A Multifaceted Approach to the Feeling of Loneliness – The Phenomenon of Loneliness Among Polish Women in Great Britain
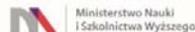
Urszula Walczak*

Abstract

Loneliness is a condition more and more often experienced by people regardless of their gender or age. The phenomenon of loneliness can be observed, among other things, in relation to cultural, social, economic, political transformations and life in emigration. The article is a proposal to define the circumstance of loneliness and show its multi-level structure. The text presents the causes and consequences of this state through which a person passes and experiences symptoms. The text is an attempt to answer the question whether Polish women living in Great Britain feel a sense of loneliness.

Keywords: *loneliness, causes of loneliness, consequences of loneliness, women, Great Britain*

* Urszula Walczak, M.Sc., The Polish University Abroad in London, e-mail: urszula.walczak@puno.edu.pl
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000- 0002-9838-5417

Introduction

Society is a fundamental environment for human development, in which they experience both togetherness and loneliness. Loneliness is necessary for the individual and the society alike, the latter of which should make it a possibility for all members (Merton 2017). Incorporated into the experience of human existence, it is an inseparable aspect of life. Everyone experiences loneliness during their life, regardless of age, gender, health, occupation or other circumstances (Wood 1986). It is a social phenomenon which is becoming increasingly widespread. Life is subject to constant social, economic, political and moral changes. The observed changes bring benefits, but also dangers. What follows is impoverishment, unemployment, and separation caused by emigration or the liberalization of ethics (Kawula 1999).

In the modern world, loneliness is often identified with the lack or limitation of interpersonal relations. Natural interpersonal contacts are being replaced with virtual contacts. The anonymity of people and places poses a threat of loneliness – "a lonely crowd" (Riesman 2017). Loneliness is a phenomenon created by the conflict between people and their environment (Ruszkiewicz 2008). It disturbs their sense of security and affects many areas of physical and psychosocial life simultaneously. It causes fear, withdrawal, leads to social behavioral disorders, depression and even suicide attempts (Rembowski 1992). Undoubtedly, loneliness, which is an enormous problem for many people, can be a positive state or an important need for others. Very often, a person consciously, by choice seeks loneliness. They need it in order to contemplate, reflect and rest. This kind of loneliness is elementary for a person's mental hygiene, necessary to maintain their mental balance.

The aim of the article is to present and explain the nature of the experience of loneliness of Polish women living in Great Britain. Through observation of the surrounding reality one can get the impression that

Polish women living in Great Britain are at risk of experiencing loneliness due to emigration, separation from family and friends, the cultural, social, economic and political transformations and dynamic development of technology. Their pace of life, preferred acculturation strategies, focus on increased work efficiency, lifelong learning and specialization affect the quality and frequency of interpersonal contacts they create with the Polish community and English culture.

Loneliness in the subject literature

The issue of loneliness is addressed and considered by representatives of various academic disciplines. The authors understand it in various ways, subjecting it to analysis and discussion. It is presented as a multidimensional, multifaceted and multicausal phenomenon, which often makes it difficult to define or describe. Literature on the subject of loneliness shows how varied these definitions are. It is a composite of many diverse facets and tones and is variously evaluated (Jadacki 2011).

Loneliness is most often perceived as an objective or subjective state resulting from inadequate interpersonal contacts (Wasilewska-Ostrowska 2013b). In its common understanding, it is treated as a state of isolation, rejection, lack of company or family. It points to long-term isolation, lack of participation in social life and inappropriate perception of social roles, which prevents physical contact with society (Świtoń, Wnuk 2015). It is used in reference to a person "deprived temporarily, ad hoc or permanently of the possibility of benefiting from interpersonal ties with other people" (Osińska 2002, p. 17). It is a consequence of breaking the bond with another person or with oneself. As a situation, it can be considered objective or subjective, creative or destructive (Latawiec 2006). Considered an unpleasant mental state, it is caused by

dissatisfaction with the quantity and quality of social and emotional relationships an individual creates with other people (Twardowska 2005)

The concept by Doris Wolf (1995) identifies loneliness as a state in which life, single or in a relationship, is imbued with a sense of abandonment and alienation, and being alone means suffering from a lack of emotional contact with oneself and others. "Being lonely gives us the opportunity to contemplate deeply about ourselves, the world and the reasons behind withdrawal. It may also be a strong stimulus to change the current state" (Bajkowski 2003, p. 438).

