

National cultural values in folk wisdom: The Indulgence (versus Restraint) Dimension in Polish proverbs

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This paper seeks to contribute to research into the relationship between language and culture. It tests correlations between the linguistic worldview (Bartmiński 2007; 2009) which emerges from paremiological evidence and the findings of social psychology with reference to national cultures (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010) which indicate that one of the top characteristics of Polish culture is restraint. Analysis of thematically selected Polish proverbs is carried out in relation to conceptualisations which include social hierarchy, gender roles, the importance of friendship, and the value of work. What emerges from the didactic message of proverbs is an image of community and its norms. Expressions of proverbial wisdom are discussed in relation to the Indulgence (vs. Restraint) Dimension (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010) as one of the cultural parameters applied in the World Values Survey (WVS). With a distinctly low score of 29 (out of 100), Poland seems to be a restrained culture which favours control of desires and impulses, undervalues leisure, discourages freedom of speech, prescribes clearly cut social roles and imposes traditional norms in public life. Linguistic evidence seems to confirm the result: Polish proverbs advocating prudence, caution and reticence, favour rigid rules which define the roles and rights of individuals. A high premium is placed on friendship understood in terms of mutual trust and support, as previously noted in cross-cultural pragmatic research (Wierzbicka 1997). Overall, the linguistic material corroborates the findings from wave 6 of the WVS (2010-2014) which show the family-work-religion triad as top priorities, relegating indulgence to fifth position.

Keywords: *proverbs, cultural dimensions, indulgence versus restraint, axiology in language, linguistic worldview.*

1. Introduction

Links between language, culture and cognition in paremiological stocks of different collectives are a challenging subject of investigation within a number of disciplines and paradigms. By means of proverbs every community retains and disseminates values to ensure that the norms it favours are respected and passed down to future generations. Linguistic analyses reveal cultural preferences and practices encoded in each layer of language, be it lexical, syntactic or prosodic. These seem to indicate the existence of "biocognitive urges to codify and comment on the state of the world relative to some ideal" (Honeck 1997) which result in the emergence of proverbs. With a focus on universal patterns, cognitive linguists have paid considerable attention to the embodied nature of conceptualisations which shape language (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Johnson 1987; Gibbs 1994; Lakoff 1999), yet they also admit that experiential basis of language is not complete without the cultural context (Geeraerts & Cuyckens 2010; Kövecses 2015). The social setting and the cultural context determine metaphors (Kövecses 2017), which – in turn – effectively perpetuate beliefs and values leaving an imprint on collective consciousness (*conscience collective*, Durkheim 1997). Interdisciplinary approaches

to cognition conclude that it is "is embrained, embodied, encultured, extended and distributed" (Geertz 2010: 304). Culture-specific metaphors, schemas, and categories are consistently explored (Palmer 1996; Sharifian 2011; 2014a; 2014b; 2017) through investigation of semantic, syntactic and pragmatic meaning. With the assumption that language is a "collective memory bank" (Wa Thiong'o 1986: 15) of cultural cognition, this paper traces cultural metaphors understood as 'fossilized' conceptualisations (Sharifian 2014b: 482) in a sample of over 2,000 Polish proverbs.

While cultural cognition, which emerges from the interactions between members of a group (Goldstein 1999; Sharifian 2014a) is believed to be subject to renegotiation throughout history, actual societal changes tend to be slow. Research in history indicates that mentalities do not keep up with the pace of change and technological advancement (Le Goff 1985). For example, conceptualisations with origins in Antiquity are very much alive today in Western culture. In Poland, the peasant roots (Wasilewski 2011) and the Sarmatian ideas of the nobility (*szlachta*) constantly emerge in language and literature (Czapliński 2009; 2015) and with them, the conservative hierarchical models of society and family do not lose traction despite the official endorsement of Western ideals which accompanied the accession of the country to the EU.

2. Folk wisdom encapsulated in language

Language reflects and effects observance of social norms. Nowhere is this impact more evident than in proverbs and adages with their authoritative and regulative force, where observance of social scripts is explicitly prescribed under the threat of social exclusion.

The Lublin School of Ethnolinguistics (Bartmiński 1990; 2007; 2009; Głaz, Danaher & Łozowski 2013) posits that the language of a community encodes its interpretations of the world and instils values in future generations; as such it provides a descriptive and axiological insights into cultures. Linguistic worldviews are explicitly expressed in proverbs – appreciated for the high degree of cultural relevance they exhibit (Bartmiński 1996: 20; Wasiuta 2012) – and the so-called "key words" (Wierzbicka 1997) whose meanings, frequently untranslatable, express a unique picture of how members of the community perceive reality and human relationships, including what they find acceptable as well as what remains a taboo subject. One reason why this vision should be invoked nowadays is due to nostalgia for the vision of an orderly black-and-white world of the past, so vividly present in discourses and ideologies.

