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Prolegomenon to the thought style of the new history of psychology

ANDRZEJ **PANKALLA** * ⓘD
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

ALEKSANDRA **KILIAN**
University of East London, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

The present article provides an introduction to the new history of psychology within the framework of critical perspective while offering some methodological solutions for contemporary historical research in psychology. We propose a new model of research for conducting studies in the history of psychology. This approach is predominantly concerned with reconstructing crypto thought styles, acknowledging the existence of peripheral sources of knowledge about human psychological life, and revealing hidden lines of inquiry, which will be presented using a contextual approach to the history of psychology. In this analysis, psychological knowledge will be treated as a product of social activities that occur under specific historical conditions and define the scope of psychological research. The proposed to examine history of psychology and investigative practice in a specific context will allow for deeper insight into the world's history of psychology and provide new methods for studying psychological schools of thought and ideas established on the periphery of mainstream psychology. Finally, we offer words of encouragement for scholars engaging in a context-specific study of psychological thought and efforts made towards grasping the reality of a local soul.

✉ *CORRESPONDING AUTHOR: inkantacje@gmail.com

The current state of knowledge remains vague
when history is not considered,
just as history remains vague
without substantive knowledge about the current state.

Ludwik Fleck (1979)

INTRODUCTION

VARIOUS DEFINITIONS OF IDENTITY

The history of psychology, understood as the study of the history of psychology from its instutionalization (see Danziger, 2013), has been presented selectively and in ways which serve to support the dominant paradigm (Pankalla & Kilian, 2018). That paradigm has been developed within the mainstream psychology which "refers to the academic field of study as taught and researched in North American and European institutions such as universities" (Teo, 2009, p. 38). Following the transformation of psychology from a philosophical discipline into a natural-scientific discipline in the 19th century, a transformation which was fueled by the struggle for recognition, power and money, some psychology specific topics such as the soul and human experience had to be abandoned. As a consequence, the history of psychology began to parallel the development of technology and mainstream psychology focused on methodology (methodolatry – Bakan, 1967; cult of empiricism – Toulmin & Leary, 1985; methodological imperative – Danziger, 1985; methodologism – Teo, 2005) inadequately creating a reductionistic, atomistic, and mechanistic model of human mental life. Mainstream psychology excludes many locally important concepts such as "ubuntu" from South African psychology (Mkhize, 2004), "the fourth state of consciousness" from Indian psychology (Paranjpe, 1998), issues of liberation psychology from Latin America (Montero & Christlieb, 2003) or "shin" (the soul) still present in indigenous psychotherapies such as Naikan and Morita in Japan (McVeigh, 2016). Moreover, this approach significantly limits insight into the active role mainstream psychology has played in constructing psychological phenomena such as personality, mental health or disability and the contributions this has had on the wider socio-political order and distribution of power (see Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009).

Principally, mainstream psychology diverts attention from the historical origins and cultural factors of psychological research and provides a misleading impression that psychological studies can be conducted and discussed in isolation. This approach may also lead to strengthening mainstream psychology's claims of scientific objectivity and political neutrality. Furthermore, it may limit our awareness of the fact that psychological research affects reality and has real implications for people's lives.

An awareness of the need for alternate ways of presenting and making the history of psychology, as proposed in this article, corresponds with some elaborations presented by scholars such as Ben Harris or Kurt Danziger. Ben Harris, a professor of psychology at the University of New Hampshire, who works at the intersection of the history of psychology and history of science, clearly states that "methods of historical inquiry are as important to learn as methods of research", "historical accounts themselves are never value-neutral"

and "once any historical account is written, it can then be used to strengthen a particular interpretation of the past and its implications for the present, that is, it may serve a political purpose" (Harris, 2009, p. 33). Harris explains that: "Dissociated from national and world events, the history of psychology becomes a history of the intellectual discussions within elite groups such as university professors. The discoveries of psychologists are presented as the products of individual inspiration, motivated by a timeless quest for knowledge when being removed from the social world." (Harris, 2009, p. 21). Furthermore, it is important to include three rules of inclusion/exclusion in the history of psychology (Brock, 2006, pp. 3–4). Firstly: "If your work did not have a major impact on the American psychology, however influential it might have been elsewhere, it does not count." Secondly: "If your work had a major impact on American psychology, even though its influence was limited or nonexistent elsewhere, it is an important part of the history of psychology." Thirdly: "Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania do not exist." There are many histories of psychology formed in various places in the world. More importantly, a careless transition and effective implementation of the dominant paradigm in psychology into different countries and societies have been creating irrelevant knowledge and irresponsive practice that is of no real value. This article uses the metaphor of periphery to accentuate the importance of a scientific activity that occurs away from the center. The dependency theories which were developed in the 1960s and 1970s use the terms of "center" and "periphery" to discuss the power and dependency relations between North America and Western Europe (the rich center) and Asia, Africa and South America (the poor periphery; Batur, 2014). This inequality contributed to establishing the superiority of Western knowledge over the marginalised knowledge of the colonized and involved "a large-scale export of psychology as a discipline and profession to the non-Western world" (Staeuble, 2005, p. 184). Regrettably, the history of ideas and people existing on the margins of the favored history of psychology is not included in textbooks nor is it taught in history of psychology courses. Therefore, this article is a call for the study and inclusion of the peripheral histories of psychology in the world's history of psychology – peripheral in a sense of their geopolitical setting as well as alternate knowledge production sources. The response requires sensitivity towards cultural and historical processes as well as a readiness to incorporate the subjective accounts of individuals that participate in the local formation of psychological knowledge.