Loneliness is therefore an individual and complex concept. Each person chooses their own way of life, preferring to live in community or in isolation. Whether they maintain interpersonal contacts or completely give in to seclusion and withdrawal is up to them. If one is emotionally unstable and consciously seeks professional help, they may be able to overcome their own fear and loneliness. It is up to them to decide. For everyone pays the price for their decisions (Kozielecki 1996).

Multilevel structure of loneliness

Humans are always accompanied by loneliness, which is the most personal feeling a person can have. It is characterized by the occurrence of at least one of the aspects of physical, mental and moral loneliness. Physical loneliness leads to a loss or absence of natural, personal and lasting contacts, and causes one to live in casual relationships within or outside the society. People isolate themselves or are isolated from society which leads to decay of family ties (Gajda 1987). Physical loneliness may be either desired (loneliness by choice), positive and developmental, or unwanted, against one's will. The latter is destructive and may result from objective necessity (e.g. illness, incarceration) or social ex-

clusion. Unwanted physical loneliness transforms into mental loneliness (Sztaba 2011), a state of absence of psychological attachment, close contact with another human being, which is connected with the sphere of personal, subjective feelings of the individual (Gajda 1987). It disrupts the inner harmony and causes a person to experience a sense of personal failure (Pawłowska, Jundziłł 2006). Moral loneliness, however, is a state of a deep crisis of values, ideals and behavioral patterns (Gajda 1987).

The subject literature also differentiates between social, emotional and axionormative loneliness. Social loneliness makes it difficult to establish proper relations with other people, which can result in isolation and loss of social ties. Emotional loneliness is interpreted as a state of deprivation of intimacy, a sense of being alone despite the presence of other people, whereas axionormative loneliness refers to the existential confusion of an individual who is unable to cope in the world of existing norms and values (Wasilewska 2010). In literary terms, one can also distinguish between ontological and metaphysical loneliness. The former stems from the fact that humans are separate and unique beings with their own and incommunicable inner world (Wojtyła 2001), while the latter is associated with theories of transience and arbitrariness and the inability to cope with them (Gadacz 2009). Ontological and metaphysical loneliness determine the loneliness of death, which is amplified by the feeling of impotence and irreversibility (Chudy 2001; Chrobak 2009).

Wiesław Łukaszewski (1984) categorized loneliness as subjective and objective. A person experiencing objective loneliness feels excluded from the circle of close interpersonal relations. Subjective loneliness, however, concerns the feeling that is exclusively connected to humans and is used to determine the lack of positive emotions displayed primarily by those closest to the individual. Due to the fact that loneliness

has an objective and a subjective character - it can be understood, experienced and interpreted in a negative and positive sense. In the negative sense, defined by Krystyna Chałas (2003, p. 184), it is "the individual psychosocial experience of a person, resulting from the awareness of the interruption, loss, weakening or compromise of emotional interpersonal or intrapersonal contacts". The negative character of loneliness constitutes the basis for unpleasant experiences and sensations. It is accompanied by extremely negative feelings such as sadness, anxiety, regret and aggression. It has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of a person and on their functioning in social microstructures.

Donald Winnicott pointed out that there is too much focus on the negative side of loneliness, its avoidance, and fears that come with it. He considered it important to focus on and consider these situations as a positive element of life (Storr 2010). The positive image of loneliness indicates its beneficial effect, as it makes it easier to concentrate, collect thoughts and contemplate the surrounding reality. It facilitates experimentation, exploration and learning, stimulates imagination and provides motivation to create unique and creative works. Additionally, it helps in achieving inner tranquility, contemplation, searching for the meaning of life and connecting with God and oneself (Chałas 2003). Positive loneliness is needed to change one's attitude towards themselves, their situation, and others. It is important especially in difficult or critical moments in life. It may be particularly important in situations when one becomes aware of the need to make a fundamental change in their mental attitude (Storr 2010).