3. The roles and normative functions of proverbs

Proverbs play an important role in oral traditions in all cultures, preceding the oldest known records from around 3500 BC (Taylor 1975: 79), as a means of lore and preservation of local behaviours and beliefs. Today their value lies in the fact that they reflect the stereotypes perpetuated by the community (Awdiejew 1984: 107) and its unique worldview. Syntactically proverbs are simple concise statements, pragmatically related to other paremiological genres, such as maxims, Wellerisms, and proverbial phrases and comparisons, classified as "echoic utterance" (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 238-239), with the function of "echoing the thought of people in general" (Blass 1990: 106) in contrast to particular views held by individuals. While the main two functions of proverbs are the didactic (social axioms) and regulatory (situational)

functions (Szpila 2003: 43), there are also several other shared characteristics (Szpila 2003: 25-55): (a) the author is unknown; (b) they are mostly derived from folk tradition or literature (a fuzzy distinction and in the latter case the original becomes modified and de-authored), or (c) borrowed proverbs (Lehnsprichwörter, Palm 1997: 4) of Biblical origin or dating back to Antiquity (easily adapted due to their universal message); (d) the content expresses the values and norms to be observed in a given community and prescribes the appropriate mode of thought and action/interaction. The key areas of human existence described in proverbs include: friendship, work, honesty, loyalty, upbringing, bad habits, and crime. Axiologically, the interpretations are transparent, and the rules are based on a commonsensical system of law. Paradoxically, proverbs with contradictory messages, known as *paremiological antonyms*, are likely to be found in every language, which might suggest that, despite established rules, contextual adaptation of behaviour is acceptable.

4. Top national values identified and quantified

Social psychology research initiated by Geert Hofstede and continued by the Hofstede Insights team (www.hofstede-insights.com) looks into six dimensions of national cultures. Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long Term Orientation, and more recently, Indulgence (Minkov 2007) were recognised and measured for over 100 countries in the World Value Survey between 1981 and 2014 (Inglehart 2018) to provide insight into values which may shape organisational relationships and performance in corporate environments.

Hofstede (1991: 5) understands culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" which can be investigated for any collective. Its members share *values*, i.e. "broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others" (Hofstede, 2001: 5). These are explicit in proverbs as a succinct linguistic reflection of societal vision and axiology.

While the notion of a "national culture" may be challenged as vague and oversimplified, Poland seems a less controversial area for Hofstede's investigation. Despite globalisation, the country remains relatively homogeneous in terms of ethnicity, language and religion. In spite of disregarding social diversity and change, investigation into national cultures offers a synthesis of dominant worldviews as systems of comprehending and organising the realities of life. This paper seeks to look at selected values through the lens of a collection of Polish proverbs.

4. 1 The 6-D Model for Poland

As the scores for 6 parameters measured in the 6-D Model (Hofstede Insights) indicate, Poland exhibits an extremely high degree of Uncertainty Avoidance (93), i.e. a tendency to preserve beliefs and rules of behaviour as well as intolerance of unconventional ideas and behaviour. Another characteristic indicated by the high UA score is "an inner urge to be busy and work hard" (Hofstede et al. 2010). A significant tolerance of perceived inequality in social hierarchies with Power Distance at 68, and a drive for success achieved in tough competition (64). Long Term Orientation ranks below the neutral threshold of 50, understood as a pragmatic approach in preparation for the future; the score of 38 for Poland suggests a preference "to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing

societal change with suspicion" (www.hofstede-insights.com/country/poland). Lastly, the lowest score (29) obtained for Poland is at the dimension of Indulgence (versus Restraint), which implies that:

Polish culture is one of Restraint. Societies with a low score on this dimension have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism. Also, in contrast to Indulgent societies, Restrained societies do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are Restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong. (*ibid.*)

These conclusions may require reconsideration in the light of more recent data obtained in the World Values Survey in 2012 (WV6 Results: Poland 2012) which indicate that free time is moderately or highly valued by 85.5% of respondents. The figures also show that friends and acquaintances are rather important for 55.2% and very important for 38.3% of the subjects, which would imply a substantial shift in interpersonal relationships. These results, however, may be affected by the geographical distribution of the participants. With all sixteen administrative regions (voivodeships) covered by the survey, more than a third of interviewees (34.9%) come from three regions with large urban areas: Masovia with the capital city of Warsaw (GDP per capita: 219.2% of the country's average), Silesia (103.6%), Greater Poland (109.1%). Economists consistently point out that the economic map of Poland reflects disparities resulting from the times of foreign occupation following the Partitions of the country (1772-1795). Another effect of the long-term annexation of Polish territories by Russia, Prussia and Austria and diversified cultural influence is the difference in the mindsets of Poles inhabiting different regions for generations. This is merely one of a host of variables to consider.

4.2 *The Indulgence (vs. Restraint) score for Poland*

The parameter of indulgence as a societal dimension grew out of research into subjective well-being (Inglehart 1997) which was later split into two by Minkov (2007) to investigate the level of Indulgence vs. Restraint (IVR) which is understood as "a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun" versus the belief that they need "to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms" (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010: 281).