Most importantly, this call requires us to provide some background to place our analysis in the necessary context. Kurt Danziger, a professor of psychology known for his innovative contributions to the history of psychology, points out that scientific psychology is a domain of constructions and it is essential to acknowledge the fundamentally social nature of psychological knowledge (Danziger, 1990). Moreover, according to Roger Smith (2007), reflexive and mutual process of development should be recognized. As Graham Richards put it: "Psychology itself must be one of the routes by which this process of 'social construction' operates." (Richards, 2010, p. 7). However, psychology has been avoiding these uncomfortable thoughts while fighting for its scientific status. Furthermore, some categories (such as personality or motivation) used by psychologists, do not represent natural categories (Danziger, 1997a). They acquire meanings in cultural-historical contexts and form a sort of implicit knowledge. This knowledge is usually unreflectively accepted and used by researchers in the explicit production of theories and methods. Thus, an investigative practice involves logical and social aspects of research. As noted by Ludwik Fleck (1935/1979), a researcher does not study naked facts but scientific facts that emerge from a peculiar thought style which is produced by members of the collective. Notably, there is also a political dimension that has to be included in the debate, and the influence of the ideology that it produces should not be omitted.

LUDWIK FLECK'S LEGACY

Building on the genius of Ludwik Fleck (1896–1961), several crucial points need to be presented not only for the purpose of this paper but also for the advancement of philosophy and historiography of science. Fleck was a Polish-Jewish microbiologist who was reluctantly acknowledged in Kuhn's (1962) work and rediscovered after many years by some peripheral scholars. Importantly, Fleck's work is not only historically significant but also of great value for contemporary meta-scientific debates, including current discussions within the psychological research community. Firstly, Fleck's legacy is an example of science that had been practiced on the margins and generated some unique concepts which remained undiscovered, neglected and de-actualized. The practice of reconstructive historiography is important to realise the power and impact of the processes that determine the construction of historical accounts, the historical embeddedness of scientific theories, and the distribution of produced knowledge.

According to Fleck, cognition is a collective activity that is performed by biased investigators who are influenced by a mental tradition of a thought collective to which they belong (Fleck, 1935/1979). The thought collective is a community of individuals engaged in a process of mutual interaction and transformation of ideas that form a thought style specific to that group, created and socially reinforced in a particular collective mood. Once the thought collective becomes advanced and influential, it is divided into two interconnected and interdependent circles: a small esoteric circle (made of specialists and fully-fledged members of the collective) and a wide exoteric circle (made of their dedicated followers), that communicate intracollectively to corroborate the structure of the thought style and its ideas. Furthermore, every thought style is influenced by elements from earlier thought styles, yet there are always some people who resist this association. It is possible to communicate ideas between thought styles if they share some similarities with each other. Importantly, the intercollective communication of ideas may lead to the development, alteration or a complete change of meanings which is of great epistemological importance. Thought styles begin with the investigation of some proto-ideas, then develop some cognition of reality and scientific facts that support views of that reality. Since the constructions of reality and scientific knowledge change depending on the developments in thought styles, at that point the concept of "truth" is perceived in a historical perspective and a contemporary context. Thus, every concept and idea created within a particular thought style is not invariant in accordance with the idea of incommensurability.

Nowadays, scientists live in very complex societies therefore they belong to many thought collectives. Being aware of thought styles that are associated with specific communities of scholars, is a very desirable approach that ought to form a constant element of everyone's investigative practice. This is especially important, because "the individual within the collective is never, or hardly ever, conscious of the prevailing thought style, which almost always exerts an absolutely compulsive force upon his thinking and with which it is not possible to be at variance." (Fleck, 1935/1979, p. 41). Reconstruction of the thought collective should be performed on two levels: in regards to one's own group of reference and while studying other schools of thinking. These would be preliminary steps before considering types of knowledge that are created within particular thought collectives. The emergence of knowledge is a result of some collective interest in particular phenomena that is supported by certain power relations and embedded in systems of values. Moreover, certain thought collectives and lines of inquiry are pushed aside or underestimated as a consequence of the politics of the dominant thought collectives. Historiographic reconstruction of crypto thought styles would be a beneficial and fascinating way of rediscovering forgotten thought collectives and the neglected areas of knowledge they generated. For psychological science, the consequences of performing this type of scientific activity would be of unpredictable

impact. Engaging into a dialogue with crypto thought styles present in the history of psychology would reveal hidden knowledge about human beings – knowledge that cannot be produced by other thought styles because it is beyond their vision of reality.

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE AND THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY

Critical thinking towards the dominant paradigms in psychology has been present in several psychological approaches, such as psychoanalysis or humanistic psychology. In recent years, it has taken the shape of a critical psychology which challenges and deals with the limits of the mainstream approach to psychology by performing critical investigations on the basis of new historical inquiry. The critical history of psychology is understood as the study of the histories of psychology that are underprivileged compared with dominant accounts of history of psychology. Its focus is placed on the examination and revision of three interrelated concepts that prevail in mainstream psychology: the restricted level of analysis, the role of ideology, and the false claim of scientific objectivity and political neutrality (see Fox et al., 2009). In essence, psychology's ontological orientation and subject matter – human beings, is viewed and studied in a limited manner operating within the mechanistic model of individual actions, an atomistic approach to study complex phenomena and reductionistic explanations of human mental life. These ontological choices have epistemological and methodological consequences. In mainstream psychology, there is a cult of methodologism (Teo, 2005) which has created a methodological theory of knowledge with no place for the humanistic view of a person and therefore is deprived of its original individuality, subjective complexity and cultural-historical context. Furthermore, this has supported a postulate for value-free and neutral psychological practice which is unaware of its political and ethical foundations and implications. It is not possible to build a scientific status of a discipline and generate meaningful knowledge in the void.