"People today are all too familiar with loneliness of civilizational acceleration, loneliness of confusion, disorientation, loneliness of the wild pursuit of exploitation, loneliness of hostile rivalry, loneliness of forced independence, self-reliance, loneliness of insatiable consumerism,

loneliness of success, fame, wealth, power, loneliness of chasing primitive pleasure; loneliness of social, economic, financial, political, ideological or religious peripheralization; loneliness of uniformization of attitudes, views, behaviors and aspirations; loneliness of strange and eccentric careers; loneliness of the culture of thoughtlessness, insanity, tack and kitsch; loneliness of the carnivalized life; loneliness of the brutalization of the private and public; loneliness of the culture of exhibitionism combined with the loneliness of the privatization of life; loneliness of various types of social segregation; loneliness of the commercialization and marketization of human life; loneliness of excessive egoism over individualism; loneliness of occasional, shallow contacts; loneliness of the depersonalization of ties; loneliness of the inability to experience intimacy, closeness, community; loneliness of nonchalance in interactions; loneliness of indifference towards the Other; loneliness of negation, rejection, suppression of traditional values, and simultaneously, loneliness of getting lost in a growing axiological multiverse; loneliness of the extrovert-introvert division, of the »having« over »being«, where to »be« means only to »have« more, the advantage of the external over the internal; loneliness of the atrophy of community-creating desires and aspirations; loneliness of consolidating factors; loneliness of generational factors; loneliness (experienced generationally, as typical for certain generations: loneliness of children, youth, adults, elderly people); loneliness of the all-pervading sense of danger, instability, uncertainty; finally, loneliness of nostalgia for an idealized past". (Domeracki, Tyburski 2006, p. 8-9).

Causes of loneliness

Loneliness usually affects people who are unable to keep up with the pace of changes occurring in the modern world. The causes of loneliness can be categorized in psychological and social terms and considered as

the most important according to the dominant factors. Among the psychological causes, the most important seem to be: inability to establish contacts, inferiority complex or unrealistic ideal of love. Social causes include: education, social, professional and material status, living conditions, reputation, beauty and the possibility of interaction with others, as well as the quality of that interaction. Temperamental traits are also important (Gajda 1997).

A concept of the causes of loneliness, which includes developmental and spiritual context, has been described in the literature. Developmental causes may have their origin in the early infancy as the child's unmet needs may lead to loneliness as one of the emotional reactions (Leszczyńska-Rejchert 2005). The causes of spiritual loneliness, however, include inner emptiness, conscious rejection of God, lack of a sense being loved in one's relationship with God and other people (Latawiec 2006).

There are many reasons for loneliness put forward in the literature, which can be divided into two groups: internal (shyness, sensitivity, helplessness, selfishness, passivity, low self-esteem, lack of ability to establish a connection with another person, lack of role models, inability to determine values and moral norms, the need to be alone) and external (age, random events, illness, disability, social changes, development of technology, lifestyle, lack of time for another person, social problems, being institutionalized away from family and friends, stereotypes) (Dubas 2000; Latawiec 2006; Zimny 2014). The cause of loneliness can be objective or subjective. The former includes: living alone, lack of friends, acquaintances, relatives. The latter may result from the individual's behavior, which discourages them from contacting others, or causes them to isolate themselves from within and from relations with others (Trafiałek 1998).

In identifying the causes of loneliness, one cannot ignore the environmental and cultural conditions, as many of these factors involve the

physical cessation of contact with other people and is manifested by the loss of emotional relationships, despite the apparent presence of close persons (Mikrut 2009).

Consequences of loneliness

Long-term loneliness causes deterioration of mental and physical health, which can lead to depression and even premature death. The person becomes lost and rebels against the current reality, which leads to the destruction and deterioration of values, norms, dreams, plans and interests. Among the indirect consequence of loneliness are symptoms of addictions, cyber addictions, eating disorders, attempts at self-harm, and suicide attempts, which only create an illusory world, a seemingly perfect reality (Zawadzki 2007; Wasilewska-Ostrowska 2013a; Sommer 2016; Baranowska 2015; Kądziela-Olech, Żak, Kalinowska, Wągrocka, Perestret, Bielawski 2015).

According to studies by Steve Cole, long-term isolation creates chronic and asymptomatic inflammation and causes anxiety. This state is not indifferent to the human body. It provides a huge portion of stress that destroys the immune system, leading to infections, injuries and diseases (Cole 2018).

Loneliness among the population of the United Kingdom

Studies on loneliness carried out by researchers worldwide indicate an increase in experiencing loneliness in different age groups, which leads to destabilization relative to oneself and society. In 2015 in the UK, Jo Cox launched a campaign to prevent loneliness, claiming that "she will not live in a country where thousands of people live alone and are forgotten by the rest of society". Together with Seema Kennedy, they founded the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness (Jo Cox Loneliness).