Answers to questions such as: *Do you feel happy? How much freedom and control of life do you have? How important is leisure time for you?* provide information on attitudes to a wide range of subjects. These can include general norms, personal feelings, private lives, consumer behaviour, sex and politics. With reference to other parameters, a negative correlation is observed for Power Distance and Indulgence, i.e. hierarchical societies are known to be less indulgent. What is relevant for this analysis is the observation that a high degree of Restraint corresponds to societal cynicism which is the strongest in Eastern Europe (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010); a negative view of others, while securing one's welfare and reluctance towards social engagement are among the main characteristics. Others include adherence to strictly prescribed gender roles and maintaining order in the community. Nations with high scores in this parameter generally exhibit high Uncertainty Avoidance levels, which is also the case for Poland. Restrictive rules are not frowned upon.

4.3 *The key characteristics of restrained societies*

To test the validity of the results in the IVR parameter for Poland, proverbs containing relevant keywords were selected to determine whether they correlate with manifestations of low Indulgence (a – h below) as indicated by Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010):

- (a) a low sense of life control: what happens to me is not my own doing:
keywords: *los* ('fate'), *Bóg* ('God'), *szczęście* ('good luck'), *fortuna* ('good fortune');
- (b) strictly prescribed gender roles: men, women and children know their place in the social and family hierarchy
keywords: *mężczyzna/chłop* ('man'), *kobieta/baba* ('woman'), *dziecko/dzieci/dziatki* ('child'/'children');
- (c) restrictive upbringing total obedience to father/parent, punishment is the best method in raising children
keywords: *dziecko/dzieci/dziatki* ('child'/'children'), *ojciec* ('father'), *matka* ('mother'), *kara* ('punishment'), *karać* ('to punish');
- (d) smiling is regarded as suspect: stupid people smile, dishonest people smile
keywords: *uśmiech* ('smile'), *śmiać się* ('to laugh') and *uśmiechać się* ('to smile') and their derivatives;
- (e) low importance of leisure work is a priority: leisure is of little/no importance
keywords: *praca* ('work'), *robota* ('labour'), *pracowity* ('hard-working'), *odpoczynek* ('rest', 'relaxation'), *odpoczywać* ('to rest');
- (f) low importance of having friends: friendship is not important
keywords: *przyjaciel(e)* ('friend(s)');
- (g) thrift is important: money is to be saved, not spent
keywords: *pieniądze* ('money'), *oszczędzać* ('to save');
- (h) wariness of trusting others: nobody should be fully trusted
keywords: *ufać* ('to trust'), *wierzyć* ('to believe'/'to trust sb').

5. Conceptualisations of indulgence in Polish proverbs

In order to test the claim that restraint is favoured in Polish culture, this paper looks into the prescriptive and normative content of proverbs with their axiological charge and underlying conceptualisations. The following analysis is meant to determine whether the proverbial lore correlates with the low IVR parameter for Poland which suggests that restraint is favoured over indulgence.

5.1 Analysis: Materials and method

A total of 2,172 single-sentence paremiological units were selected from Krzyżanowski (1969-1978), a 4-volume printed academic collection of Polish proverbs. The basic criterion for the inclusion of a proverb into the corpus was its relevance for the identification of characteristics considered to indicate Indulgence or Restraint as a national value.

Table 1: IVR characteristics attested in Polish proverbs (Krzyżanowski 1969-1978)

IVR characteristics	keywords	no. of relevant proverbs/all proverbs	meaning	
			indulgent	restrained
low sense of life control	<i>los</i> ('fate')	19/22	1	18
	<i>Bóg</i> ('God')	384/550	0	384
	<i>szczęście</i> ('good luck')	118/132	1	117
	<i>fortuna</i> ('good fortune'/'fate')	41/57	0	41
strictly prescribed gender roles	<i>mężczyzna</i> ('man')	1/6	0	1
	<i>mąż</i> ('husband')	43/47	1	42
	<i>kobieta</i> ('woman')	19/68	2	17
	<i>żona</i> ('wife')	44/154	3	41
restrictive upbringing	<i>dziecko</i> ('child') + synonyms	72/120	0	72
	<i>ojciec</i> ('father')	31/59	0	31
	<i>matka</i> ('mother')	18/88	7	11
	<i>kara</i> ('punishment')	8/17	3	5
	<i>karać</i> ('to punish')	4/7	0	4
smiling people are suspect or stupid	<i>(u)śmiech</i> ('smile'/'laugh')	6/22	3	3
	<i>uśmiechać się</i> ('to smile')	0	-	-
	<i>śmiać się</i> ('to laugh')	20/55	1	19
low importance of leisure	<i>praca</i> ('work')	9/58	2	7
	<i>robota</i> ('labour')	6/70	1	5
	<i>pracowity</i> ('hard-working')	1/7	0	1
	<i>odpoczynek</i> ('rest'/'relaxation')	2/2	2	0
	<i>odpoczywać</i> ('to rest')	3/6	1	2
low importance of having friends	<i>przyjaciel(e)</i> ('friend(s)')	27/123	23	4
	<i>przyjaźń</i> ('friendship')	17/49	1	16
thrift is important	<i>pieniądze</i> ('money')	20/162	3	17
	<i>oszczędzać</i> ('to save')	8/8	1	7
wariness of trusting others	<i>ufać</i> ('to trust')	5/5	1	4
	<i>zaufanie</i> ('trust')	1/2	0	1
	<i>wierzyć</i>	27/54	6	20
	('to believe'; 'to trust sb')			

Another was the transparency of meaning; significant as they might prove, allegorical proverbs are not included in this corpus, which is limited to proverbs with literal meanings. Next, relevant proverbs were matched with the key characteristics of restrained societies which are at the head of each section (5.2.1-5.2.8).