The critical history of psychology would not be the same if it was not for the visionary but unappreciated work of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911). He made a distinction between the natural and human sciences and specified their theoretical tasks. For psychology and history as human sciences, the main task is to understand historical-cultural aspects of human life and the reality of lived experience. According to Dilthey (1982, 1987, 2004), psychology should be oriented towards understanding, to treating the human experience in its totality as its subject, to study human life in context and to use understanding as a primary research method that comprises elementary forms of understanding, empathy, and hermeneutic understanding. Applying this perspective to the contemporary history of psychology helps to recognize and strengthen the status of the history of psychology as a human science dedicated to reconstructing historical context and applying hermeneutic methods of inquiry in support of psychological knowledge development.

THE NEW HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY – THEORETICAL CHOICES

The historiography of psychology (inspired by the historiography of natural science), which is the study of the writing of history of psychology, has created lots of literature that is affected by many fundamental issues that have been ignored, such as: "we find histories that are no more than literature reviews extended backward in time, we find story telling substituting for history, we find great man hagiography, we find the cult of 'anticipations' and the awarding of good and bad marks on the basis of some current scientific orthodoxy, we find gross insensitivity to historical context, we find the formulation of 'timeless' problems in the

language of the present, we find the constructions of spurious lines of ancestry, we find the mythology of progress" (Danziger, 1997b, p. 108).

The dominant history of psychology has been created under pressure to provide valuable scholarship in support of the scientific status of mainstream psychology and a respectable place within academia. Notably, the history of psychology was used "as a way of furthering this cause, providing simple storylines that unfolded Psychology's increasing commitment to scientific methods, and what it has accomplished by so doing." (Richards, 2010, p. 4). Historical interpretations are never value-neutral because they are located in specific cognitive perspectives chosen by historians of psychology. For the history of psychology, there are three main distorted ways of presenting historical accounts (see Harris, 2009; Richards, 2010): Whiggish (historical accounts in support of the status quo written by the dominant group), internalist (historical accounts focused on the internal history of psychology) and presentist (historical accounts projecting today's perspective on the past). Some histories of psychology were also presented as a succession of great men while completely ignoring the contextual factors involved in the process. The history of psychology could be organized by presenting its four main domains of interest: psychological topics, psychology as a separate field of study, psychology as an institutionalized discipline, and psychology as profession (see Walsch, Teo, & Baydala, 2014). However, complementary histories of psychology have appeared on the peripheries of the dominant paradigms, such as: revisionist history (historical accounts challenging the status quo using history), compensatory history (historical accounts focusing on neglected groups – e.g., women and ethnic minorities) or new history of psychology (historical accounts recreating psychological ideas in the social context, including power relations, and the perspectives of different groups). The new history of psychology aimed to be "more contextual, more critical, more archival, more inclusive, and more past-minded" (Furumoto, 1989, p. 30). Thus, the history of psychology should be studied and practiced with the awareness that:

1. "Methods of historical inquiry are as important to learn as methods of research.
2. Historical accounts themselves are never value-neutral. The historian always has to choose some method of data collection and organization over another. The historian also needs to choose an interpretative framework to present an account of the past.
3. Once any historical account is written, it can then be used to strengthen a particular interpretation of the past and its implications for the present, that is, it may serve a political purpose." (Harris, 2009, pp. 33–34).

Kurt Danziger explains that "the way in which we organize a field will determine the way we organize its history" (Danziger, 1990, p. 1). For example, if psychologists are expected to produce scientific activity within the framework of the 19th century physical sciences, they will present the history of psychology as a succession of individual investigators, confirmed hypotheses, developed techniques and accumulated findings. However, that is a very limited approach as psychological knowledge and the historical reconstruction of it are founded on the social activity of scholars in a wider and diverse historical-cultural world. The reconstructive work of a historian of psychology should involve the analysis of the "context of discovery" and the "context of justification." Performing an analysis of the context of discovery means investigating the context of constructing theories, research methods, and results. Analyzing the context of justification is about recognising the community of scholars that constructed and supported the "constructive schemes." Importantly, those schemes provide cognitive frameworks for the interpretations of data but also a set of rules for organizing the data production. More specifically, products of scientific inquiry are constructed by established groups and undergo an acceptance process as not every type of knowledge is equally valued and desired at particular time and in a specific setting.

Psychological life and psychological inquiry are universal phenomena, however the historiography of psychology has privileged psychological knowledge produced by the dominant centers – with the most influence given to the United States. This negligence towards any peripheral sources of psychological investigation and claims of universal validity led to a one-way flow of the "only legitimate and homogeneous" psychological knowledge to many different locations in Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, Australia and Oceania. This colonial-like style of distributing knowledge has been objected to recently by some of the scholars from peripheries. For instance, some Japanese psychologists have realized that they have not produced their own history of psychology but have completely relied on American textbooks and scientific accounts (see Pankalla & Kilian, 2018). The emergence of indigenous psychologies in various locations has been very inspiring for the history of psychology and for the construction of locally-relevant psychological knowledge. Therefore, "insofar as psychology is regarded as a social project producing locally grounded knowledge, the characteristics of the sides for the production of that knowledge become quite important." (Danziger, 2006, p. 220). Moving towards a polycentric history of psychology reveals the multiplicity of historical data and encourages an investigative practice that is able to deal with rich accounts of psychological knowledge that are relevant to the psychological life of local people.