Loneliness is often stereotyped and associated with sick or elderly people. However, the results of research contradict this image. This is evidenced, for example, by the studies carried out in the United Kingdom in 2016-2017. They show, for example, that women are more likely to experience loneliness than men, single persons, widows, widowers, people with poor health or suffering from diseases they describe as "debilitating". These are usually tenants, rather than home-owners, people who feel less integrated into their immediate social environment and those who do not trust others in their immediate environment. Young people are the largest social group that suffers from loneliness the most (Office for National Statistics 2018).

The UK began initiatives to counteract this problem, and researchers have agreed that loneliness is a serious public health problem. In January 2018, following the publication of the report on loneliness, the United Kingdom announced preventive measures against social isolation. The British Government led by Prime Minister Theresa May, who said that "loneliness is the sad reality of modern life", appointed Tracey Crouch as the world's first Minister for Loneliness. Appointing the Minister for Loneliness is a response to the horrific findings of the report of a British governmental commission, which show that as many as 9 million adults in Britain, or around 14% of the population, are "often or always lonely". This new department is responsible for developing and coordinating preventative and interventionist strategies to combat loneliness among UK residents, implementing a social support system for these people and creating a fund to deal with isolation in society (Office for National Statistics 2018; *PM commits to government-wide drive to tackle loneliness* 2018).

Currently, the campaign "End Loneliness" is active in Great Britain. Additionally, the Jo Cox Foundation has been established, which continues the prevention of loneliness of started by the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness, and since 2017 the Great Get Together Festival has been

held, which brings together thousands of people for social integration and sensitization to the problem of loneliness.

Issues and results of own research

The choice of the research topic was based on the belief that in the modern society, natural communities are disappearing and people are being displaced, atomized, dissolved in an anonymous mass of workers, officials, voters, consumers and audiences. The ties of common residence, ethnic, religious or class similarities are replaced by the phenomenon of loneliness (Sztompka 2012).

The main objective of the pilot study was to investigate the experience of loneliness in Polish women living in Great Britain. The practical goals was to gather information concerning interpersonal relations of Polish women and then to describe their situation in the context of their experienced emotions. The research questions posed concerned the attitudes of Polish women towards English culture and their relationship with Polish culture. Do they willingly maintain their own cultural identity and simultaneously maintain contact with the new culture? Do they participate in the host culture while preserving their cultural identity? Do they declare their unwillingness to participate in social life in Great Britain, limiting their functioning to the Polish environment? Do they deliberately disassociate themselves from both the Polish and the English environment? Is the experience of loneliness in Polish women a socially significant phenomenon?

The pilot study was conducted in 2019 among Polish women living in the UK. In order to collect quantitative data, a diagnostic survey method using a questionnaire as a research technique was used. The questionnaire was made available to the respondents directly for completion and via e-mail with a request to inform other Poles living in the UK about the study. The questionnaire was anonymous. The Loneliness

Scale by De Jong Gierveld was used to measure the feeling of loneliness. The authors of the Polish adaptation of the scale are: Paweł Grygiel, Grzegorz Humenny, Sławomir Rębisz, Piotr Świtaj, Justyna Sikorska. The tool consists of eleven statements and is partially balanced. Six statements refer to the experience of loneliness described as the dissatisfaction with social relations and are reversed, meaning they are formulated as negative sentences. The remaining five positive statements measure satisfaction with interpersonal relations and relate to emotionally perceived loneliness. The respondents were asked to indicate to what extent the statements express their current situation and feelings. The answers were given on a five-point scale: from "definitely agree" to "definitely disagree". The overall result of the study serves to indicate the overall feeling of loneliness of Polish women living in Great Britain. The scale shows good psychometric properties such as reliability, validity and homogeneity (Grygiel, Humenny, Rębisz, Świtaj, Sikorska 2012).

The survey involved 154 women living in Great Britain. 39% of them were aged between 29-39; 37.7% (40-50 years old); 9.1% (51-60 years old); 7.8 % (18-28); 3.2% (71-80 years old); 1.9% (61-70 years old); 1.3% (over 80 years old). The vast majority of the respondents - 85.1% lived in large cities with more than 500 000 inhabitants; 9.7 % lived in medium-sized cities with fewer than 500 000 inhabitants and only 5.2 % in small cities with fewer than 100 000 inhabitants. None of the respondents lived in rural areas. 71.4% of the surveyed women lived in Great Britain after Poland's accession to the European Union (after 1 May 2004), while 28.6% before Poland's accession to the European Union (before 1 May 2004). None of the respondents have lived in the UK since birth. The majority of women in the study had a secondary education – 41.5%, and 27.3% – a higher education. 24.7% of the women had a bachelor's degree; 5.2 % had vocational training and 1.3 % only a pri-

mary education. The majority of the respondents – 54.5% were married; 19.5% of the respondents were in civil partnerships; 7.8% were divorced; 5.2% were widows and 13% were unmarried.