5.2.1 *What happens to me is not my own doing*

Proverbs reflect a strong conviction that human efforts are futile. Belief in predestination and God's omnipotence or the capriciousness of fate are frequently evoked:

- (1) *Bóg daje dzieci i Bóg je odbiera* ['God gives children and God takes them away'];
- (2) *Co dał los, to i bierze* ['What fate gave you, it takes it away'];
- (3) *Każde dziecko szczęście swoje ze sobą na świat przynosi* ['Every child brings its own luck into the world'].

Feminine personifications of fickle Fortune are common:

- (4) *Fortuna z ludźmi gry sobie wyprawia* ['Fortune plays games with people'];
- (5) *Fortuna się do niego uśmiechnęła* ['Fortune smiled at him'];
- (6) *Fortuna się do niego tyłem obróciła* ['Fortune turned her back on him'];
- (7) *Fortuna z niego zakpiła* ['Fortune mocked him'].

Admittedly, determinism is defied in a popular proverb:

- (8) *Każdy jest kowalem swego losu* ['Every man is the blacksmith of his own fortune'/'Every man forges his own future'].

This position is rare, however. An overwhelming number of 550 proverbs which include *God* (as attested in Krzyżanowski 1969-1978) unanimously point out his role as a driving force:

- (9) *Bóg tak chciał* ['God's will'];
- (10) *Człęk sieje, a Bóg rodzi* ['Man sows, God gives life'];
- (11) *Człęk układa, a Bóg włada* ['Man plans, God rules'];
- (12) *Człęk zamysła, Bóg rozrządza* ['Man makes plans, God makes decisions'].

These proverbs, dated as they are, may not be a mere vestige of the past. As Inglehart (1997: 350) notes, Poland as "an intensely Catholic society, and the worldview of the Polish people emphasizes traditional cultural norms to a far greater extent than is true of [...] other industrial societies." This observation is consistent with the conclusions of Polish Catholic sociologist and priest Władysław Piwowarski, who claims that the process of industrialisation did not affect the Catholic Church in Poland which is "the Church of the People" (1996). As Olechnicki (2012: 362) points out, "Polish religiosity was and is very selective, incoherent and contradictory when it comes to teachings and doctrine of the Church." Among the dominant features of "traditional Polish religiosity" listed by Piwowarski (1996) a deep emotional attachment to the "faith of the fathers", a specific morality which emphasizes an attachment to rites and practical morality more than evangelical ideals, and ritualism are noteworthy in the light of the discussion here.

Trust and optimism in surrendering to God's will can also be detected, as in:

- (13) *Dał Bóg na dziś, da i jutro* ['God provided for today and will for tomorrow']
- (14) *Wszystko w ręku Boga* ['All is in God's hand'].

This commonsense folk philosophy and a declaration of optimistic fatalism can also be attested in what has become a popular catchphrase:

- (15) *Jakoś to będzie* ['Things will work out in the end'],

which is believed to represent a uniquely Polish lifestyle concept listed alongside Danish *hygge* and Swedish *lagom* (Chomańska et al.: 2017; Mecking 2017).

5.2.2 *Men, women and children know their place in the social and family hierarchy*

A patriarchal model of the family is dominant:

(16) *Biada temu domowi, gdzie żona przewodzi mężowi* [‘Woe to the house where the wife leads the husband’]

is known in 5 variants. Equally explicit is the message in the vivid imagery of:

(17) *Niedobrze tam, gdzie mąż w spódnicy, a żona w gatkach chodzi* [‘It is no good if the man wears a skirt and the wife wears trousers’]

with 15 variants attested in paremiological literature. The ideal wife is subservient to the husband:

(18) *Dobra żona, sługa doma* [‘A good wife serves the house’]

and reticent

(19) *Jak drzwi, które nie skrzypią, tak żona, która milczy – najprzyjemniejsza* [‘Like the door which doesn't creak, a quiet wife is the most pleasant’].

The wife needs supervision as she cannot be fully trusted

(20) *Nie wierz żonie w domu, a koniowi w drodze* [‘Don't trust your wife at home or your horse on a journey’].

As a preventative measure, occasional beating is recommended for her own good:

(21) *Kiedy mąż żony nie bije, to w niej wątroba gnije* [‘When a husband doesn't beat his wife, her liver rots’].

However, if the wife conforms to the expectations of her husband and other grown-up relatives (within the extended family model), the wife deserves respect equal to that shown to other distinguished members of the community:

(22) *Z żoną, doktorem i księdzem w zgodzie żyć trzeba* [‘It is essential that you live in harmony with your wife, the doctor and the priest’].

Admittedly, the husband is also expected to meet high moral standards:

(23) *Żona ma być ukladna, a mąż przykładowy* [‘The wife is to be graceful, the husband flawless’]

and set an example, since

(24) *Jaki pan mąż, podobnaż pani żona* [‘Like husband, like wife’].