The previous paragraphs provided an introductory background of the investigative practices in the contemporary history of psychology. Acknowledging and integrating selected approaches offers an original and promising perspective to examine of psychological phenomena and to integrate psychological knowledge within the framework of the history of psychology (see Figure 1).
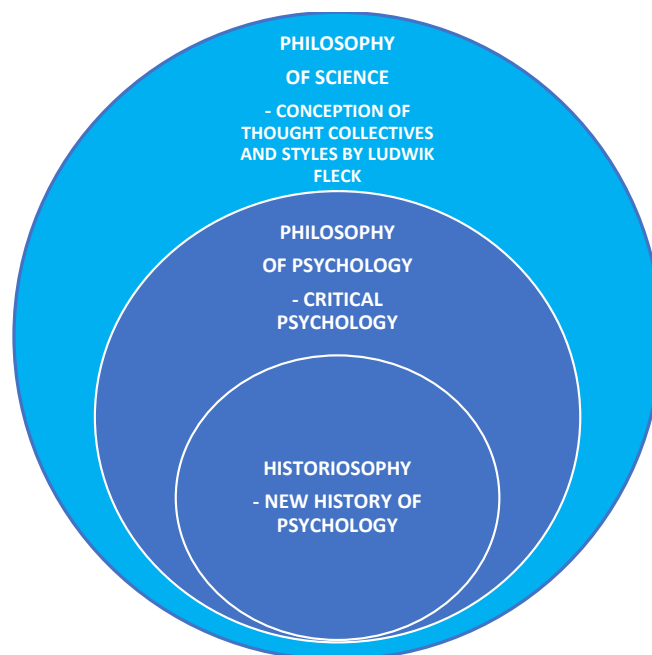
Figure 1. A research perspective for studies in the history of psychology[1].

We propose that Figure 1 demonstrates a plausible research perspective and process for conducting studies in the history of psychology. This research perspective is comprised of

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1   The perspective was developed by Andrzej Pankalla, Aleksandra Kilian and Konrad Kośnik.

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three interrelated elements: the philosophy of science, the philosophy of psychology and historiosophy, understood as the philosophical interpretation of the course of history of psychology. This research process consists of three stages:

1. Identify thought collectives and the reconstruction of thought styles. Researchers also identify their own thought style and its presuppositions.
2. Apply a critical approach focused on the historical-cultural perspective, including power relations, and value systems. Researchers discover their own value systems.
3. Develop new historical accounts of the studied phenomena, including local context, ideas previously distorted, and excluded groups. Researchers reconstruct and complement current psychological knowledge and advance new studies in the history of psychology.

This methodological perspective is proposed to study unnoticed or marginalised thought styles – crypto thought styles, neglected research areas, complex historical-cultural knowledge, diverse groups of people and phenomena in the history of psychology.

CONCLUSIONS – TURNING TO REAL PSYCHOLOGY

The aim of real psychology (Pankalla & Kilian, 2018) is to recognize and reconstruct marginalised lines of inquiry within the framework of a new history of psychology, to promote scholarship that differs from the dominant paradigm in Western psychology, and to remain closely related to the fields of cultural psychology and critical psychology. The main focus is on the unique lifeworld of the human psychic and spiritual life that should be the fundamental subject matter of psychological studies. As noted by Danziger (2013), modern mainstream psychology is a psychology without a soul. Moreover, it is practiced beyond the lifeworld of human experience. The real psychology rediscovers the forgotten and uncomfortable concepts of the soul, life, and experience, and acknowledges their realness and relatedness as well as their historical specificity. The analysis of this fundamental and constant interrelation of life, soul, and experience brings unique and rich accounts of knowledge about a person. This interrelation could be studied by using qualitative research methods based on the understanding that is open to subjective, individual, and distinctive aspects of human experience. Real psychology is inspired by the work of Wilhelm Dilthey (1982) and the German term of "Real-psychologie" which describes the study of the contents of a human soul, occurring connections, and activities.

While looking at the historical aspects of psychological inquiry from the perspective of real psychology, several points should be considered. Firstly, every person and community possess some distinctive historical background, characteristics cultural features, and meanings that convey new insights into the knowledge of locally-created psychological life. Secondly, psychological life is interconnected with historical and cultural frameworks and extends beyond the existing and temporal connections by having a creative and significant impact. Thirdly, no locally produced knowledge about individuals should be omitted in the discourse of scientific psychology. Fourthly, for the practice of psychology to be relevant and compelling, it has to be derived from real world studies and serve the people for whom it is practiced. Fifthly, researchers should be aware of their reality and be reflective about the presuppositions they bring into the analysis of different realities which are never the same and yet are equally intelligible. Considering all these insights allows for psychological investigation to be free from outdated concepts and irrelevant categories as opposed to the current ahistorical approach of identifying universal objects of one unified psychological inquiry. This way of theorising and practicing psychology is fascinated with discovering the

diverse, fragmented, and cultural-historical reality constructed and used by people in everyday life. As such, this type of psychological inquiry is preoccupied with identifying reality and the meaning it expresses through life experiences in its pursuit of understanding man.

As the history of psychology plays a crucial part in supporting the mainstream paradigm and maintaining the status quo, there is a need for a reflective reconstruction of crypto thought styles present in the whole historiosophy and historiography of psychology. Implicit in such crypto thought styles is the hidden knowledge about a multi-dimensional psychological reality of people and their compound experiences. Notably, this reconstructive work reveals the ethical foundation and system of values of every thought style that is shared by a collective of scholars. Conducting critical studies in the history of psychology requires rediscovering and elaborating on different psychological anthropologies that proceed each thought style. It also requires scholars to form relevant categories and concepts that have been previously and mistakenly applied as organic and to investigate these in any person located in whichever place in the world. Hopefully, this article's perspective on theorizing in the history of psychology will fulfill Danziger's wish that: "By encouraging a genuine historicizing of psychological knowledge it would open up the categories and practices of the discipline to hitherto unthinkable possibilities. Who knows, one day we might even end up with a history of modern psychology that actually contributes to the further development of psychological knowledge." (Danziger, 2006, p. 223).

