview (which is complex task in cognitive and evaluative terms), really help him or her to find the meaning of life and to distinguish good from evil? As the cultural critic Arnold argues: *"freedom is a very good horse to ride but to ride somewhere"* (Harvey, 2008).

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