The wife's role is recognised in:

(25) *Mąż głową domu, a żona szyją* [‘The husband is the head of the household, the wife is the neck’].

For this reason, as is the case with other social connections, a dose of caution is advocated:

(26) *Żonę kochaj, prawdy jej nie mów, a przyjacielowi nie wierz* [‘Love your wife, don't tell her the truth, and don't trust your friend’].

5.2.3 *Stupid people smile; dishonest people smile*

As with the majority of post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Poland is repeatedly described as a country where smiling faces are relatively rare and individuals perceive smiles as an indicator of low intelligence or evil intentions (Bedford, Fallon & McAdam 2008; Szarota 2006; 2009; 2011). While more recent research brings a more cautious assessment of this reserve and its demonstration (Krys et al. 2014; 2016), a distrust of smiling faces and displays of happiness as such is a recurring motif in Polish proverbial lore:

(27) *Nie wierz niebu jasnemu ni człeku śmiejącemu* [Don't trust a clear sky and a smiling man].

As a culture-specific element of non-verbal communication, a smile does not necessarily reflect happiness, yet is naturally linked with a spontaneous expression of contentment and joy. This feeling however, let alone any demonstration of well-being, may be disapproved of. Polish proverbs consistently remind you that belief in good fortune is naive as good luck is short-lived and those who indulge in the temporary are the hardest hit by misfortune:

(28) *Gdzie szczęście panuje tam rozum szwankuje* [‘Where happiness rules, the mind fails’];

(29) *Szczęście człowieka oślepia* [‘Happiness blinds a man’].

Modesty and restraint in enjoying one's success is recommended:

(30) *Kto się w szczęściu nadyma, kurczy się w nieszczęściu* [‘One puffed up with happiness shrinks in misery’]

and a stroke of luck is perceived suspiciously. A windfall may not be seen as a godsend, nor does it gain you the community's respect:

(31) *Ma diabelskie szczęście* [‘He/She has devilish/evil luck’];

(32) *Nie ufaj szczęściu* [‘Do not trust good luck’];

(33) *Szczęście głupim sprzyja* [‘Good luck favours fools’].

A sense of determinism is present in reliance on God for solutions to problems. It is coupled with the conviction of a lack of social support in times of misery:

(34) *W szczęściu każdy dopomoże, ale w złym razie tylko ty sam, Boże* [‘Everyone will help out in happy times; in evil ones only you, God’];

(35) *Pan Bóg szczęściem władnie* [‘God controls good fortune’].

5.2.4 Work is a priority, leisure is of little/no importance

A high axiological value of labour in Polish proverbs is undisputable. As with other aspects of the worldview emerging in this corpus of proverbs, work ethos is closely combined with religion:

(36) *Pracowitym Bóg pomaga, a próżniaków bieda smaga* ['God helps busy men and whips idlers'];

(37) *Kto lichy pracuje, ten lichy się modli* ['Who works poorly, prays poorly'],

which regulates the calendar of work and leisure:

(38) *Kto w święto poluje, diabłu służy* ['Who hunts on a holy day serves the Devil'].

In a study on Polish paremiology, Wyżkiewicz-Maksimow (2012: 125-126) notes that:

Diligence is a value exhibited alongside faith, patience, honesty, thrift, perseverance, fame and reason. The recommended way of doing a job is a thoughtful action that should be accompanied by focus, accuracy, devotion, stubbornness, uncompromising attitude, sacrifice, consistency, modesty, lack of publicity, counting primarily on one's own strength, without using others in the most difficult moments [...]. Inactivity is harmful and leads to unwise, senseless actions defying common sense [...]. All proverbs contain a clear message that work is connected with the presence and protection of God, idleness with the Devil's.

[translation mine]

The currency of proverbs about work is put to the test by Wołonciej (2012) who conducts a survey to conclude (ibid.: 266) that traditional values promoted in proverbs do not correspond to today's experience of work, especially those which refer to the spiritual dimension of reality. However, one's positive attitude to work and performance receives high values. Proverbs referring to time management at work (ibid.: 276) highlight the importance of commitment, moderation, consistency, and timeliness, placing purposeful and money-making activities high in the hierarchy of life and human values:

(39) *Robota nagle warta diabła* ['Speedy work is worth the devil/has no value'].

As to the work-leisure balance, only two proverbs recognize the value of the latter:

(40) *Po pracy nie wadzi się ucieszyć* ['There is no harm in fun after work'];

(41) *Po pracy miły odpoczynek* ['It is nice to have a rest after work'].

A less diligent attitude to work can be found in:

(42) *Robota nie zajac, nie uciecze* ['Work is not a hare; it won't run away'].

Mostly, however, a serious and humble approach is recommended:

(43) *Praca, umiar i spokój zamykają drzwi przed lekarzami* ['Work, moderation and peace keep the doctors away'];

(44) *Rozkoszy skromno zażywaj* ['Enjoy pleasures with moderation'];

(45) *Gdzie rozkosze panują, tam się cnota ostać nie może* ['Where pleasures rule, righteousness cannot remain'];

(46) *Kto się rozkoszami bawi, zgrzybieje przed czasem* ['He who indulges in pleasures will all too soon turn senile'].