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The Role of Self-Regulation in Work-Life Balance

ANNA **CZYŻKOWSKA** iD

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the phenomenon of work-life balance (WLB) through the lens of Stuart Shanker's Self-Reg® framework. WLB is an individual human ability to perform everyday negotiations between the roles one performs. The key to successful WLB is optimal and smooth self-regulation of stress in accordance with the Self-Reg method, which this article is an attempt to introduce the readers to. The Self-Reg method consists in skillfully switching between arousal, when needed, and inhibition or recovery. In this perspective, self-regulation consists of five stages: reframe (the behavior), recognize (the stressors), reduce (the stress), reflect (enhance stress awareness), and restore (strategies to promote resilience and restoration). Self-regulation ability enables efficient participation in all systems, integrated fulfillment of roles, smoothly switching attention between "I" (self-knowledge and the fulfillment of one's needs) and "we" (acting for the benefit of the group, family, or mankind). It thus allows not only for reducing the stress but also for achieving balance and harmony.

✉ *CORRESPONDING AUTHOR: a.czyzkowska@uksw.edu.pl

INTRODUCTION

The systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1984) postulates that a person is part of many systems (family of origin, nuclear family, groups of friends, workmates, etc.). According to the role theory (Kahn et al., 1964), an individual simultaneously performs many different roles in their lifetime: father, son, brother, husband, subordinate, superior, friend, neighbor, etc. Therefore, the question worth asking is: How to maintain balance when performing so many roles and functioning in several systems at once? The most important systems in an adult's life include working life and private life, and one of the greatest challenges in the contemporary world is to reconcile the demands they impose. The present article argues that what makes it possible to maintain balance between career and private life, referred to as *work–life balance (WLB)*, is the smooth self-regulation ability, which is called Self-Reg in the perspective offered by Shanker and Barker (2016).

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance in an adult's life has not been unambiguously defined. Originally researchers understood it as the absence of conflict between the demands of the professional role and those of roles other than work (Wayne et al., 2017). The term "balance" assumes the individual's equal engagement in career and other activities as the main goal, leading to satisfaction. This does not reflect the various possibilities and styles of reconciling different roles, not necessarily by devoting the same amount of time and energy to each of them (Clark, 2000). As a result of qualitative research on the phenomenon of WLB, some scholars therefore began to perceive it as a situation of day-to-day negotiations between the roles one performs rather than as an established, measurable, rigid, and precise construct. Consequently, WLB is fluctuating, elusive, and changeable (Wattis et al., 2013).

WLB can be understood as an individual human ability that one can learn in order to balance the components of work and private life (including family life). In this perspective, balance is an personal choice and the individual is fully responsible for it in their life. Some researchers believe that it is a matter of good time organization and prioritizing (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). Others stress how important varied individual abilities are in the process of achieving this balance (Hobson, 2014). Most studies focus on how support in achieving this balance can be provided to individuals by their employing organizations (Grawitch & Ballard, 2016) and by legislators (Herman & Lewis, 2012). According to one of the definitions, WLB is a mental state influenced both by the individual and by their environment (Grawitch & Ballard, 2016). There are few studies, however, that address the issue of whether the ability to balance career and private life (especially family life) is a personal skill based on some other important psychological abilities. For this reason, no knowledge is available concerning how it can be enhanced through appropriate psychological training.

WLB is also defined as a subjective sense of efficiently reconciling one's roles and of participating (in a way that one perceives as adequate) in all systems one is part of, thanks to the dynamic ability to negotiate between the demands of all these systems. Research has shown that ineffective reconciliation of roles leads to heavy stress (Wattis et al., 2013; Frone et al., 1997). Strategies for coping with stress were among the strongest predictors of WLB, much stronger than organizational support (i.e., support from the government, the law, and

enterprises; Amazue & Onyishi, 2016). Balance results from the use of coping strategies in constantly changing circumstances and from simultaneously and smoothly responding to the demands of the multiple systems in which one functions (Marks et al., 2001). A person achieves balance not only through the reduction of stressful experiences (tensions, conflicts) but also through self-development and caring for resources (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Kalliath & Brough, 2008).

The author therefore decided to use the theory of stress management (self-regulation) in the present study to look for an answer to the question of how to balance career and family life effectively. The psychological state of balance is the outcome of a broader process of self-regulation, which consists in adjusting the individual's expectations and resources to the challenges the individual is faced with in a given life situation. A state of balance cannot be achieved once and for all. It is achieved continually through self-regulation.

SHANKER AND BARKER'S SELF-REGULATION THEORY

In the perspective proposed by Shanker and Barker (2016), self-regulation is the response of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) to stress that consists in activating the metabolic processes (consuming energy) and then initiating compensation processes (restoring balance, growth, and development). Every day, faced with numerous situations and challenges, people alternately experience activation, triggered by the sympathetic nervous system (which releases cortisol and adrenaline, thus increasing the arousal of the organism), and inhibition, triggered by the parasympathetic nervous system (which releases acetylcholine and serotonin, decreasing the arousal of the organism). An increase in arousal consumes energy, while inhibition is needed for recovery and the restoration of resources. From this perspective, balance means smoothly (and consciously) switching between arousal, when needed, and inhibition (recovery), which continues throughout a person's lifetime. Practicing this balance is not tantamount to practicing self-control ("restrain yourself", "control yourself", "resist impulses").