In determining their professional activity in the UK, the participants had the opportunity to choose more than one answer. 68.2 % had a permanent job; 17.5 % did not work and were financially dependent on someone else; 8.4 % had a part-time job; 7.1% were volunteers; 6.5 % were studying. Pensioners and the "other" category (self-employed, caregivers for Parkinson's and Alzheimer's patients and "full-time mothers") accounted for 2.6% and disability pensioners for 1.9% of all women surveyed. 7.8% of the women surveyed lived alone and 92.2% did not live alone, including 62.3% who lived with their families; 18.2 % lived with their partners; 11% with a roommate or roommates; and in the "other" category only 2.6% were caregivers or took care of a daughter. Women who did not need help in everyday life constituted 77.3% of all respondents, while the remaining 22.7% needed such help. The respondents, having the possibility to choose more than one answer to the question concerning the kind of help they need in everyday life, answered as follows: 15.6 % need information support; 13.6% – emotional support; 9.7% material support; 8.4 % health support and 1.9 % in "other" category, listed interpersonal support, babysitters, cleaners and cooks, as well as support when contacting physicians.

52.6% of the respondents used health institutions, medical clinics 9.7 % sought psychosexual and family counselling. Both 1.9% sought the help of professional addiction and codependence therapy centers, as well as aesthetic medicine centers, beauticians, hairdressers, masseurs. However, 0.6% of all respondents were part of Alcoholics Anonymous Groups. While choosing one of the acculturation strategies, 53.2% of the respondents identified themselves with the Polish community and maintained contact with English culture (integration); 42.3% of the respondents maintained their own national identity while minimizing

contacts with the culture of Great Britain (separation); 3.2% indicated the fact that elements of Polish culture have been replaced by the elements of English culture (assimilation), while 1.3% felt isolated from the Polish and English environments (marginalization).

The vast majority of the surveyed women (53.9%) rated their knowledge of the English language as intermediate; 26.6 % rated themselves as being proficient in the language and 19.5% as having a basic understanding of it Out of all the respondents, 62.4% were religious and practicing; 29.3% were religious nonpractitioners and 4.5% were religious seekers. Both non-believers and women choosing the "other" category constituted 1.9% of the sample.

Empirical research using the De Jong Gierveld Scale shows that 38.4% of respondents had a person with whom they can always talk, and 31.8% definitely had such a person. 14.3% answered "neither yes nor no"; 9.7% did not have such a person, and 5.8% definitely did not have such a person. 30.5% of the surveyed women did not feel the lack of a close friendship; 24.1% definitely did not feel the lack of a close friendship, and 18.9% did. 16.8% chose the answer "neither yes nor no" and 9.7% definitely felt the lack of a close friendship. In the context of experiencing general emptiness, 42.9% of women did not experience such a feeling; 30.5% of the respondents answered "neither yes nor no"; 16.2 % definitely did not experience it; 7.8 % experienced it and 2.6 % definitely experienced it. 35.7% of the respondents knew a lot of people they could rely on in difficult times; 22 % answered „neither yes nor no"; 20.2 % definitely did know such people; 18.2 % did not know such people, and 3.9 % definitely did not know such people. Respondents' answers showed that 37.6% of the surveyed women did not lack the company of other people; 20.2 % definitely did not lack it, and 20.1 % answered "neither yes nor no". 14.3% indicated they lacked company; 7.8% indicated they definitely lacked company. Women who have a lim-

ited circle of friends and acquaintances constituted 18.8% of all respondents and those who chose the "definitely" answer constituted 4.5% of the sample. Women who chose "neither yes nor no" constituted 15.6% of the respondents, and women who did not feel that their circle of friends and acquaintances is limited – 38.4%. However, 22.7% of the respondents definitely did not feel that they had a limited circle of friends and acquaintances.