The value of moral discipline is a recurrent topic. Acceptance of frivolous, reckless merriment is rare (merely 2 proverbs confirm such an attitude):

(47) *Jak się bawic, to się bawić, portki sprzedać, frak zastawić* ['If you have fun, have fun: sell your trousers, pawn your tailcoat'].

Notably, the entire collection of proverbs includes only a single mention of the noun *zabawa* ('fun', 'merriment') as a threat to one's reputation:

(48) *Zabawa - nie sława* ['Merriment does not bring glory/is a cause of infamy'].

Indulgence in alcohol consumption is discouraged as a rule, yet easily excused in festive circumstances:

(49) *Stary lacno odmłodnieje, gdy sobie trochę podleje* ['An old man will soon get younger when he pours himself a drop'].

Alcohol seems an important aspect of life with as many as 64 proverbs including *wino* ('wine'), 40 proverbs containing *gorzalka* ('spirits'/'booze') and 31 including *wódka* ('vodka'). The Polish equivalents of spirits and vodka frequently appear in the form of derivatives, mostly augmentatives in warnings against excess, but also as diminutives in more tolerant versions. Overall, the prevalent opinion is that alcohol abuse brings on poverty, disease, and eventually death. This contrasts with occasional relaxed attitudes, as in:

(50) *Nie ma lepszego leku jak gorzalka po mleku* ['There is no better cure than booze after milk'].

Ambivalent valuation of drinking habits can be found throughout the corpus of proverbs investigated here:

(51) *Kto wino pije, ten zdrow żyje* ['One who drinks wine lives a healthy life'],

(51) *Kto wódkę pije ten niedługo żyje* ['One who drinks vodka does not live long'].

Light-hearted pleasures are subject to social norms, with age being a crucial factor:

(52) *Staremu się pisać nie przystoi* ['It is not appropriate for an old man to dance'].

Nie przystoi ('it is not appropriate') and its more common synonym *nie wypada* have a normative function which can be expressed without the use of a personal subject or object, and the absence of the addresser or an addressee create the impression of a universal undisputed

rule. In a similar way, impersonal forms such as: *nie można* ('one cannot/is not allowed'), *nie należy* ('one should not') do not denote the source or the reason behind the prohibitive phrase, making it non-negotiable. The linguistic repertoire of imposition includes the standard use of *musieć* ('must'/'have to') in advice and instructions instead of more tentative verbs and phrases. The direct normative functions of the Polish language are discussed by Wierzbicka (2003) and have a considerable impact on the communicative style as a reflection of cultural norms.

5.2.5 Total obedience to father/parent. Punishment is indispensable in raising children

Linguistic means and verbal patterns effectively help curb spontaneous behaviour in children, which seems an indispensable part of the traditional authoritarian Polish parenting style. This has been officially encouraged by conservative political parties and the Catholic Church which "promote the understanding that parents had a right to use corporal punishment as a natural element in the upbringing of children" (Non-violent childhoods: Moving on from corporal punishment in the Baltic Sea Region, 2017: 4). While a more democratic model of child-rearing seems to be on the increase - at least as declared by parents (Bereźnicka 2013) – in the 2017 survey by the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights, 52% of the respondents agreed that there are situations where children have to be spanked (ibid.: 5).

The instruction that can be drawn from Polish proverbs explicitly suggests that discipline and corporal punishment are part and parcel of upbringing. As many as 12 proverbs in Krzyżanowski (1969-1978) suggest that children, as low in the hierarchy of beings as animals, should be trained and punished for their own good. Strict rules, curbing of unruliness and controlling of impulses are the hallmarks of the child-rearing model advocated in proverbs:

(53) *Bez kary dziecko się nie wychowa* ['A child will not become well-raised without punishment']. There are as many as 11 variants of:

(54) *Nie kocha ten dziecięcica, kto różgi oszczędza* ['One who spares the rod doesn't love the child.'].
Eng. Spare the rod, spoil the child].

These proverbs illustrate an "organization and effectiveness of control" style of upbringing (Lorr & Jenkins 1953) characterised by "strict orderliness, enforcement, severity of penalties, pushing, coordination of household" (ibid.) and "inhibitory demands and discipline" (Slater 1962):

(55) *Cudzemu dziecku i cudzemu psu nigdy się nic nie daje* ['Never give anything to someone else's child or dog'];

(56) *Dobre dziecko, które się wstydzi* ['A good child feels ashamed'];

(57) *Dzieci i pieski na ostatku* ['Children and puppies come last'];

(58) *Dzieci i ryby głosu nie mają* ['Children and fish have no voice'; *Eng.* Children should be seen and not heard];

(59) *Dziecko uparte niewiele warte* ['A stubborn child has little worth'];

(60) *Jak dasz dzieciom wolę, sam wleziesz w niewolę* ['If you let your children have their own way, you will end up a slave'];

(61) *Kto dzieci szkodzi, ten sobie pętlę na szyję gotuje* ['Be lenient with children and you knot a noose around your neck'].

This model of a strict, authoritarian, and punitive parent is consistent with that of the recommended proverbial paternal role in the family:

(62) *Słowo ojcowskie – słowo boże* [‘The father's word is a holy word’].