Self-regulation means recognizing the many different signals of arousal (including heightened stress), analyzing the situation based on self-knowledge and the knowledge of the environment in which one functions, and skillfully managing oneself and the situation so as to turn off this alert (and in order not to cause excessive exhaustion in the future). Self-regulation is based on constantly monitoring one's situation (external and internal stimuli) and evaluating whether a particular arousal is needed and useful (activity and energy needed at work and at home) or whether it has become a case of overload. When one is overloaded, one feels that one has no reserves left and perceives many negative thoughts, behaviors, and emotions (e.g., uncontrolled outbursts of anger, lack of strength, or quite the opposite—inability to stop). One then falls into the vicious circle of chronic stress. When a situation evokes anxiety in a person, the level of tension increases, the level of energy decreases, and it becomes more difficult for the person to understand signals from the social environment. This in turn impairs their ability to benefit from the positive influence of other people and brings them to the verge of an emotional crisis. Such situations may occur more frequently in individuals with a sensitive temperament, higher reactivity, and lower resistance to stress.

Self-regulation is the ability to smoothly manage energy in such a way as to function efficiently in changing conditions and achieve a dynamic balance. The method of self-regulation (or Self-Reg) designed by Shanker (Shanker & Barker, 2016) is the outcome of research on stress and clinical experience of work with parents and children in the stress loop. This method is based on the cycle of arousal in stress and on the ability to diagnose stress in five main domains. Self-Reg is not merely individual regulatory strategies but

a holistic understanding of human functioning throughout the lifetime. The method is meant to develop greater resistance to stress, ensure greater balance, and promote coping with the challenges of everyday life in all of its domains. Self-Reg consists in building the ability to diagnose oneself and the situations one is in in order to be able to manage one's choices and reactions in such a way as to avoid overload. To develop this ability, it is necessary to learn each of the five stages (Table 1). Each stage will be discussed in more detail and its aims will be explained.

Table 1. Stages of Self-Regulation

STAGES OF SELF-REGULATION	
Stage 1: Reframe	Monitoring one's situation (thoughts–emotions–behaviors), reading the signals, and reframing behaviors
Stage 2: Recognize	Identifying the stressors
Stage 3: Reduce	Reducing the stress
Stage 4: Reflect	Awareness of the causes of stress overload
Stage 5: Restore	Learning the ways to recover and restore the resources

STAGE 1: REFRAME (THE BEHAVIOR)

The first stage consists in identifying the symptoms of stress and reading them as signals of a deeper problem. What is helpful at this stage is good self-knowledge and a good knowledge of one's organism. The signal symptoms may be somatic (e.g., stomachaches, headaches, trembling hands) or mental (sadness, anger, fear, helplessness). The better the self-knowledge, the easier it will be to identify these symptoms (for example, if one is aware that one laughs hysterically under stress, one will quickly realize that one is in a situation of tension).

After reframing, most overload behaviors can be interpreted as symptoms of stress. What is crucial here is the understanding of human behaviors as energy deficits or as signs of breakdown in a crisis rather than, for instance, as intentional and malicious.

STAGE 2: RECOGNIZE (THE STRESSORS)

Simultaneous functioning in the domains of work and private life exposes a person to stress, which may be related to problems at work, conflicts at home, work overload, and lack of time. In Shanker's approach (Shanker & Barker, 2016), stress and stressors are very broad concepts, covering all situations that consume a person's energy (i.e., require effort). In this perspective, stressors originate in five main domains: biological, emotion, cognitive, social, and prosocial. When one of the domains is disturbed, the entire system will be destabilized. A destabilizing element can be hunger. The feeling of hunger (the biological domain) results in increased tension and anger (the emotion domain), impairs understanding and attention (the cognitive domain), and—like a snowball—may trigger an avalanche of stress and upset the balance. In the second stage one should be a detective investigating one's own stress, which means one should recognize which of these domains one is experiencing overload from. The table below details the domains of stress.

Table 2. Domains of Stress

Biological domain (fundamental, energy basis)	Stimuli: light, sound, temperature, touch (texture), smell, allergens, air condition and contamination Physiological reactions and processes: aches (stomachache, headache, spine ache, etc.), illnesses (including heightened body temperature), hunger, thirst, lack of sleep, physical fatigue
Emotion domain	Emotions as a source of overload (internal stimuli)
Cognitive domain	Learning, attention, comprehension, information processing, memory, prediction Information overload, inability to critically analyze sources, cognitive dissonance, intellectual challenges, etc.
Social domain	Situations in which being in the social environment is stressful (mobbing, domestic violence, and neutral contacts with people which are nevertheless straining for an introvert or for a person with low social intelligence)
Prosocial domain	Empathy (understood as the ability to perceive other people's mental states) and functioning for the benefit of others (abandoning a focus on oneself and one's needs in favor of a focus on others and on their needs), namely: selflessness, sacrificing oneself for other people's good, cooperation for the group's goals, the burden of job burnout in social work occupations, parental burnout, etc.

Self-regulation is a dynamic system; anything that happens in one element of the system influences its remaining parts. The greater the tension caused by stressors from one domain, the lower the level of general energy resources and the more difficulty the next domain poses to the person (e.g., it is hard to cognitively focus at work when the situation at home has strongly affected one's emotions). In this situation, the threshold of resistance to stimuli from further domains decreases (i.e., reactivity increases). The vicious circle of stress is triggered (the way a snowball starts an avalanche)—stress affects successive domains, tension escalates, and the level of energy for coping with the challenges decreases exponentially. In order to maintain balance, one needs to simultaneously work on stabilization in all domains or to replenish energy in one part of the system with resources from another part. Maintaining balance means attempting to maintain homeostasis by constantly juggling with energy and tension.