30.5% indicated that they did not know many people they could trust completely, while 28.6% did. 17.5% of the respondents answered "neither yes nor no"; 15.6% – "definitely yes", and 7.8% – "definitely no". Women who knew enough people they felt close to represented 31.8% of all respondents; 22.1% replied "neither yes nor no", 20.8% indicated that they definitely knew such persons, and another 20.8% answered they did not. However, women who definitely did not know people they could trust completely constituted 4.5% of the respondents. Respondents who declared that there were enough people around them constituted 44.2%; 20.7% chose "neither yes nor no"; 18.3% chose "definitely no", and 16.8% indicated a lack of people around them. However, no woman answered that there was a definite lack of people around her. 50.6% of the surveyed women replied that they did not feel rejected, 24.1% that they definitely did not feel this way, and 18.8% chose "neither yes nor no". 5.2% of the respondents felt rejected and 1.3% definitely felt rejected.

33.8 of the respondents said that can count on friends when in need, 29.2% answered "neither", and 21.4% "definitely yes". 9.1% of respondents cannot count on friends when in need, and 6.5% of respondents definitely cannot count on them.

Own research conclusions

The results of the pilot study confirm that loneliness is a global, common phenomenon and affects women of all ages. They portray the scale

of the issue and the way it is perceived in the context of living abroad. The presented results of empirical studies indicate that women experiencing the feeling of loneliness without adequate support and fostering of social interaction struggle to achieve harmony in life and may encounter difficulties in managing failures and life's misfortunes. Their English proficiency affects the quality and quantity of their interpersonal relations with the environment.

The study shows that the feeling of loneliness among Polish women living in Great Britain is frequently caused by the lack of people in their lives, close friends, or other people to talk to about everyday problems. The women experience general emptiness, sometimes struggling with feelings of isolation and rejection. They are distrustful of others and find it difficult to receive help in problematic situations. Also, the quality of the relations with the environment affects the feelings of loneliness. The conclusions above are intended to be suggestions and constitute possible interpretations of the obtained results.

The conducted study also made it possible to identify the acculturation strategies with which the respondents identified themselves. Despite identifying with the Polish community and maintaining contact with English culture, most of them also indicated that they maintained their own national identity while minimizing contacts with British culture. Therefore, the choice of the two preferred acculturation strategies is concerned with integration and separation. On that basis, a relationship between the feeling of loneliness and the identity of the respondents can be indicated. These results may have a major impact on the direction of preventive and intervention measures tailored to overcoming obstacles in adaptation of Polish women to living in Great Britain.

The surveyed women experienced loneliness, which is a determining factor for developing appropriate strategies of coping with the feeling of loneliness for this group of respondents. Appropriate methods of cop-

ing with this state will allow to form desired interpersonal relations, improve their quality, and overcome the feelings of rejection or isolation. They will also help protect against intolerance on the part of the closest persons and the environment and, above all, will strengthen the self-esteem and confidence of women in their ability to fulfill their plans, dreams and desires as migrants. Also, notably, it is necessary to change the approach to the interpretation of this issue and to adopt an active attitude towards a multilevel structure of the experience of loneliness, which may constitute a significant source of personal satisfaction raising the quality of life of women living abroad.

The current research topic is extremely important and relevant, as loneliness is a frequent experience in the modern world. The prevalence of loneliness among women leads to depersonalization, which leads to anonymity or social isolation. Causes for loneliness among these women stem from both external and internal factors and often lead to a feeling of hopelessness, lack of control over a given event, and even to pathological behavior. The process of coping with this phenomenon is, then, essential, which should take place through acceptance and noticing the opportunities for growth, building social relations, distancing oneself from and negating loneliness (Rokach, Brock 1998).

The issue of loneliness among Polish women in Great Britain definitely requires further analysis and continuation of empirical research which will consider not only developmental factors or temperamental traits, but also the changing conditions of life as an immigrant. Scientific consideration of the phenomenon of loneliness may contribute to a better understanding, explanation and prevention of the negative effects of loneliness among Polish women in Great Britain. It therefore seems necessary to develop a loneliness prevention plan for people experiencing this phenomenon and to establish a system of support for those who are also immigrants.

Summary

Loneliness has become an epidemic, a syndrome of the 21st century, which contradicts the basic needs of every human being and disrupts their development, thus endangering health and even lives (Gania 2004). The modern world, by posing new challenges to people, constantly tests them. This dynamic development of technology, as well as social, economic and political changes carry with them the risk of loneliness, which is the "hallmark of our times" (Domeracki, Tyburski 2006, p. 15). Modern civilization affects people in two ways. On the one hand it gives them the possibility of greater independence, freedom and autonomy, and on the other hand it makes them lonely, frightened, isolated and alienated (Król 2006). Humans need the presence of other people in their lives, not only in difficult, helpless situations and spare moments. Closeness of other people is particularly important to maintain the harmony of physical and mental health.