Words of warning against insubordination resonate in multiple variants of proverbs, such as:

(63) *Kto nie słucha ojca, matki, tego wygnać za rogatki* [‘One who does not obey his father and mother should be driven out of town’];

(64) *Kto nie słucha ojca, matki, będą bić go własne dzieci* [‘One who does not obey his father and mother will be beaten by his own children’];

(65) *Kto nie słucha ojca, matki, ten słucha psiej skóry* [‘One who does not obey his father and mother will hear the dog's leather’¹].

The father's heavy hand is a precious 'tool' in responsible upbringing:

(66) *Nikogo nie znieważa ręka ojcowska, ale katowska* [‘The father's hand does not humiliate anybody, the executioner's does’],

(67) *Ojcowska łagodność syna psuje* [‘The father's leniency spoils the son’].

The same measure is recommended with reference to the wife (see: 5.2.2).

Today, social expectations of parental roles and men's attitudes are much more complex and largely depart from the strict patriarchal model (Włodarczyk 2014). The WVS6 shows a balance between traditional and progressive views. Among the qualities which Poles prize in their children are: tolerance and respect for other people (82.6%) and a sense of responsibility (81%). In contrast to the proverbial instruction, only a third of those surveyed put a premium on obedience; however, imagination and perseverance in children are not favoured with only 16.8% and 19.3% of mentions in respective categories. Opinions are divided as to whether self-expression should be encouraged (41% versus 59% against it).

5.2.6 *Money is to be saved, not spent*

An ambivalence can be identified in the approach to money and pursuit of financial success as indicated by the folk wisdom of the proverbs. On the one hand, guided by the self-preservation instinct, everyone would agree that:

(68) *Mądry bierze, a głupi daje* [‘A wise man will take, a stupid one will give away’]

and

(69) *Lepszy wróbel w garści niż gołąb na dachu* [‘A sparrow in the hand is better than a pigeon on the roof’].

Hundreds of years of misery amongst the peasantry while under the rule of the nobility and aristocracy taught whole generations of Poles that thrift secures survival. Prosperity is viewed a sign of wisdom:

¹ Dog's leather refers to a belt as an instrument for corporal punishment.

(70) *Kto ma pieniądze, ma i rozum* ('Where there's money, there are brains')
and a guarantee of happiness and respect is well-established:

(71) *Za pieniądze masz co serce żądze* ['With money you will have whatever your heart desires'],

(72) *Za pieniędzmi fortuna* ['Good luck follows money'],

(73) *Nie imię, tylko pieniądze zdobia człowieka* ['It is not the name but the money that adorns a person'].

Therefore, poor people are despised rather than pitied:

(74) *Ten kiep, co pieniędzy nie ma* ['That simpleton who has no money'].

Wealth has its downsides as well:

(75) *Wtedy cię nienawidzą, jak pieniądze u ciebie widzą* ['They hate you when they see your money'];

(76) *Pieniądże chytry złodziej wykrada* ['Money is stolen by a sly thief'].

More importantly, riches spoil people and attract the devil:

(77) *Bogactw przybywa, cnoty ubywa* ['The greater the riches, the less virtue'].

Excess is therefore condemned, while modesty and frugality are praised.

(78) *Co człowieka wzbogaca? - Wiara, rozum i praca* ['What makes a man rich? - Faith, brains and work'].

Again, the role of the father as the breadwinner, supporter and as a role model should be noted:

(79) *Do ojca po grosz, do matki po koszulę* ['Turn to father for money, to mother for a shirt'].

His labour should be appreciated and possessions, even if modest, valued:

(80) *Dobrze ten żyje, komu się błyszczy na skromnym stole ojcowska solnica* ['One who appreciates his/her father's salt shaker on his humble table lives a good/decent life'].

5.2.7 *Friendship is not important*

Testing this aspect of the IVR parameter poses a semantic problem. The meanings of *friend* and *przyjaciel* partly overlap with the English term although the latter has a wider scope which refers to both an acquaintance and a soul mate. *Przyjaciel*, in contrast, is involved in a relationship based on mutual trust developed over time and (mostly) shared experience, a person you can confide in and rely on. By definition, there are few people you can name a true *przyjaciel*. For more casual relations Polish has other terms (e.g. *kolega*, *znajomy*) which also belong to the semantic scope of *friend* in English. This conceptual and linguistic discrepancy should be borne in mind in the investigation of the concept of *przyjaciel* and its significance in the lives of Poles. As Wierzbicka (1997) claims, *przyjaciel* is a culture-specific term, a key word for the analysis of Polish culture and social relationships.