STAGE 3: REDUCE (THE STRESS)

After identifying what is stressful for you, the next step is the management of stressors in order to reduce them. The mindfulness method, crucial for self-regulation, is incessant internal monologue ("what I feel", "what disturbs me", "what I care about"). In psychology, the application of mindfulness-based methods brings notable effects in working with stress and emotion regulation (Khoury et al., 2015; Paulus, 2016). An individual may control (regulate) the situation they are in (e.g., refuse to see a person who regularly distresses them), the way they think about a given situation once they find themselves in it ("The person must be very lonely and takes it out on others like this"), and possibly the way they cope with the situation and with the emotions it has evoked ("I felt sorry after visiting this person, I feel a decrease in energy") or the way they seek to restore the resources ("I will phone my husband and seek his support"). One can try to adjust the home or work environment to one's preferences.

STAGE 4: REFLECT (ENHANCE STRESS AWERNESS)

Functioning in a hurry and in many roles, people often do not realize that they have been overloaded with stress for quite a long time. Even when they finally do realize that their energy resources are running out, they are still not fully aware of the causes of this overload. One "earns" exhaustion for a long time by failing to regulate one's life in such a way as to

ensure a balance of stimuli in it. Good self-regulation is based on thorough knowledge of the causes of one's state (what is happening to me and what it may stem from—broad and narrow circumstances). The essence of regulation lies not in controlling or reducing difficult behaviors ("I must restrain myself more effectively"; "I will try not to shout at my child ever again") but in stopping and devoting time to reflection on what a given behavior signals (presumably, stress—in other words, excessively high arousal combined with inadequate resources and recovery) and on how one can operate the stressors (now or in the future) to reduce them.

STAGE 5: RESTORE (STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE RESILIENCE AND RESTORATION)

The last but not less important stage consists in developing strategies that will help a particular person reduce tension and regain energy. This stage, again, is an individual matter. The next step to self-knowledge consists in familiarity with the activities, behaviors, and circumstances that soothe the individual and help them recover by restoring their resources (sports, social gatherings, reading books, going on holiday, taking a walk, watching films, movement or immobility, etc.). What often contributes to recovery in individuals strongly overloaded with stimuli is sensory deprivation—sitting in silence and darkness (or gazing at one point). The idea is to develop constructive strategies while not allowing detrimental ones (which give temporary relief but are destructive in the long run), such as drinking alcohol, eating sweets, etc.

People satisfy one another's numerous needs (belongingness and relatedness, affiliation, security, showing love or friendship). Rebuilding resources after challenges that exhaust energy can (and should) take place in relationships with people. The better the social support network, the more mentally and physically healthy people are (Brooks, 2006)—positive social interactions contribute to reducing blood pressure, decreasing cortisol level, activating the immune system (Sternberg, 2001), and even alleviating inflammatory conditions in the organism (Schreier et al., 2013). Interestingly, scientists have discovered that what plays a special role in reducing the stress perceived by the individual is giving other people care and concern (rather than only receiving them). Research confirms that giving support decreases the level of tension and the reactivity of the sympathetic nervous system to stressors (Inagaki & Eisenberger, 2016) and that it directly translates into health benefits (Brown et al., 2009).

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND SELF-REG

The question of how to maintain work-life balance, crucial for satisfaction with life, is in fact a question of how to achieve balance in life in order to be able to simultaneously function in several systems (e.g., work, home) and perform many roles. To answer it, to begin with, it is worth citing three definitions of WLB, as: (1) a situation of day-to-day negotiations between the roles one is supposed to perform; (2) a person's individual ability to balance the components of career and private life; (3) the dynamic ability to negotiate between the demands of all the systems that one is part of.

The question therefore arises of how this balance can be achieved (and what practical abilities to develop to help people achieve it). How to negotiate between the roles one has to perform every day? How to acquire the ability to balance several different components of human life? How to negotiate between the demands of all the systems one is part of? Shanker and Barker (2016) presented a holistic method (Self-Reg) leading precisely to the

maintenance of balance in life. It can be used to develop those human competencies that allow a person to achieve WLB. WLB can be understood as equal division of time between working life and private (family) life. At the same time, these two worlds are not separated; they are united by the fact that the same person functions in both of them simultaneously. Accordingly, balance should not be based on time schemas or established structures built by the employer or the government but on certain traits or **abilities** of the individual that result in an efficient and dynamic balance being achieved every day. Balance should be understood as the domains being divided "satisfyingly in changing circumstances" rather than "equally." Research shows that maintaining clear and rigid boundaries between professional and home roles can be a cause behind the emergence of stress (Smith et al., 2016). A better strategy for the achievement of balance is integration. The idea of *work-life integration* (in place of work-life balance) posits that there are several systems which an individual simultaneously belongs to and that the aim should be to integrate them efficiently and to ensure their coexistence. How to achieve this aim? The key lies in understanding the nature of the stress that an individual undergoes in everyday life and in identifying the optimal strategy for regulating it. When the WLB phenomenon is considered from a psychological system perspective, a holistic and consistent model to apply to it is Self-Reg. Self-regulation ability enables efficient participation in all systems, integrated fulfillment of roles, and smoothly switching attention between "I" (self-knowledge and the fulfillment of one's needs) and "we" (collectivism, community, acting for the benefit of the group, family, or mankind). The system of balance is sensitive to every disturbance; it works consistently as a whole. The effective integration of roles and systems (i.e., WLB) results in increased quality of life in the form of increased well-being, marital satisfaction, better health condition, work efficiency, etc.—namely, in what is called *work-family enrichment* or *work-family facilitation* (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Siu et al., 2010; Srivastava & Srivastava, 2014).