Loneliness is one of the most unpleasant psychological conditions, and it is a definite threat to core human values, since it is included in the most important matters of society. It is primarily the result of a lack of communication between the person and the people around them. It starts evolving when one notices their otherness, the state of inability to function in a social group, until it reaches the moment of existential contemplation, when certain conclusions are reached, which involve of failures, but also fulfillment. Depending on personality, character and environmental factors, loneliness requires everyone to confront the universal reality.

The results of the study indicate that the issue of loneliness may, in the future, become a real social problem among Polish women living in Great Britain. In the struggle against loneliness it is necessary to work on self-realization, to be active and have a positive attitude towards the surrounding reality, to fill the emptiness and to create one's own inner

world, because human nature lies in being active. It is important to implement strategies to tackle loneliness in order to prevent people from becoming idle and withdrawn from society.

References

Bajkowski T. (2003), *Samotność dziecka w rodzinie*, [in:] *W służbie dziecku*, (Ed.) ks. Wilka J. SDB, Vol. II, KUL, Lublin

Baranowska A. (2015), *Zachowanie autodestrukcyjne wśród młodzieży*, "Pedagogika Społeczna" No. 4 (58)

Cole S. (2018), *Dr. Steve Cole on Loneliness*, https://news-inhealth.nih.gov/2018/08/dr-steve-cole-loneliness [27.08.2019]

Chałas K. (2003), *Samotność a osiągnięcia edukacyjne wychowanka*, [in:] *U podstaw dialogu o edukacji*, (Ed.) Karpińska A., WU Trans Humana, Białystok

Chrobak S. (2009), *Podstawy pedagogiki nadziei. Współczesne konteksty w inspiracji personalistyczno-chrześcijańskiej*, UKSW, Warszawa

Chudy W. (2001), *Obszary filozoficzne Jana Pawła II teologii ciała*, [in:] *Jan Paweł II, Mężczyzną i niewiastą stworzył ich. Chrystus odwołuje się do „początku"*, (Ed.) Styczeń T., Vol. I, KUL, Lublin

Domeracki P., Tyburski W. (2006), *Zrozumieć samotność. Studium interdyscyplinarne*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń

Domowy Popularny Słownik Języka Polskiego (1999), (Ed.) Dunaj B., WILGA, Warszawa

Dubas E. (2000), *Edukacja dorosłych w sytuacji samotności osamotnienia*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź

Gadacz T. (2009), *O umiejętności życia*, Znak, Kraków

Gajda J. (1987), *Samotność i kultura*, Instytut Wydawniczy Związków Zawodowych, Warszawa

Gajda J. (1997), *Wartości w życiu człowieka. Prawda, miłość, samotność*, UMCS, Lublin

Gania K. (2004), *Samotność dziecka w rodzinie*, "Edukacja i Dialog" No. 10

Grygiel P., Humenny G., Rębisz S., Świtaj P., Sikorska-Grygiel J. (2012), *Validating the Polish adaptation of the 11-item De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale*, "European Journal of Psychological Assessment" No. 2, Vol. 29

Jadacki J. (2011), *Oblicza samotności*, [in:] *W poszukiwaniu najwyższych wartości. Rozmowy międzypokoleniowe*, (Eds.) Brożek A., Jadacki J., Przełęcki M., Semper, Warszawa

Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness, https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/campaigning/jo-cox-commission/ [27.08.2019]

Jo Cox Loneliness, *Start a conversation. Combatting loneliness one conversation at a time. A call to action*, https://www.redcross.org.uk/-/media/documents/about-us/combatting-loneliness-one-conversation-at-a-time.pdf [27.08.2019]

Kawula S. (1999), *Rodzina ryzyka*, [in:] *Elementarne pojęcia pedagogiki społecznej i pracy socjalnej*, (red.) Lalak D., Pilch T., ŻAK, Warszawa

Kądziela-Olech H., Żak G., Kalinowska B., Wągrocka A., Perestret G., Bielawski M. (2015), *Częstość zamierzonych samookaleczeń bez intencji samobójczych – Nonsuicidal Self – Injury (NSSI) wśród uczniów szkół ponadpodstawowych w odniesieniu do wieku i płci*, "Psychiatria Polska" No. 49 (4)

Kozielecki J. (1996), *Człowiek wielowymiarowy*, Żak, Warszawa

Król J. (2006). *Kultura masowa jako katalizator poczucia samotności*, [in:] *Zrozumieć samotność. Studium interdyscyplinarne*, (Eds.) Domarecki P., Tyburski W., Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń

Latawiec A. (2006), *Destrukcyjny czy twórczy charakter samotności (ujęcie systemowe)*, [in:] *Zrozumieć samotność. Studium interdyscyplinarne*, (Eds.) Domarecki P., Tyburski W., Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń

Leszczyńska-Rejchert A. (2005), *Człowiek starszy i jego wspomnienie – w stronę pedagogiki starości*, UWM, Olsztyn

Łukaszewski W. (1984), *Szanse rozwoju osobowości*, Wydawnictwo Książka i Wiedza, Warszawa

Merton T. (2017), *Nikt nie jest samotną wyspą*, Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Warszawa

Mikrut A. (2009), *Samotność młodzieży z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną*, "Nasze Forum" No. 1-2

Office for National Statistics (2018), *Loneliness – What characteristics and circumstances are associated with feeling lonely?*, https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/lonelinesswhatcharacteristicsandcircumstancesareassociatedwithfeelinglonely/2018-04-10 [26.08.2019]

Osińska K. (2002), *Doświadczenie samotności*, [in:] *Samotność chciana i niechciana*, (Ed.) Matusiak A., Wydawnictwo esPe, Kraków

Pawłowska R., Jundziłł E., (2006), *Pedagogika człowieka samotnego*, Wyd. Gdańskiej Wyższej Szkoły Humanistycznej, Gdańsk

PM commits to government-wide drive to tackle loneliness (2018), https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-commits-to-government-wide-drive-to-tackle-loneliness [27.08.2019]

Rembowski J. (1992), *Samotność*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk

Riesman D. (2017), *Samotny tłum*, Wydawnictwo Vis-a Vis Etiuda, Kraków

Rokach A., Brock H. (1998), *Coping with Loneliness*, "The Journal of Psychology" Vol. 132, No. 1

Ruszkiewicz D. (2008), *Życie w pojedynkę: ucieczka od rodziny czy znak naszych czasów?*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Humanistyczno-Ekonomicznej, Łódź

Seema Kennedy, https://www.seemakennedy.co.uk/jo-cox-loneliness-commission [27.08.2019]

Sommer H. (2016), *Anoreksja nastolatek w świetle badań - droga do sukcesu czy akt powolnej autodestrukcji, Lubelski Rocznik Pedagogiczny*, Vol. XXXV, No. 1

Storr A. (2010), *Samotność. Powrót do jaźni*, W.A.B., Warszawa

Sztaba M. (2011), *Źródła ekskluzji społecznej w nauczaniu społecznym Jana Pawła II i Benedykta XVI*, [in:] *Wykluczenie społeczne. Czynniki ryzyka, profilaktyka, remedia*, (Eds.) Nazaruk S., Nowak M., Konovaluk E., PSWJPII, Biała Podlaska

Sztompka P. (2012), *Socjologia. Analiza społeczeństwa*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków

Świtoń A., Wnuk A. (2015), *Samotność w obliczu niesprawności osób starszych*, "Geriatria" No. 9

The Jo Cox Foundation, https://www.jocoxfoundation.org/ [27.08.2019]

The Great Get Together inspired by Jo Cox, https://www.greatgettogether.org/ [27.08.2019]

Trafiałek E. (1998), *Życie na emeryturze w warunkach polskich przemian systemowych*, WSP, Kielce

Twardowska J. (2005), *Przeciw samotności*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań

Wasilewska K. M. (2010), *Samotność młodzieży*, Kujawsko-Pomorska Szkoła Wyższa, Bydgoszcz

Wasilewska-Ostrowska K. (2013a), *Samotność emocjonalna – jako jeden z czynników ryzyka uzależnień wśród młodzieży*, "Wychowanie na co Dzień" No. 10-11

Wasilewska-Ostrowska K. (2013b), *Samotność osób starszych w kontekście zmian demograficznych*, Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu, Kultura i Edukacja, No. 4 (97),

Wojtyła K. (2001), *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, TN KUL, LUBLIN

Wood L.A. (1986), *Loneliness*, [in:], *The Social Construction of Emotions,* (Ed.) Hare R., Blackwell, Oxford

Zawadzki P. (2007), *Poczucie alienacji, samotności i depresji u współczesnej młodzieży*, "Wychowanie na co dzień" No. 12

Zimny J. (2014), *Zjawisko samotności-wyzwania i zagrożenia*, "Pedagogika Katolicka" No. 14 (1)