The following selection of conceptualisations of friendship established by Wyżkiewicz-Maksimow (2012: 117-121) – largely based on those proposed by Nowakowska-Kempna (1995) – in Polish (as well as Serbian and Croatian) paremiology

includes the following views on friendship:

- friendship is a desired commodity:

(81) *Przyjaciela zawsze trzeba, każdemu, jak wody, chleba* ['A friend is as essential as water and bread'];

- friendship is wealth:

(82) *Kto znalazł przyjaciela, skarb znalazł* ['Who finds a friend, finds a treasure'];

- friendship is tolerance:

(83) *Przyjacielskie wady znaj, a małe przebaczej* ['Know your friend's faults, forgive the minor ones'];

- friendship is loyalty:

(84) *Dla przyjaciela nowego nie opuszczaj starego* ['Don't leave an old friend for a new one'];

- friendship is an alliance (tested in hard times):

(85) *Prawdziwych przyjaciół poznajemy w biedzie* ['A friend in need is a friend indeed'];

- friendship is sacrifice:

(86) *Za dobrego przyjaciela, choćby na śmierć, bagatela* ['It is a trifle to die for a good friend'];

- friendship is exclusive:

(87) *Kto przyjaciel każdemu, ten nikomu* ['A friend to all is a friend to none'];

(88) *Przyjaźń wielkiej liczby nie lubi* ['Friendship does not like big numbers'].

Friendship, as can be concluded, is a highly valued exclusive relationship. The general image of a friendship is that quality (loyalty and support) matters more than quantity, which explains the restricted semantic scope of *przyjaciel* in contrast to English *friend*. A purely transactional model of friendship also exists in terms of the exchange of services. Yet, limited trust is occasionally recommended:

(89) *Gdy pieniędzy wiele, wkoło przyjaciele* ['Lots of money means lots of friends'];

(90) *Tam są tylko przyjaciele, gdzie w piwnicy wiele* ['Friends are where the cellar is full'];

(91) *Przyjaciel się zmieni, gdy pusto w kieszeni* ['A friend will change when your pocket is empty'].

5.2.8 *Nobody should be fully trusted*

One of the distinctive features of nations with a low IVR parameter is limited interpersonal trust, including family and other in-group relations:

(92) *Nie ma rodziny we złe godziny* ['There is no family around in bad times'];

(93) *Nie każdemu ufaj* ['Do not trust everyone'];

(94) *Wierz, ale wiedz komu* ['Trust but make sure who you trust'];

(95) *Nie ufaj, nie będziesz zdradzony* ['Do not trust and you won't be betrayed'];

(96) *Ufać każdemu - szlachetnie, nie ufać nikomu - bezpiecznie* ['It is noble to trust everyone, it is safe not to trust anyone'];

(97) *Lepiej dojrzeć samemu, niż wierzyć drugiemu* ['It is better to see for yourself rather than trust another/someone else'].

Women belong to the same category of beings as dogs and horses, all of which cannot be fully trusted:

(98) *Nie wierz niewieście, by też i martwa była* ['Do not trust a woman even if she is dead'].

The popularity of this proverb can be attested in its 8 variants. Limited trust towards everyone is advocated, insincerity and hostile intentions should be watched out for at any time:

(99) *Kto się nisko kłania, temu patrzaj w oczy* ['Look into the eyes of the one who bows low'].

6. Conclusions

The attitudes reflected in Polish proverbs would seem to confirm the view that a low level of existential security manifests itself in the distrust of strangers, preservation of closely-knit social units, and obedience to figures in authority, as observed by Inglehart (2018). Indeed, many Poles feel that they have not received a fair share of the material benefits of the economic transformation that the country has undergone over the last few decades. This is consistent with Inglehart's findings that prosperity and security are prerequisites for social change. The shift from materialism to post-materialist values observed in the majority of the nations of the West is relatively slow and the distribution unequal in Poland. These economic factors carry over to the social dimension and mentality marked by strong adherence to conservative norms. Even if they clash with the realities of the present day, the black-and-white image of the world which they offer is attractive and influential.

The analysis of the paremiological material indicative of cultural values and social norms largely corroborates the results of the WVS in the category of Indulgence versus Restraint obtained for Poland. The values promoted favour restraint, caution and thrift, which stem from the actual experience of previous generations. The worldview retained in folk lore is predominantly pessimistic and sceptical. Low public trust and tolerance, popularity of conservative views, and acceptance of hierarchies are consistent with the other five dimensions investigated by Geert Hofstede. The only notable exception refers to the perception of friendship; Polish proverbs define it as a unique strong bond of loyalty, shared values and mutual support, bestowed upon those few who deserve to be trusted.

Taking into account (i) the worldview which emerges from the collection of proverbs, (ii) the recent political developments in Poland which reflect the success of conservative values, and (iii) the scores in the IVR and other WVS parameters, it may be assumed that the "shift from survival to well-being, which is the essence of "postmodernization"" (Inglehart 1997: 223), has not been successful in Poland's social and religious landscape.²

However, the role of proverbs in shaping core values is uncertain. A substantial number in the collection seem obsolete both in terms of the problems they address and the solutions they propose. The significance of proverbs as verbalisations of culture has been in decline for decades (Buttler 1989) which indicates socio-cultural change. The currency of proverbs is challenged by new technologies and online media. Parodying proverbs in memes and advertisements is symptomatic of disrespect for the restrictive norms of the days gone by.

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² Inglehart (1997) argues that there are predictable patterns of social development in which economy, politics and culture are related. Beliefs and values are linked with socioeconomic conditions as exemplified by the transition from industrial to post-industrial societies which triggered a change in social and gender roles. Ronald Inglehart cites quantitative data from the World Values Surveys (conducted since 1981) to support his claims.

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