PARENTS AND CHILDREN: SELF-REGULATION AS THE KEY TO HARMONY IN THE FAMILY

It is essential that adults develop their self-regulation ability not only for their own good (and for the good of other adults in their social environment, at home or in the workplace) but also in order to be able to teach it to their children. Stress reactivity is built into neural systems in the first years of the child's life (Bradley, 2003). Even in early childhood infants strongly emotionally resonate with their caregivers (Schore, 1994). This phenomenon is known as limbic resonance (Lewis et al., 2007). It has two aspects, however—reading people's emotions and resonating with them (empathizing), a person may become infected not only with their positive mood but also with stress, anxiety, or anger. Porges (2011) calls this phenomenon neuroception. In his opinion, it is an atavistic neuromechanism which is supposed to constantly monitor if other people (and the predictable situations related to them) are potentially safe or threatening. The social monitoring system carefully observes nonverbal signals—facial expressions, the tone of voice, gestures—and registers them probably below the threshold of consciousness (until they become upsetting, that is, until they induce a fight-or-flight response). Another person's stress or anger automatically stimulates the amygdala (Goleman, 2007).

The child's basic level of reactivity, arousal, and affect regulation ability develop through interaction between genes and the educational environment (Schore, 1994). It is parents who teach their children how to regulate the states of arousal and inhibition by improving self-regulation and the knowledge of basic principles of emotion regulation

(**recognition**—learning the emotions; **reduction**—learning the possibilities of reducing stress in each domain; **recovery**—learning to build the basis restoring energy).

As a result of a chronic state of stress and arousal the individual becomes hypersensitive to stimuli and evaluates them as threatening even when they are not (this is a process called priming; Levine & Frederick, 2012). Thus, a person in an overstimulating environment, trying to combine functioning in many domains (work, home) is constantly in the fight-or-flight mode (hypervigilance, reactivity, a state of alert) and stress hormones are constantly released in their organism, which causes disturbances in tissues, organs, and systems. In a state of increased stress the organism expends energy (needed for fight or flight), taking it from many domains. This slows down and impairs the functioning of the digestive system, the immune system, and cell growth and reproduction (Mate, 2004). A person who fails to cope with the challenges involved in simultaneously functioning at work and in private (family) life (frequently in a hurry and in overdrive in each domain), lives in chronic stress, using their energy for fight-or-flight responses, thus impairing the functioning of their organism and psyche until breakdown (mental or somatic stress-related disorders; Terelak, 2001). This is how the vicious circle of stress arises.

If the number of stresses is high, a child's brain may become hypersensitive even to slight stimuli (priming) and overreact to them (with anger and shouting—which, again, is yet another stimulus leading to arousal). When parents use inappropriate methods in response to the child's shouting (for example, when they take offense at the child, punish or shout at him or her, or drag the child behind them), they add to the stress, causing the child to fall into the vicious circle of stress. Their own reactions and the reactions of others are further stress-inducing stimuli. The vicious circle of stress is fueled by stimuli from five successive domains of stress. When one of the these domains is disturbed, the entire system becomes destabilized, passing tension on to further domains. People function in self-intensifying cycles of reciprocal behaviors (de Barbaro, 1994; Pohorecka, 1992). An individual's stress loop encounters the loop of another person's stress, and this may lead to the escalation of tension in a feedback cycle.

Additionally, an adult participates in their occupational system and children participate in the school system (which means father's vicious circle of stress encounters the boss's or workmate's stress loops, while the child's vicious circle of stress meets that of the teacher or a classmate, etc.). Therefore, self-regulation is one of the most important abilities for parents to acquire and pass on to their children, enabling them to achieve a sense of balance in their future life.

CONCLUSION

The literature and research on work-life balance are extremely extensive and multidisciplinary. The approach focused on politics and the environment investigates state and organizational social and family policy and its significance for WLB (Gatrell et al., 2013). This approach is concerned with what kind of support from external systems is useful for the achievement of balance in the life of citizens (employees). This support includes both decisions at the government level (family law, labor law—the length of paid maternity leave, paternity leaves, building free nursery schools, the requirement of taking one full 14-day leave in a year, etc.) and the level of employing organizations (family-friendly company policy, flexible working hours, etc.). By contrast, the approach focused on private life is mainly concerned with the division of domestic duties that is conducive to WLB (e.g., smoothly switching between roles; Lyness & Kropf, 2005). All the conceptions discussed above are based on the idea of control and rigid divisions or rules. But the issue of balance in human

life is somewhat more complex than that. Human life cannot be restricted to only two domains: career and home (family life). It is possible to mention numerous examples that do not fully fit into these two spheres (personal development, charity or volunteer work, etc.). It has been proposed that, in our thinking, we should depart from *work–life balance*, understood as setting strict rules and principles (e.g., a rigid division of time between work and private life) and as reliance on behaviors based on self-control, in favor of *work–life integration*, based on smooth and dynamic self-regulation ability. This ability is based on energy management, not on time management (Schwartz, 2007).

Self-regulation is an immensely important process because it also includes reacting to the stress loops of other people whom one depends on. Sometimes effective self-regulation requires teaching regulation to others. Attempts at self-regulation must be adjusted both to the changing situation and to the characteristics of a particular person in such a way as to stop the avalanche in time (or—better—to prevent it a well-thought-out way). This ability, therefore, is not easy; it requires a high degree of insight (into oneself, into the situation, and into other people around) and self-reflection. Although it is highly difficult, this method is likely to be the key to what most people seek: harmony. The topic of self-regulation as the key to successful work-life balance is promising and requires empirical research.

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